

OVERSEAS OVERWHELMED

This is the last issue of *Overseas, Overwhelmed* for 2004.
We will resume publishing in early January.
Higher-Edge wishes all of its readers a happy holiday season.

LET'S GO CANADA

International Students & Discrimination

An Australian report found half of the country's international students are experiencing discrimination. *The Age*, an Australian newspaper, reported on the preliminary findings of the study, which found that 51 percent of the international students surveyed were victims of some sort of discrimination. Bigotry and racism can take various forms, from verbal abuse to physical violence. Russia has experienced examples of the latter case, where students from Africa and Asia are targets of race-based violence that have resulted in death.

Are foreign students facing discrimination in other study abroad destinations? The New Zealand Ministry of Education published online the results of its own survey, where international students report of encountering more discrimination outside of the academic community (the survey looks at all levels of education).

The closest study available that looks at discrimination in Canada is *Canada First*, recently published by the Canadian Bureau for International Education. The report examines the issue of racism as part of its section on student satisfaction. Of the students surveyed, around 70 percent did not experience any form of racism.

International students certainly have a range of fears and concerns when going overseas for study, from social (Will I make new friends?) to academic (How difficult will my studies be?) to the trivial (What clothes should I bring for winter?). Fears of bigotry and racism can be a primary concern for some students; creating a welcome environment for international students is certainly a challenge for host countries, although one cannot expect attitudes to change overnight.

To read the results of the New Zealand survey, click [here](#).

For more information about *Canada First*, please contact Jennifer Humphries at (613) 237 4820 ext. 246 or JHumphries@cbie.ca.

Source: "[Foreign students targets for bigots,](#)" *The Age*, 1 December 2004; "[Foreign Students in Russian City Protest Another Apparently Race-Based Killing,](#)" *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 20 October 2004. (Both articles require registration for viewing)

OVER THE COUNTER

The Fight Against Diploma Mills

In two instances over the past week, legal action was brought against online "diploma mills" – institutions that grant degrees with little (or often no) work and assessment. In the first case, the Pennsylvania Attorney General's office is suing a Texas-based institution, Trinity Southern University, after it awarded an MBA to a cat. The feline belonged to the state's Deputy Attorney General. In the second case, Regis University, based in Denver, Colorado, is suing the individuals operating the online St. Regis University, based in Washington state. Incidentally, this online university shares its name with a distance education institute in Liberia; the Liberian institution, however, claims that there is no connection between the two.

These latest developments are a clear indication that fake degrees and diplomas are spread far beyond the perceived high-risk countries (Pakistan, Nigeria, China). Even so, verification of credentials is a readily available tool that admissions officers can utilise to minimise the risk of admitting fraudulent students.

Source: "[Regis University Sues Online 'Diploma Mill',](#)" [TheDenverChannel.com](#), 11 December 2004; "[Online School That Gave Cat an MBA Is Sued,](#)" ABC News, 7 December 2004.

ABROAD PERSPECTIVE

Jordan Expects More Foreign Students

The Kingdom of Jordan has the ambitious goal of multiplying the number of foreign students studying at its universities from 20,000 to 100,000 by 2020. This is the objective of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, and according to the Minister, considers the Kingdom to be a "hub for regional higher education" (75 percent of the foreign student population come from Arab countries).

The Minister made these comments at a workshop to discuss improvements to the Kingdom's higher education sector. Attended by students and other stakeholders, the participants covered a range of administrative and academic issues, raising concerns and offering suggestions. Jordan's intentions would intensify an already growing export education market in the Gulf region, with Dubai and Qatar currently leading the way.

Source: "University students provide feedback on Kingdom's higher education system," *Jordan Times*, 13 December 2004.