

### *Strengthening the Decision-Making Process*

Each school or faculty within Japanese universities is an autonomous unit. Each faculty council has considerable decision-making power. To reform Japanese universities as drastically as envisioned, however, this tradition would seem to be an obstacle. Thus, the report calls for the introduction of more efficient management systems. Specifically, it asks universities to limit the authority of faculty councils to matters involving each school's education and research and to give presidents and deans more executive power. Academics are resisting such changes as intrusions into academic autonomy.

### *Creating an Evaluation System*

These proposed reforms in the quality of education and the strengthening of decision-making procedures will require constant evaluation. This was the final point in the report and has become the most controversial topic among academics. Japanese universities, especially the national universities, are closely monitored by the Ministry of Education. Since 1992, universities have been required to be assessed by internal committees. However, while most have performed self-evaluations and have issued many assessment reports, it is doubtful that these exercises really contribute to true reform. The 1998 report strongly emphasizes the need for outside evaluations, recommending establishing third-party monitoring committees consisting of professors (not under the auspices of the Ministry of Education).

This evaluation would be used to determine distribution of government spending on education and research. This could also prove to be problematic: universities with high evaluations would attract students and resources, while poorly evaluated universities with low evaluations would suffer. This could produce changes in the rankings of some institutions.

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### *Conclusion*

The report originated out of a sense of crisis over the future of Japanese higher education in the 21st century. These are the most radical reforms proposed in Japanese higher education since World War II. If Japanese universities are able to carry out these ambitious reforms they will be well positioned to meet the challenges of the 21st century. ■

## Despite Asian Turmoil International Enrollment in the United States Grows in 1997

### **Todd M. Davis**

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The number of foreign students studying in the United States increased substantially in 1997–98. This year's total of 481,280 represents an increase of 5.1 percent over last year's figure, building on last year's near 1 percent increase and appears to reverse a six-year trend of declining foreign student enrollments. These findings and others are reported in the 1997/98 edition of *Open Doors*.

This 1997–98 increase reflects enrollment growth from 13 of the 15-largest source countries and exceptional growth from three countries: Korea, China, and India. By contrast, last year, 7 of the 15 leading places of origin showed declines in enrollment, while the other 8 showed only slight to moderate growth. More than half (57 percent) of the 23,000-student increase comes from Korea, China, and India. While the United States hosts international students from virtually all international homelands, there is a marked concentration of enrollments from particular places. Just over 41 percent of all international students studying in this country come from the leading five places. Japan, China, Korea, India, and Taiwan, collectively, account for 201,000 international students. Indeed the leading 15 homelands, of which 9 are Asian, account for two-thirds of all U.S. international enrollments. (See table on next page.)

While the overall foreign student total is up markedly this year, certain sectors of the higher education system have benefited disproportionately. Between 1993 and 1997 community colleges have shown the strongest growth in international enrollments (19.9 percent) of all institutional types. Within institutional classifications, however, the more selective institutions have shown stronger increases in enrollment than have less selective colleges. Among the most popular fields of study, international enrollments in business (up 4.7 percent), computer science (up 20 percent), and the arts (up 14.7 percent) demonstrated exceptional growth this year.

### *But What About This Year?*

The total number of international students enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities appears to be holding steady for the fall 1998 term. The number of institutions reporting either increases in enrollments or no change over 1997 levels exceeded 55 percent for all Asian countries surveyed. An overwhelming proportion of institutions reported en-

rollment jumps for students from India and China. These findings were based on the returns from an e-mail survey of 776 U.S. colleges and universities. The survey was conducted jointly by the Institute of International Education (IIE) and the National Association of International Educators (NAFSA) during the month of November 1998. These findings suggest that the 5.1 percent enrollment jump for the fall 1997 reflects the continued attraction of U.S. higher education for international students despite the widely reported Asian economic turmoil. The internals of the survey also suggest that the overall health of our foreign enrollments may prove to be quite misleading for individual institutions. The reality is that the Asian crisis is real and may be producing two classes of institutions—those that have proactively addressed the crisis and those that have been either passive or slow to act.

In all, 345 institutions responded to this survey. For the 273 institutions that provided both fall 1997 and fall 1998 total enrollment data, 136,877 students were enrolled in fall 1998. This figure is virtually the same as reported for these institutions in fall 1997. The 136,877 students represent about 28 percent of all international enrollments in the United States. Of the 320 institutions providing country-specific responses the majority of institutions reported that they had experienced an enrollment increase or no change in enrollment between fall 1997 and fall 1998 for many of the leading Asian countries.

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When the institutional responses were divided between institutions that reported total enrollment increases between 1997 and 1998 and those that reported enrollment decreases, it became apparent that the overall gainers did two important things. They held on to their Asian students

### International Students in the United States: Enrollments in the Top 15 Countries, 1996–98

Rank	Place of Origin	1996-97	1997-98	1996-98 % Change	% of World Total
1	Japan	46,292	47,073	1.7	9.8
2	China	42,503	46,958	10.5	9.8
3	Korea	37,130	42,890	15.5	8.9
4	India	30,641	33,818	10.4	7.0
5	Taiwan	30,487	30,855	1.2	6.4
6	Canada	22,984	22,051	-4.1	4.6
7	Thailand	13,481	15,090	11.9	3.1
8	Malaysia	14,527	14,597	0.5	3.0
9	Indonesia	12,461	13,282	6.6	2.8
10	Hong Kong	10,942	9,665	-11.7	2.0
11	Mexico	8,975	9,559	6.5	2.0
12	Germany	8,990	9,309	3.5	1.9
13	Turkey	8,124	9,081	11.8	1.9
14	United Kingdom	7,357	7,534	2.4	1.6
15	Brazil	6,168	6,982	13.2	1.5
	WORLD TOTAL	457,984	481,280	5.1	

*Source: Open Doors.* New York: Institute of International Education, 1997, 1998.

in greater proportions than did the decliners and they broadened their enrollment pools to include areas other than Asia. The most likely sources for non-Asian students were South America, Canada, and Western Europe—especially the United Kingdom and Germany.

Institutions were also asked to report the most important factors that accounted for the enrollment changes on their particular campus. The tenor of the comments was especially striking between the gainers and the decliners. Institutions with enrollment increases attributed their success to better recruitment, competitive pricing, and the development of attractive academic programs. Campuses on the rise reported enhancing international student services by focusing on retention and personalized attention. Most gainers report expanded and aggressive recruitment—including responding rapidly to prospective student inquiries, the use of the web to enhance international alumni involvement, international exchange agreements, and the focus on recruitment from diverse geographic regions. Some campuses reported that their pricing policies for internationals were designed to be competitive both internationally as well as with other institutions in their regions. This was especially so for community colleges. One respondent noted that “because of the economic crisis, more Asian students are coming to this community college from four-year institutions, because of the lower educational costs here.” Finally the gainers were also active in develop-

ing and expanding graduate programs that were attractive to internationals and in providing some campus-based support for international graduate students.

An important word of caution for the future: several responders suggested that the overall enrollment picture on campus might be masking a real drop in the number of new admissions, especially at the undergraduate level, for students from the Asian tiger nations. One medium-sized southern institution reported that a major gap was developing between total students overall and new admissions totals. For example, while total Indonesian enrollments showed a 6 percent increase, a 20 percent decrease was seen in new admissions; Malaysia showed a 6 percent overall increase and a 40 percent decrease in new students; and among Thai students there was a 10 percent overall increase and a 55 percent drop in first-time enrollments. Another moderate-sized institutional respondent noted that "the increase in our international population is due to employment layoffs in the home countries. Many students are viewing this time as an opportunity to continue their education and to improve their level of education—preparing to reenter the work force when it regains its stability."

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***These findings suggest that the 5.1 percent enrollment jump for the fall 1997 reflects the continued attraction of U.S. higher education for international students despite the widely reported Asian economic turmoil.***

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These survey findings suggest that the enrollment increases seen in fall 1997 are likely to persist into 1998. While it should give observers comfort that the Asian flu has not turned into pneumonia, the findings also point to the importance of institutional responsiveness in abating the effects of global financial dislocation. Institutions that acted proactively to retain enrolled Asian students, recruited aggressively both within Asia and beyond, and instituted institutional systems and programs that are responsive to the needs of international students appear to have expanded their international enrollments. ■

*Open Doors 1997/98* can be ordered from IIE Books at 800-445-0443 toll free in U.S. or by e-mail from <iiebooks@pmds.com>. The new edition may be purchased at the IIE Online Bookstore: <http://www.iiebooks.org> or from Amazon.com.

## Coordinating Latin American Higher Education Reform: IESALC

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In Latin America, broad and growing consensus exists that in future societies will depend to a large extent on their capacity to generate new knowledge. Scientific research and technological development, as well as the ability to adopt and adapt new technologies, are strategies in the effort to increase competitiveness in the world economy and to achieve greater collective well-being. Universities, the traditional locus of research in the region, are being challenged to help countries stimulate economic growth and ensure a sustained and equitable process of development. But unless universities themselves engage in a comprehensive process of transformation, they will have limited capacity to become key actors in social and economic development. The formidable task ahead requires a redefinition of policies, plans, guiding principles, innovation in programs and curricula, and strengthening of management capacity. In sum, institutions must commit themselves to significant change and engage in a process of comprehensive restructuring.

In November 1996, a regional conference organized by UNESCO's Regional Center for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean—now the International Institute for Higher Education (IESALC)—was held in Havana, Cuba. The conference was attended by 700 participants; conference proceedings, including 132 papers, keynote speeches, and reports, have been published in Spanish, English, and French. A follow-up Caribbean meeting was held in June 1998, with some 50 participants from the region.

A regional plan of action emerged from these meetings and has been a major undertaking of IESALC. The Plan addresses actions along five major issues:

1. *Improving the Relevance of Postsecondary Education.* The plan of action identifies education in general, and higher education in particular, as essential instruments, of strategic value, to cope with the challenges of the modern world and to prepare citizens capable of building a fairer and more open society, based on solidarity, respect of human rights, and the shared use of knowledge and information. Higher education should contribute to social and economic development, as well as participate in the struggle against poverty and the promotion of the culture of peace.

2. *Improving Quality.* The plan calls for a commitment