

further explains their numbers at the community college level.

The presence over the last half century of ever-increasing numbers of international students has influenced the United States in many ways. Among these are the internationalization of higher education, economic growth from international student expenditures, and linkages with the rest of the world created when international students return home with an understanding of and experience with Americans and American culture and values. Global business activity, advances in technology, and an expansion of the worldwide pool of

individuals who can participate will continue to fuel international education enrollments. The challenge will be for our institutions, businesses, and governments to continue the work of strengthening international education as an integral feature of American higher education.

This article is based on the *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*, which is available for purchase for \$42.95. *50 Years of Open Doors*, a CD-rom containing every issue of the *Open Doors Report* published from 1948 to 1999, is available for \$129.00. For information on ordering on-line, by fax, phone, or email, see <www.wiebooks.org>.

Community College Development in China

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China already has a number of institutions that are referred to as community colleges—such as, Chaoyang Community College, Jinshan Community College, Shanghai Community College, and Luwan Community College. In reality, these hardly resemble a standard community college (if such an institution actually exists). The American community college developed out of a particular set of sociohistorical conditions that cannot be duplicated elsewhere. But as China's higher education system continues its rapid expansion in the coming years, selected aspects of community college models may prove useful in meeting the development needs of diverse communities across China. When this happens, the schools that eventually adopt community college models may include some of the current postsecondary colleges, as well as a number of other types of institution.

Postsecondary Options

China's postsecondary education institutions can generally be divided into two sectors: regular and adult higher education. The regular sector includes four-year university (*benke*) and three-year specialized college (*zhuanke*) programs, leading to a bachelor's degree and diploma, respectively. Some institutions include both programs of study. The adult sector includes two- and four-year diploma programs of study. The regular higher education institutions were administered by the Ministry of Education's department of regular higher education (*gaodeng jiaoyusi*), and the adult higher education institutions were administered by the adult higher education department (*chengren gaodeng jiaoyusi*), but both have recently combined under the former

department. Adults may also choose examination-based self-study higher education, while attending a variety of noncredential programs of study in postsecondary institutions.

China's secondary school graduates who do not score highly enough to gain admission to a four-year, degree-granting university may opt to enter a variety of other postsecondary educational institutions. Among them are upper-level specialized colleges (*dazhuan*) or vocational-technical colleges (*gaodeng zhiye jishu xueyuan* or *gaozhi*). Most have a two- or three-year program designed to be terminal in nature, leading to a diploma (*wenping*). Parents and students generally view vocational-technical colleges as second choices to universities. The practice of transferring (*zhuanxue*) from colleges to universities does not exist in China, although there is discussion about its merits.

The *dazhuan/gaozhi* institutions of higher education might seem to be the natural forerunners of the community college. However, if given the choice, directors of these institutions would choose to upgrade themselves to four-year *benke* universities (which may occur as China moves toward mass higher education), rather than to become two-year colleges.

Community College Models in China

For a number of reasons, it would appear that community college models could be suitably adapted to China's own developmental needs. China's authorities place great value on vocational-technical education. Market forces in China's rapidly expanding economy are creating the need for a new system of postsecondary institutions that can produce skilled technicians to support technological and industrial development. Two-year postsecondary colleges could meet part of that demand.

Major universities in China are expanding their adult and continuing education divisions, and some refer to this sector as a community college. The growth of this sector adds to their status in the eyes of the public, an important factor in their further development and popular acceptance of community colleges as legitimate postsecondary institutions.

Membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO) will create a further demand for postsecondary education graduates. Community college models may improve China's chances of competing in the global economy by minimizing dislocations in the labor market created during the initial period of China's WTO membership. Finally, community colleges can already be found in both Hong Kong and Taiwan. This not only means that they are well suited for Chinese societies, but also that these institutions survive well in the rough-and-tumble East Asian economic environment.

The Community Education Movement

Community education has already taken root in China. However, this form of education is of a nonformal nature and does not lead to a credential. It caters to a variety of needs, including youth activities, healthcare, social work, rehabilitation, prenatal care, activities for seniors, basic job skills, etc.

There is also the development at the county level of vocational-technical education centers (*zhiye jishu jiaoyu zhongxin*). These centers address the training and educational needs of the local communities. These are important because they take the community education concept to rural China, where most people live, and because they are key to solving other problems as well. For example, the western development strategy of China includes encouraging talent from the eastern regions of the country to "go west" and develop China. This adds needed skills and knowledge to the package of western development. However, it also creates problems in that local inhabitants are not able to compete with the newcomers. These vocational-technical education centers can provide opportunities for local people, including local ethnic minority populations of western China, to learn useful skills that will allow them to compete with the newcomers and at the same time contribute more to the development of their own regions.

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Other Community College Models

In the coming decade, *minban* (popularly run) colleges and midlevel specialized colleges may also be candidates for becoming more like standard community colleges. There is a great demand for higher education, and community college models are one way to deal with the demand. Thus, postsecondary *minban* institutions will take up much of the demand for higher education, though their quality is ques-

tionable. There are already over 1,400 *minban* colleges and universities serving over one million students. However, only 37 are permitted by the Ministry of Education to confer diplomas, and of these, only 4 can confer bachelor's degrees.

China's midlevel specialized secondary schools (*zhongzhuan*) offer a vocational high school education similar to vocational high schools (*zhiye gaozhong*) but with less academic content. These schools were formerly under the authority of the respective ministries (health, railroads, post and telecommunications, etc.), but will increasingly come under the jurisdiction of local education bureaus. As upper secondary education becomes more popularized and the content less vocationally oriented, these institutions can begin to upgrade their programs to postsecondary level. Some have already begun to do so and are entering into arrangements with universities to strengthen their programs. They may adapt community college characteristics when China moves toward mass higher education.

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Conclusion

The demand for alternative forms of postsecondary education will grow, especially in areas where 12-year postsecondary education has already been popularized. Community college models could also provide an opportunity for newly unemployed workers to retool and find employment. Postsecondary education in China still serves a small elite. The unemployed population may be better served by nondegree, short-term training aimed at getting individuals back into the labor market as quickly as possible. By the year 2015, China will have moved toward mass higher education. At that time, postsecondary vocational-technical education will no longer serve a small elite as it does today.

As China embarks on mass higher education in 2015, the institutions that evolve into a type of community college will likely include more than just the current postsecondary colleges (*gaodeng zhiye jishu xueyuan*) and/or the continuing education divisions of universities. Other likely candidates are the current midlevel secondary specialized schools (*zhongzhuan*), some of the nongovernment (*shehui lilianq banxue*) colleges that are being established to meet the growing demand for postsecondary education, and some of the county/township level vocational-technical education centers (*zhiye jishu jiaoyu zhongxin*). ■