

# OVERSEAS OVERWHELMED

## LET'S GO CANADA

### *Rankings Around The World*

International students may often ask university administrators promoting their institution, "Where does your university rank?" Without a doubt, some prospective students may place great importance on how an institution matches up against others at the regional, national and even global levels. Ranking systems are an inexact science at best, but will there ever be a way to objectively grade a university?

Both Philip Altrach and Nicholas Confessore take different approaches to this issue in *Academe* and *The Atlantic Monthly* respectively. Altrach does a commendable job of outlining various criteria that could be used in determining a "world-class" university; these include excellence in research, governance of institutions and academic freedom, among others. Confessore examines the American situation, where rankings systems are selective in the criteria that they use: the widely read "America's Best Colleges," by *U.S. News & World Report*, focuses on the resources of an institution, where more resources is equated with excellence.

One possible measurement of a "world-class" university is the diversity of its student body. The *U.S. News* study explicitly states that it leaves out international students when calculating campus diversity. In our view, true "world-class" diversity entails not only a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic student body from a nation's own residents, but must also incorporate students from around the world.

Source: [Philip G. Altrach, "The Costs and Benefits of World-Class Universities," \*Academe\*, January/February 2004](#); Nicholas Confessore, "What Makes A College Good?" *The Atlantic Monthly*, November 2003.

## GLOBE TIPPING

### *Smart Cards & Transportation In China*

Beijing will be testing out a new "smart" card for taxis. About 10,000 cars are currently using the pre-paid cards, with Beijing transport authorities looking to expand the concept to other methods of public transportation. A similar system is already in place in Shanghai. Cards cost 30 yuan, and can store a pre-paid value of at least 300 yuan. Using a smart card to pay for your cab fare in Shanghai guarantees a receipt.

## ABROAD PERSPECTIVE

### *Asian University For Women*

At the January groundbreaking ceremony for the Asian University for Women (AUW), Bangladeshi Prime Minister Khaleda Zia remarked that the institution could become a paragon of equity in education. The anticipated Class of 2007 student population will come from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and other countries in South Asia, to fulfill what Karen Rizvi, Program Officer for the AUW Support Foundation calls a "truly inter-regional campus." To help those students who come from economically deprived backgrounds, the University plans to provide 1000 scholarships worth \$50,000 each.

Rizvi also told Higher-Edge that 2004 would be an important year, with two major fundraising campaigns, the selection of a Vice-Chancellor and curriculum development all on the agenda.

Source: ["PM breaks ground for Asian University for Women in Ctg," \*The Daily Star\*, 14 January 2004.](#)

## OVER THE COUNTER

### *Chinese Education Agents & Sub-Licensing*

Education agents in China employ all sorts of tactics when dealing with overseas institutions, from imposing extra costs on students ([Overseas, Overwhelmed 3.31](#)) to knowingly submitting false visa applications ([3.12](#)). To circumvent the local regulations, licensed agents will "sublet" their licence out to other agents. A quick visit to an agent's office will quickly and clearly establish this relationship. The official agent may own an entire floor in a building but rent out office space to other "affiliated" agents. These affiliated agents may share the licence with others. Several affiliated agents may be working for the same school, although they may be in no professional way related to each other.

Our Grace Huang reports that this relationship does have some drawbacks, especially for the agent that holds the official licence. She says, "If a lawsuit is raised against any of the affiliated agents, it is the official [agent] who will be responsible."

Each province in China has its own Education Commission that regulates education agents, monitoring them for instances of infractions, like licence subletting.

The Ministry of Education also recently released an official list ([click here](#), in Chinese) of 270 agents who deal with students who independently fund their overseas education.