

# OVERSEAS OVERWHELMED

HIGHER  
EDGE

Issue 8.36  
October 4, 2006

A Bulletin for  
Canadian International  
Education Professionals

## LET'S GO CANADA

### ***CBIE Sees New Attitude in Ottawa***

An official with the Canadian Bureau for International Education says a recent meeting with Monte Solberg, Canada's Citizenship and Immigration minister, left CBIE officials very impressed and hopeful for international education in Canada.

"It was a great meeting," Jennifer Humphries, the CBIE's vice-president for membership and scholarships, said of the talk, which took place earlier this week. "This is not a minister who wants to sit in his office—this is a minister who is interested."

Specifically, Ms. Humphries told *Overseas, Overwhelmed*, Mr. Solberg seemed both very well versed in international student issues, and also of the importance of international students to Canada. He also seemed inclined to improving communication between Ottawa and Canada's schools.

"The minister is clearly dedicated to increased and enhanced communication that should lead to a better understanding on all sides of how to manage the international student recruitment matter," she said.

## ABROAD PERSPECTIVE

### ***In Malta, Booming ESL Sector Charting Still More Growth...***

The number of foreign students in Malta has more than doubled over the last decade, rising from 30,000 in 1996 to 62,000 in 2005, chiefly due to the island nation's healthy ESL industry.

Dramatic though the trend may seem, the Federation of English Language Schools in Malta believes there's room for still more growth. The group hopes changes in government practice will help the industry develop further. For example, it wants the Malta Tourism Authority to promote the island as a study destination not just for the summer, but for the winter months as well. It wants a better system for vetting visa applications, and it also wants the government to promote the industry overseas through trade missions.

Source: "[The Future of English Language Schools](#)," *Times of Malta*, October 1, 2006

## OVER THE COUNTER

### ***...While in New Zealand, Industry's Collapse Prompts Fnger-Pointing***

Opposition politicians in New Zealand are accusing the government of fumbling on international education after the release of recent numbers outlining revenues from the country's schools.

According to a recent report, the income New Zealand ESL schools make from tuition dropped from \$258 million (\$171 U.S.; \$192 Cdn.) in 2003 to \$112 million (\$74 U.S.) \$84 Cdn.) in 2006. Meanwhile, a number of New Zealand universities are cutting staff.

Instead of spending money on posting "education counsellors" overseas, the government should be streamlining visa processing, improving work opportunities and taking other measures, a spokeswoman for the opposition National Party said recently.

Currency fluctuations and other factors have been blamed for the crash of New Zealand's ESL sector, which has seen the closure of many schools recently.

Source: "International Education in Disarray," New Zealand National Party news release, September 27, 2006, available on [Scoop.com](#)

## GLOBE TIPPING

### ***Ramadan Varies Widely Within Islamic World***

Non-Muslims have little idea about most things in the Islamic world, says Mel Broitman, Higher-Edge's director for international outreach—and that includes what it means to travel and work in Islamic countries during Ramadan, the "month of fasting."

"Islam is practiced and expressed very differently around the globe," Mr. Broitman says. "In Saudi Arabia, food consumption is mostly strictly forbidden in public. But in Dubai, restaurants in hotels are open, as well as food courts in office areas and private dining areas for workers. For the Western traveller, most Islamic nations are closer to Dubai than Saudi in the practice of Ramadan."

Ramadan this year lasts from September 24 to October 24. Stay tuned to Not-So-Foreign for more advice on travel during Ramadan next week!