

## ABROAD PERSPECTIVE

### *Foreign Universities in UAE, Pt. 1*

A heavyweight fight over the future of foreign universities in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is taking place between the two most powerful and influential of the seven Emirates, Dubai and Abu Dhabi. At the center of the dispute is an education center in Dubai called Knowledge Village (KV), which has been open for more than a year.

KV (part of the Internet City and Media City initiatives) allows foreign universities to set up inside its "Free Trade Zone," with 100% foreign ownership and the relative ease of a quick start-up. According to the Ministry of Education (MOE) based in Abu Dhabi, foreign universities setting up inside KV are flouting the country's education regulations and cannot confer degrees recognized in the UAE, unless they go through a lengthy and expensive accreditation process with the MOE. KV has its own approval process allowing institutions to operate inside the zone.

Given KV institutions mostly attract expatriate students (the vast majority are Indians) looking for careers in other countries (especially Western economies), the concern regarding a degree not recognized in the UAE is a moot point for many families. Currently there are Indian, Pakistani, Iranian and Australian universities operating in KV.

*To be continued in next week's Not-So-Foreign.*

## OVER THE COUNTER

### *Multiculturalism Or Money?*

Reports this month on Oxford University's proposed plans to increase foreign student enrollment raises an important question: student diversity or greater revenue? The British university is operating at a loss (as much as £2700 per British or European Union student), and with the government's recent proposal of fees paid after graduation, international students who pay at least four times more than British students can be very attractive.

This delicate balance between more internationalism and more revenue was at the center of a January article in Canada's *National Post*, where Gardiner Wilson of the Canadian Education Centres Network was quoted, "The revenues from international students provide additional places for Canadian students. If you have five international students at \$12,000 a year, that's \$60,000. That pays for another professor."

Source: "[Foreigners to outnumber British undergraduates in Oxford.](#)" *The Economic Times*, 11 March 2004; "Foreigners at universities hit record 15% jump" *National Post*, 8 January 2004.

## THE PLAYING FIELD

### *India, Australia & IDP*

The success of Australia's leading university marketing arm IDP, has led to expectations of 10,000 new Indian students going to Australia this year, a staggering figure considering Australia's population (approximately 19.7 million) and just 39 universities. Australia's projected total from India will match more than half the U.S. total, and four times more than Canada's (both with much larger populations, numbers of universities and the supposed attraction of "North America").

It's been a remarkable turnaround considering just three years ago Australia's immigration ministry had labelled India as a "less desired" country to draw foreign students from. The official categorization was a result of large numbers of non bona-fide students who had gone from India to Australia to seek economic opportunities in the guise of student visas. The response was to force every Indian applicant, regardless of how exceptional their English language skills, to write an English language test.

IDP entered a business arrangement with the British Council and University of Cambridge to market the IELTS test (in India and beyond) and now not only is IDP cashing in on record numbers of Indian students going to Australia, it is also selling record numbers of IELTS tests in India. "Last year our goal was 7,200 test-takers and we had 19,000," IDP India Director Henry Ledlie told Higher-Edge's Mel Broitman. "This year our goal is 33,000, but we are hoping for 50,000 IELTS takers". With a fee of about \$120 USD per test, one can see why Ledlie claims his office is challenging Singapore and Kuala Lumpur as IDP's most profitable enterprise abroad.

## GLOBE TIPPING

### *Useful Phone Numbers In Beijing*

The following numbers are important to remember when in Beijing:

24 hours Tourist Hotline: 65130828  
(Service in Chinese, English, Japanese)

#### **Emergencies**

For foreigners: 552729  
Fire: 119  
Ambulance: 120

Weather: 121