

and for recruiting doctoral students. Since 1998, Xiangtan University, for example, has been determined to “win permission for doctoral programs at all costs,” and by 2004 this policy resulted in nine programs. As the number of doctoral students is directly linked to government appropriation, the growing number of fee-paying doctoral students is a substantial contributor to university revenues.

A related phenomenon is the relationships and subtle dealings between universities and people in business and government, many of whom are enrolled in doctoral studies, but not all of them perform the work of degree programs. Cash, power, and influence become corrupting factors and compromise academic standards. One doctoral student at the Beijing University of Science and Technology completed an entire thesis within a week. Such practices have compromised the quality of doctoral students’ training. This explains why an examiner from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences became such a newsworthy figure when he rejected a student’s doctoral thesis in 2003.

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CONCLUSION

Corruption in higher education relates closely to institutional aspects of China’s system. The effect on higher education development and on the entire nation’s modernization is devastating, particularly because science and education have been officially identified as strategically significant in China’s nation-building. My research has repeatedly confirmed that many Chinese diaspora scholars with good intentions to return and serve China shrink back at the sight of corruption.

Corruption also greatly hinders the internationalization of China’s higher education. It is even more detrimental to scholarly exchanges between the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong: Hong Kong has played a role as the “beachhead” of China’s higher education internationalization by providing crucial benefits to the mainland while maintaining its own sense of standards.

An analysis of corruption in China’s higher education demonstrates how the corporate “Western” managerial and market accountability mechanisms are becoming layered on top of a more traditional accountability based on personal relationships in the form of *Guanxi*. The result has been corruption of accountability procedures in China’s current higher education system. The modified Western and traditional modes of accountability operate under different sets of rules, and the two are in constant tension. This has been confirmed by an overwhelming number of respondents in my research within recent years. ■

China’s Universities on the Global Stage: Perspectives of University Leaders

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The Chinese government has had a policy of giving priority funding to its top universities since 1993, when it announced the 211 Higher Education Project, which opened the way for universities across the country to make strategic bids for acceptance among China’s top 100 institutions and be funded to reach world-class standards in the 21st century. At the time of Peking University’s centenary in May 1998, the 985 World-Class University Project was launched; it has continued to concentrate high-level funding on a much smaller number of top universities.

In July 2004, we interviewed the senior vice presidents of three universities in the Shanghai area that are among the nine top-ranking institutions first selected for the 985 Project: Fudan University, Shanghai’s leading comprehensive university; Shanghai Jiaotong University, which has a high profile in science and engineering; and Zhejiang University, in nearby Hangzhou. We also interviewed the president of East China Normal University, one of two national leaders in teacher education. These university leaders agreed that Chinese universities should be taking active steps to raise China’s cultural profile consonant with the country’s growing economic role. At the same time they noted that scientific achievements and reputation have been the main focus of their efforts to reach world-class standing and that Chinese intellectuals continue to be hampered by limits on intellectual freedom—limits that constrain initiatives in the area of thought and culture. Each of these leading figures gave us a somewhat different picture of recent aspirations and achievements.

CONSTRAINTS ON THE NURTURING OF THINKERS

Fudan’s vice president described one of Fudan’s greatest strengths as a tradition of academic independence going back to its early years as a private university, which will be celebrated in its upcoming centenary year in 2005. He stressed Fudan’s responsibility for nurturing “thinkers” first and foremost, yet expressed frustration at the fact that there are still many “forbidden zones” of research on health issues such as AIDS and SARS, also in politically sensitive areas such as the Tiananmen tragedy of 1989 and the Cultural Revolution of 1966. He drew attention to the University of Tokyo’s movingly

worded new charter, put into effect in March 2003, and told us he was urging Fudan's president to have Fudan articulate a charter giving clear expression to its academic mission in time for its centenary anniversary. In terms of leadership, he expressed a quiet pride in the fact that senior appointments are now based entirely on academic criteria and explained how the president of Peking University, noted biologist Xu Zhihong, had chaired Fudan's recent search committee for dean of the School of Life Sciences, one of the areas where Fudan is particularly well known.

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A MERGED UNIVERSITY

The vice president of Zhejiang University (Zheda) in Hangzhou emphasized the university's long-standing ethos of "seeking truth" (*Qiushi*), going back to its origins as the Qiushi Academy in 1897; and the leadership of a visionary president of the 1930s, the internationally known geologist Zhu Kezhen. He noted Zheda's proven record for nurturing leaders who are both innovative and able to "get things done" (*ganhuo*). Under the Soviet influences of the 1950s, Zheda had been turned into an engineering institution, with its faculties of arts and science, medicine, and law converted into separate higher institutions. Their reintegration into Zheda in 1998 has been seen as one of the most successful university mergers of the recent period and has stimulated the leadership to move actively onto the global stage. The university has recently taken on responsibility for the Asia Pacific leadership of UNESCO's Global Universities Network of Innovation and participates actively in the Association of Pacific Rim Universities, which seeks to interact with the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum. On the cultural front, Zheda has recently appointed the Harvard-based and world-renowned Confucian philosopher, Tu Weiming, as a visiting professor. The dean of the Faculty of Education is actively developing an "area of excellence" proposal to foster Chinese culture and education for priority funding at the national level.

NEW CULTURAL INITIATIVES

Shanghai Jiaotong University has a historical standing equal in prestige to that of Zheda, going back to its founding in 1896 by an outstanding Chinese industrialist keen to promote applied sciences. Like Zheda, Shanghai Jiaotong suffered serious losses while conforming to the Soviet model, but it has built up its present preeminence through innovative program initiatives of its own, rather than by undertaking a merger. Its original strengths in basic sciences and engineering are now complemented by relatively new schools of management, humanities, media and design, public administration and international

affairs, law, and foreign languages, which highlight aspects of teaching and research that benefit from the university's rich technological traditions. It has also set up its own new medical school. The vice president emphasized the fact that the university's mission, which is undergoing continuous discussion, arises from certain widely shared basic principles—no tolerance of mediocrity, support for innovation and creativity, and a high awareness of society's trust in the outstanding quality of its graduates.

East China Normal University is a much younger institution, having been founded just two years after the 1949 revolution, based on the French/Soviet model of a normal (teacher training) university. It is nationally recognized as one of the top two institutions having a high profile in education, as well as the arts and sciences. The university's president remarked that while China's history of achievements in civilization and culture is simply incomparable, science and technology tends to dominate all contemporary discussion about universities reaching world-class standards. He outlined a national policy that will call on the comprehensive universities selected for the 985 Project to dedicate 15 percent of project funding to the humanities. Universities of science and technology, such as Shanghai Jiaotong, will be required to commit 5 percent to the humanities. Because such institutions lack a strong tradition in the humanities, they are likely to use this funding to "recruit" senior scholars from institutions such as East China Normal University, causing a kind of double threat to universities with strong humanities programs that have not yet been included in the 985 Project.

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CONCLUSION

It would not be wise to generalize from such a small sample of universities, yet it is evident that institutions shaped by the priority given to science and technology under Soviet influence in the 1950s seem to be in the best position to take the lead in new cultural initiatives. Interestingly, six of the top nine institutions in the 985 Project are in this category, while only three are traditional comprehensive universities.

Note: The first nine leading universities included in the 985 Project include three traditional comprehensive universities, Peking University, Fudan University and Nanjing University; as well as six technologically oriented universities, Tsinghua University, Shanghai Jiaotong University, Xi'an Jiaotong University, Zhejiang University, China University of Science and Technology in Hefei, Anhui Province, and Harbin University of Technology in Heilongjiang Province. ■