

## THE PLAYING FIELD

### *Canada shoots itself in the foot yet one more time*

Earlier this month, the House of Commons Immigration Committee voted against the federal department proposal to spend an extra \$168 million dollars (US \$ 140 million) to fund improvements. Of this amount, \$10 million (US \$ 8.4 million) was slated to assist in funding off-campus work permits for the international students program. The vote against the proposal was reported to potentially put the planned Federal-Ontario Immigration Agreement, which would enable this provision, in jeopardy.

While authorization for off-campus work has already been made by federal agreement with some provinces, others, like Ontario, are still waiting. Off-campus work authorization is one of the pillars of international student recruitment, and one which other key competitor countries have long relied upon. Notwithstanding that Canada recently posted its lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the void between politicians and the desires of international students and the needs of Canadian institutions, remains cavernous. Meanwhile, this week the *Financial Times* reports that last month's European Union globalisation summit, put forth the concept of offering citizenship to foreign students completing doctorates in Europe. As for Canada's international student recruiters, yet again they can only give wishy-washy, convoluted responses to international students wanting some clear talk on whether, where, and when, they can work off-campus in Canada.

## ABROAD PERSPECTIVE

### *Czech universities compete for international students*

In order to attract greater numbers of international students to their campuses, Czech universities are planning to increase English-language programmes offered by them. This includes both short-term programmes as well as regular undergraduate and master's level programmes. While students studying in Czech do not pay for classes, those opting for classes taught in English or other foreign languages have to pay a fee. Hence, by offering more classes in English and other languages, universities will be able to generate more revenue.

The Education Ministry plans on increasing the numbers of international students to 33,000, or 10 per cent of the total projected student population in 2010. To achieve this,

doctoral programmes taught in English and other languages will increase from 30 to 60 per cent, master's programmes will increase to 50 per cent. Also, teachers and administrators will be motivated to achieve fluency in English.

Source: "[Universities vie for foreign students.](#)"  
[The Prague Post Online, October 26, 2005](#)

## OVER THE COUNTER

### *New exam marking system in Uganda schools*

The Uganda National Examination Board (UNEb) has put in place a new marking scheme that would reduce instances of cheating during examinations. Under the new system, each answer script is checked by several examiners. Each of the examiners marks a certain number of questions and passes the script on to the next examiner. Since each examiner marks only a few questions, he does not know the total marks. This eliminates chances of examiners being involved in any kind of fraud and the whole process is faster and more accurate. Also, the examiners are paid a flat rate. Earlier, examiners were paid according to the number of answer scripts marked and this led to inaccuracies in marking since each examiner was trying to increase his pay by marking as many scripts as he possibly could.

Source: "[UNEb switches to New Marking Scheme.](#)"  
[AllAfrica, November 14, 2005](#)

## GLOBE TIPPING

### *Electrical connections in China*

While traveling to China, remember that electrical connections are 220V, 50 cycles, AC. Two-pin sockets and some three-pin-sockets are in use. Most Chinese hotels have a socket in the bathroom for both 110V and 220V. However, in the rooms, mostly 220V sockets are provided. While you can always borrow an adaptor plug from the hotel, it is always better to carry your own. For complete preparation to any country one might be travelling to, consult the World Electric Guide at: <http://kropla.com/electric2.htm>.