

## SEVERE ACUTE RESPIRATORY SYNDROME (SARS) - A Special Higher-Edge Bulletin

### Student visa issuance from Beijing

SARS seems not to have had any immediate effects on the recruitment efforts of British universities and colleges.

Paul Clementson, First Secretary (Cultural) of the British Embassy's Cultural and Education Section in Beijing reports that student visa applications for April 2003 were similar to numbers in the same period last year. Further, he adds, although some independent schools in the UK have implemented a ten-day quarantine period for students who have been to SARS-hit areas, there is no overall requirement for nationals from affected countries to be quarantined or undergo health examinations upon arrival in the UK.

Some British higher education institutions are postponing their visits, while others are not. Some Chinese academics have also postponed their scheduled visits to the UK. •

### American Study Abroad Programs affected by SARS

With several major players such as Columbia University, the University of Michigan and the University of California cancelling their study abroad programs in China, one wonders about the state of the study abroad sector, and how it will cope with this blow.

The Institute for the International Education of Students (IES) has ended its spring program three weeks early with no protest from students or their parents. Micheal Steinberg, Executive Vice President and Director of Academic Programs for IES, told Higher-Edge that the students wrote their exams in Beijing but will complete their studies in the U.S.

Dr. Glenn Shive, Director of the America Centre in Hong Kong, estimates that approximately half to two thirds of students from abroad have already left Hong Kong. He also admits that it's a risky business. "At some point, however," he states, "one must also acknowledge that study abroad involves going beyond the safe circle of the small, predictable worlds within which our students would otherwise stay. In future, study abroad cannot be made 'risk-free.' The educated person in this globalized world needs to be able to learn about the risks, weigh evidence from multiple sources, and adjust his/her behavior accordingly. This is a tough issue for all international educators." •

### To stay or not to stay

Morale is low as overseas students are weighing the risks of staying in China's SARS-hit cities. While international students are concerned about the situation, they also worry that any decision to return home might be made prematurely.

Shelly Kraicer, a Canadian studying in Beijing, reports that the city's primary and secondary schools have been ordered to shut down for two weeks. He fears that the city's institutions of higher education might soon follow. While the prospect of hanging around the city with not much to do might sound unappealing, Shelly states that "it will (be) a shame precipitously to leave." He adds, "the saner among us are still going to classes, trying to ignore swirling rumours, and trying not to get too distracted by the deflating campus atmosphere around us. It's tough, but possible, so far." •

### Toronto added on SARS list

As of April 23, 2003, the World Health Organization (WHO) has issued a travel advisory for Americans visiting Toronto, Canada. The organization is recommending postponing all but essential travel to the following areas: Beijing, Shanxi Province, Guangdong Province, and Hong Kong in China.

See: [http://www.who.int/csr/sarsarchive/2003\\_04\\_23/](http://www.who.int/csr/sarsarchive/2003_04_23/)

Canadian federal, provincial and municipal officials are fuming at today's health/travel advisory against Toronto, saying that it is an unfair assessment of actual conditions and will do much to hurt the city's economy and reputation.

For details, visit: [http://www.torontostar.ca/NASApp/cs/ContentServer?pagename=thestar/Layout/Article\\_Type1&c=Article&cid=1035781169752&call\\_pageid=968332188492&col=968793972154](http://www.torontostar.ca/NASApp/cs/ContentServer?pagename=thestar/Layout/Article_Type1&c=Article&cid=1035781169752&call_pageid=968332188492&col=968793972154) •

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