

THE PLAYING FIELD

Hong Kong institutes form links with China

With the Hong Kong government keen on attracting talent from mainland China, and the Chinese government intent on revamping the country's higher education sector, collaborative arrangements between higher education institutions in Hong Kong and the mainland are becoming the order of the day.

With China's Ministry of Education giving the go-ahead for a joint project, the United International College (UIC) has been established by Hong Kong Baptist University and Beijing Normal University. The UIC campus is located at China's Zhuhai - a special economic zone bordering Hong Kong. UIC will offer undergraduate programmes in environmental science, computer science and technology, statistics and operations research, and finance and applied economics.

There are other such instances of institutes collaborating to offer a particular programme of study, for example the MBA Program in Finance jointly started by the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) and Tsinghua University. The School of Business and Management of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) has also opened a centre in Beijing recently to cater to China's developing financial industry.

Source: "[HK universities seek strong ties.](#)"
[Xinhua, July 5, 2005](#)

OVER THE COUNTER

Indian e-learning provider to create national repository

The [Indira Gandhi National Open University](#) (IGNOU), India's largest distance learning provider, has announced plans to introduce a national repository of courses and research materials which will be available for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and rural areas. Access to the repository will be free of charge. The courses will be offered through tele-centres located in rural areas. A cooperative of 17 radio stations is also in place, providing access to remote areas. IGNOU is also developing "a network of five Satellite Interactive Terminals (SITs) all over the country to pool best practices." The IGNOU initiative will promote equitable access to higher education in the country and other Indian e-learning varsities are being encouraged to contribute to the repository. In the past, international education providers like Canada's Commonwealth of Learning, UNESCO's International Institute for Capacity Building have collaborated with IGNOU to offer programmes to rural communities in Africa and Jamaica. Experts from Britain's The Open University will be working with a team from IGNOU to identify critical areas for collaboration.

ABROAD PERSPECTIVE

Private sector competition for British varsities

Private sector companies will soon be giving British universities a run for their money. With recent government legislation allowing teaching-only institutions, including commercial enterprises to assume the status of a university, private sector education providers such as College of Law and BPP have already applied for degree-awarding powers. Under the new rules, universities need not carry out research as long as they have 4,000 full-time equivalent higher education students. Given that estimate, BPP, a professional training company, which has 3,000 full-time postgraduate students on its rolls, is eligible for university status.

Once the applications are cleared by the government, Britain's traditional higher education sector (comprised of universities and colleges) could find itself competing with private sector organizations for students. BPP, for example, plans to enroll students from September 2006 for two-year accelerated degrees in law and accountancy with fees of £9,000 (USD \$15,813) a year. Charles Prior, chief executive of BPP, told *Times Higher Education Supplement*, "We will initially offer these degrees in London and believe they will be very attractive to students facing high fees, particularly overseas students." According to the same report, the Financial Training Company, part of Kaplan Inc., is also interested in applying for degree-awarding powers.

Source: "[Private sector muscles in.](#)"
[The Times Higher Education Supplement, July 1, 2005](#)

GLOBE TIPPING

Indian airports' renovation programme

Changi Airport Managers and Partners (CHAMPS), will be modernising the Delhi and Mumbai airports in collaboration with Bharti Enterprises. Both the airports will be equipped with state-of-the-art facilities such as those found at Singapore's Changi Airport and prepared for the operations of the double-decker Airbus A-380 aircraft.

The airport renovation programme is aimed at providing speedy and efficient clearance as well as a luxurious travelling experience.