themselves recognized. As a consequence of the globalization of higher education, North American, European, and Australian universities provide degree courses through websites, distance education programs, or conventional instruction. Some of these courses are of dubious quality. But nothing can be done as they lie outside the jurisdiction of regulatory bodies set up by the government. In any case, they do a brisk business, because dissatisfaction with universities runs high, because institutions that provide quality education are unable to meet the demand for admissions, and because there is blind faith in education coming from the developed nations.

Meeting Manpower Needs

In 1857, the British established in India the first three universities for European education. Simultaneously, as part of their policy of cultural colonization, they withdrew their support for indigenous learning and cut the colony off from traditions of higher learning dating back to the Brahmanical universities (1000 B.C.). Subsequently, India depended on Europe and North America for knowledge and expertise in every field. Today, India has the world's third-largest stock of technically and professionally trained manpower. The country has achieved impressive industrialization and modernization and even developed nuclear power. Professionals and technologists educated in India are respected and in demand all over the world. There are other successes, too.

The plan included a selection of about 100 leading research centers in the country, chosen for their relevance to economic and social development and to higher education reform.

But there is a measure of mismatch between the manpower produced and the country's needs. The economy is unable to absorb all of this sophisticated work force, which has led many highly qualified Indians to emigrate. At the same time, positions in different fields remain unoccupied due to lack of suitably qualified personnel. The system has been spectacularly successful in contributing to the industrialization and the modernization of the country, but it is unable to produce the manpower required to advance the traditional occupations, which account for the employment of nearly 80 percent of the population of the country. These occupations, deeply anchored in indigenous knowledge, range from forestry, fishing, agriculture, and related occupations to the manufacture of textiles, jewelry, and other handcrafted goods, the practice of medicine, the fine and performing arts, and a host of services. It was hoped that these occupations would modernize as industrialization advanced, but this did not happen. Economists now warn that the growth of the Indian economy hinges on the advance of this sector, and higher education is challenged to pay special heed to its needs.

A New Dilemma

Meanwhile, globalization has generated a new dilemma. With the resources now available, the country must choose between two options. It can promote advanced technical and professional education and research to be self-sufficient and to remain in the forefront of knowledge. Alternately, it can concentrate on providing a variety of vocational and technical courses to equip the population to take advantage of the employment opportunities that are generated as multinationals locate labor-intensive production processes in India. The second alternative may create dependence, but it will enable many Indians to earn well. The challenge is to combine government funding with privatization, to build the resources required to accomplish both options, and optimize the country's gains from globalization.

■

China's Plan to Promote Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences

Rui Yang and King Hau Au Yeung

Rui Yang is a lecturer in the Graduate School of Education at the University of Western Australia. Address: Graduate School of Education, University of Western Australia, Nedlands, WA 6009. E-mail: <ryang@ecel.uwa.edu.au>. King Hau Au Yeung is a doctoral student at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Address: Faculty of Education, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shatin, New Territory, Hong Kong. E-mail: <auyeung@cuhk.edu.hk>.

With the exponential growth of Internet use in China and China's accession to the World Trade Organization, many signs indicate that China's open door policy is only going to continue. Chinese universities are thus further confronted with an international context. Within this context, one urgent task is to improve the level of internationalization in the humanities and social sciences. Due to the varied ideologies, paradigms, and discourses inherent in these fields, and the high dependency on language to convey their meanings, dialogue with the international community is far more limited. This article reviews China's current initiatives to restructure research strength and infrastructure.

The Goals of the Plan

In June 1999, the Ministry of Education issued the Plan to Build up Key National Bases for Humanities and Social Sciences Research in Regular Higher Education Institutions. The plan included a selection of about 100 leading research centers in the country, chosen for their relevance to economic and social development and to higher education reform; provision of spadework for future development by reforming the existing administration system—including initiating major projects, allocating funds and grants, and supervision; and improvement of the overall research capacity of these listed centers to cutting-edge level, and thus ensuring a substantial international reputation. These initiatives have been well received nationwide. They are expected to have significant impact on the reform and development in the humanities and social sciences in Chinese universities.

The plan has been in operation for two years, and has yielded intense competition among universities.

To achieve the aforementioned targets, three stages have been scheduled to implement the plan. Step one (1999–2000) focused exclusively on identifying 103 centers of research excellence. Step two (2001–2005) includes comprehensive policy implementation. This stage aims in particular to ensure that the overall research strength of the selected centers achieves leading level within China by 2005. Those failing to do so will be excluded from the plan, and new centers with recent excellent performance in similar areas will be added. The final stage will start in 2006.

It should be mentioned that while the plan is basically an initiative of the central government, with the ministry playing a major role in administration and finance, it is a "fishing" project (as it is jokingly referred to in Chinese higher education circles): to generate revenue from all possible sources.

Characteristics of the Plan

The plan has been in operation for two years, and has yielded intense competition among universities, which is welcomed by the Chinese government. According to the ministry, such competition helps use financial and human resources at different levels where they are needed most. The 103 listed centers are spread across 40 universities, of which 27 are under the direct administration of the ministry, and 13 are under other ministries and provincial governments. Despite their dissimilar administrative jurisdiction and geographical location, they share a number of features.

Together, these centers have shaped a general disciplinary structure that combines basic theoretical subjects and applied areas, including traditional disciplines and new multidisciplinary studies. The overall proportion of theory-oriented centers is nearly 50 percent, and traditional disciplines comprise a high proportion. For example, the Centers of Ancient Chinese Documents (Peking University), Classical Chinese Literature (Fudan University), History and Theories of History (Beijing Normal University), and Chinese Language History (Zhejiang University) are all ranked at the top of the list.

New multidisciplinary studies centers have also attracted much attention. The Center for China's Financial and Banking Policy (People's University), for instance, was included for its effort to combine finance with banking, linking theoretical research to policy studies. Similarly, Chinese Language and Modern Application (East China Normal University) is a center that emphasizes the combination of theoretical linguistic inquiry with current practice. While theoretical inquiries consider potential applications, applied studies are strengthening their conceptual foundations. For example, Nankai University's Political Economy Center goes far beyond a traditional economics framework by focusing on other more application-oriented issues such as the Internet and economic simulations. The same can be said of the Center for Developmental Psychology at Beijing Normal University.

Themes with theoretical and practical significance for current economic, political, and cultural development have been emphasized. The plan has included the Centers for Socialist Market Economy (Fudan University), State-Ownership Economy (Jilin University), and Social Welfare (Wuhan University). As for the area of law and order, of crucial interest in contemporary China, the plan has selected the Centers for Political Development and Government Administration (Peking University), Social Administration (Zhongshan University), and Criminal and Legal Studies (People's University). Education and culture are also included in the plan, in an effort to be relevant to the current situation. A number of large research centers have been established as the result of the plan. The most prominent ones include the Centers for the Theories of Deng Xiao-ping (Peking University), Ethics and Morality (People's University), Rural Education (Northwest Normal University), and University Moral Education (Tsinghua University).

The listed centers are not confined to those with existing records of excellence. Programs that currently

lack first-class research achievement but show promise and solid resource infrastructure enjoy special privileges. In this respect, issues relevant to China's development in the 21st century are especially obvious targets of the plan. The Centers for Rural Development (Central China Normal University), Northwest Historical Environment and Economic and Social Development (Northwest Normal University), China's Minorities (Central Minority University), International Law (Wuhan University), and World Trade Organization Studies (Foreign Trade University) all fall squarely into this category. Others include the Centers for Media Studies (Beijing Radio University), Chinese Folklore (Sichuan University), and Huizhou Culture Studies (Anhui University).

Conclusion

The plan echoes an international trend in educational restructuring: ongoing devolution in finance and administration with increasing central government influence on curricula. This major initiative to promote research deserves our particular attention as China's scholars in the humanities and social sciences have achieved far less international visibility than their colleagues in engineering and the natural sciences. The humanities and social sciences, however, serve as a more accurate barometer of the extent of China's progress in the internationalization of higher education.

Along with other features, the plan stresses China's practical needs. This would appear to be reasonable in China, where problematic issues demand urgent practical responses and concentration of limited resources is designed to "use the best steel to make the knife's edge." However, one thing is certain: the plan will exercise an enormous impact in China on the humanities and social sciences in the years to come. ■

University Autonomy from the Top Down: Lessons from Russia

Olga Bain

Olga Bain recently received a Ph.D. from the State University of New York at Buffalo. E-mail: <ob_olga@usa.net>.

In Russia and the other newly independent states of Eastern Europe and Central Asia the concept of university autonomy was rekindled by the new democratic ethos and economic policies that encouraged initiative and responsibility on the part of individuals and enterprises. At the same time, the central governments of most of these states faced severe financial constraints resulting in reduced support for most public services including higher education. For example, state support for higher education in Russia decreased threefold in real terms between 1992 and August 1998 before the rouble default. While the government's policy of greater university autonomy was not consistently spelled out in a single document, the state nevertheless granted numerous freedoms to individual universities on matters that prior to the mid-1980s had been the exclusive prerogative of the central government.

Universities had no choice but to make the best use possible of increased legal and financial autonomy.

Universities had no choice but to make the best use possible of increased legal and financial autonomy. My recent study focused on three institutions that adopted distinctive strategies enabling them to fare relatively well in the new system.

St. Petersburg State University, Russia's oldest and one of its most-renowned universities, was faced with declining enrollments and a sharp cutback in federal support from the early 1990s. The new rector, who was appointed in 1994, decided that the key to St. Petersburg's future was to regain its position as a top institution deserving special treatment from the central government. Accordingly the university announced plans for a highly visible celebration of its 275th anniversary, which included invitations to many prominent academics and politicians both from within Russia and around the world. Drawing on its extensive cultural capital, the university won recognition as a special institution by the National Duma with the corollary privilege of receiving a level of support per student several times that of the average university. At the same time, individual faculties of St. Petersburg University were able to develop many new revenue-generating programs.

At Novosibirsk State Technical University, radical restructuring in response to changing market conditions was the response. With the collapse of the economy, this technically oriented institution lost large sums of research revenue. As the job market for engineers eroded, the university experienced plummeting enrollments and thus faced the prospect of a sharp cutback in state subsidies in the early 1990s. In 1990, the newly elected rector, who had prior experience as a chief operating officer in an industrial corporation, proposed a full-scale review of the university's mission. The faculty responded to this call and worked harmoniously and efficiently to identify new approaches. Out of the ensuing review emerged a