

OVERSEAS, OVERWHELMED

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Abroad Perspective

The Pakistani News Service reports that an important meeting was held last Wednesday to finalize the ordinance of the country's Higher Education Commission (HEC).

Addressing the meeting, Federal Minister for Science & Technology Prof. Atta-ur-Rahman stated that HEC would adopt a pro-active role for the improvement of educational standards in the higher education sector and to make Pakistani universities "internationally compatible". He added that the commission would focus on making education more needs-oriented and an effective contributor to efforts towards poverty alleviation and socio-economic and industrial development of the country.

Higher-Edge COO Mel Broitman travels to Pakistan every four months and reports that there is a long way to go to make Pakistani universities "internationally compatible". However, according to Mel, there are some outstanding institutions in the country. Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), the engineering institution GIK, north of Islamabad, and the excellent Aga Khan University Medical College in Karachi, are three of the best. ♦

Let's Go Canada!

Recently, all schools and tertiary institutions in New Zealand which enrol international students were required to sign a code of practice for the care and well-being of foreign students.

The code provides guidelines covering topics such as the provision of up-to-date and accurate information, ethical recruitment procedures, the safeguard of fees, and general care and grievance procedures. Recruitment agents representing schools overseas are also required to abide by the code. The complete code can be found on the NZ Ministry of Education web page: www.minedu.govt.nz

Neil Scotts, Manager of International Policy and Development at the Ministry of Education, said, "We want to aim for the quality end of the [international education] market. We don't want to be seen as a cheap, mass production, low quality provider [destination]."

It appears that New Zealand is attempting to differentiate itself as a study destination from nearby Australia, which has been heavily criticized for rampant commercialization of its higher education sector. New Zealand's evolving national brand is a reputation already enjoyed by Canadian institutions. But in the last two years, results indicate the Kiwis have been much more effective than the Canucks at presenting a unified message to market quality higher education opportunities. ♦

Over the Counter

The Spring Issue of *College and University*, a journal of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), features an article by Edward Devlin, Director of Special Projects, AACRAO Office of International Education Services (OIES).

In his piece, entitled "Why Verification of Suspicious Records is Important", Mr. Devlin identifies three problem areas for institutions who do not exercise vigilance in examining suspicious documents from overseas students. These three categories are ethical, legal, and practical.

While the practical reasons for verification are rather clear-cut, the interpretations are more subtle and have long-lasting consequences. Devlin writes: "The reputation of an institution as an "easy mark" for questionable application documents is a hard one to repair. Once this reputation is public, good students will stay away. Weak ones will apply, fraudulently or not."

In "high fraud" countries, such as Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and China, Higher-Edge staffers in Karachi, Delhi, Dhaka and Beijing report there are several Canadian institutions which are considered "easy marks" as defined above. Many of them are working with agents who will do whatever "is necessary" to secure an admission for their student clients. Visa officers in Embassies and High Commissions in those countries are increasingly aware of which universities and colleges are admitting students with bogus credentials. Institutions which are finding that many of their students are being rejected for visas, should be asking if they have become "easy marks". ♦

Globe Tipping

Travelling with your lap-top to the four corners of the world? Before you leave, check out the following resources:

<http://kropla.com/phones.htm#Phone%20modems#Phone%20modems>
This site entitled "What you need to hook up your modem just about anywhere!" answers many questions you may have regarding how to dial-in for several countries.

<http://www.rentcomputers.com/sosair.html>
This site offers a list of in-flight laptop services by different airlines.

<http://www.corporatetravelsafety.com/laptoptheft.html>
Everything you may want (and not want) to know about lap-top theft. ♦

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