

THE PLAYING FIELD

World Demand to Rise

The global demand for higher education is likely to climb dramatically in coming years as Asian economies continue to grow, a recent Australian study predicts. According to the study, the number of international students could rise from its current number, pegged at about 1.8 million in 2008, to eight million by 2025. Many of these students are likely to come from China and Southeast Asia, where the demand for university places is likely to grow faster than governments can fill it, the report says. The study describes education as “Australia’s fourth largest export,” pegging its value to the Australian economy at \$5.9 billion (Aus.) in 2003-2004 (13 per cent higher than the previous year). From 1994 to 2004, the number of international students enrolled in higher education in Australia grew from 35,290 to 151,798.

Source: Executive summary of *Education without Borders: International Trade in Education*, released on 7 September 2005 (Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade)

http://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/eau_education

OVER THE COUNTER

America Seeking to Reverse Post-911 Decline

The Bush administration has started 2006 touting itself as a student-friendly country. “The United States has never been more eager to welcome foreign students to our country,” Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice told a gathering of American university presidents in Washington earlier this month. A bipartisan amendment approved by the Senate in November calls for a marketing plan to encourage international students to study in the U.S. Numbers of foreign students at U.S. colleges and universities have fallen since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, with new measures making U.S. visas harder to obtain. The September 11 hijackers had entered the U.S. on valid student visas.

Source: “U.S. seeking to stem decline in foreign students,” *World Peace Herald*, Jan. 13, 2006

<http://www.wpherald.com/storyview.php?StoryID=20060113-040054-4554r>

ABROAD PERSPECTIVE

UK Schools Facing Financial Crisis?

According to a recent survey by Universities UK, the number of international students has fallen at four out of every five British universities over the past 12 months. Numbers were down by an average of 12 per cent—meaning UK schools are making 1 million pounds less on average. Universities UK president Drummond Bone said universities “are going to find it difficult to make ends meet” and could end up cutting back on jobs. While some wring their hands, however, others in the UK are predicting tidy profits for higher education. A recent forecast by the Higher Education Funding Council for England sees higher tuition fees putting the country’s universities comfortably in the black; by 2008-09, it predicts, they will have a combined operating surplus of 427 million pounds.

Sources: “Vice-chancellors bemoan drop in foreign students,” *The Guardian*, Dec. 15, 2005

<http://education.guardian.co.uk/students/overseasstudents/story/0,12743,1667820,00.html>

“Increase in fees to benefit academic funding,” *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, Jan. 11, 2006, sourced in turn from *The Financial Times*

http://www.thes.co.uk/latest_news

GLOBE TIPPING

Chinese New Year’s Begins

People who do business with China should keep in mind the country’s peak holiday season—the Lunar New Year Festival, also known as the Spring Festival—kicked off Jan. 14. The holiday, focused around the beginning of the traditional Chinese New Year, Jan. 29, is a popular time for Chinese to travel and visit family members, so Chinese contacts may be even more difficult to reach than normal.

Source: “2 Billion Trips Expected During Holiday,” *China Daily*

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-12/22/content_505464.htm