

the Australian National University in the federal capital, Canberra.

CONCLUSION

The threat of a downturn in international student enrollments, as well as recent major losses incurred by IDP Education, a marketing company owned jointly by the Australian universities, has slightly dampened the buoyant enthusiasm of Australian universities about the future of international student enrollments. But most universities still appear to be optimistic and continue with plans for future initiatives. Moreover, recent studies of student preferences have been encouraging. One such study reported in October 2005 that—in interviews that JWT Education, a research firm, conducted with 332 undergraduates from 10 Asian markets—Australia's popularity as a student study destination had increased appreciably since 2000. ■

Employment and China's Private Universities: Key Concerns

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China currently has more than 1,200 private higher learning institutions. Riding the tide of higher education expansion, about 50 private universities have become *wanren daxue*, meaning they are universities enrolling between 10,000 and 35,000 students. Regardless of the size of their institution, the big concern of Chinese private university students is their job opportunity. From 2003 to 2005, the author visited a dozen private universities throughout China. Interviews with students indicate that private university students are very worried about their employment prospects.

Indeed, they should have concerns: while only 70 to 80 percent of public university graduates find jobs upon graduation, private university students have just 60 to 70 percent employment rates upon graduation. Graduates of private institutions often end up with jobs that pay from 600 to 900 yuan a month, an amount many people with no higher education can easily earn in a wide range of jobs. Since reemerging in the country after 1982, without government support, private universities in China have had a lower social status and are generally held to be of substandard quality. Due to these factors, their graduates often face discrimination in the job market. Once they learn that job applicants graduated from a private university, employers lose interest in or are reluctant to hire

them. Encounters with graduates who have faced such problems have intensified the concern of students currently studying at private universities.

STRATEGIES TO INCREASE JOB OPPORTUNITIES

To survive and expand, private universities give top priority to their students' employment opportunities. They regularly host job fairs on campus and form collaborative relationships with businesses. Universities have focused on training students with: (a) practical skills that allow students to find what they call "a cross between white-collar and blue-collar jobs"; (b) multiple skills that include typing, English-language translation, driving, etc.; and (c) specialized skills for a niche market—for example, real estate management, which is on high demand with China's rapid increase in the construction of commercial residential communities. The universities also try to provide their students with "sufficient theoretical knowledge and creative ability," as one university puts it. Some universities offer courses on starting private businesses and invite successful graduates back to share their experiences.

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With these strategies, some universities sustained high employment rates for years. For example, Beijing City University, Yellow River University of Science and Technology, and Shanghai Jianqiao Vocational Technical College are reported to have achieved more than a 90 percent employment rate for years. In 2005, the Chinese University Association Net (<http://www.cuaa.net/2005mb/fenlei/>) produced a ranking of private universities by employment rate. Twenty-six universities were listed as having employment rates from 95 to 100 percent in 2004.

COMPETITION AND STUDENT MANAGEMENT

One factor behind the low employment rates of private university graduates relates to the highly uniform subject areas offered by private universities. For example, most private universities shy away from the natural sciences, which require equipment and laboratories, and almost all offer programs in international trade, computer science, accounting, finance, foreign languages, as well as other fields. The lack of program diversity creates fierce competition among the graduates of private universities for similar jobs.

Private university students tend to possess lower academic achievement levels and poor discipline. Grouped at the bottom 25 percent of students taking the national university entrance exam, these individuals are usually admitted by private universities after all public universities have chosen their enrollees. In our fieldwork, private-sector students are usually described as "having poor study habits, lacking self-control and self-dis-

cipline, having low interest in study, lacking big goals in life," and so forth. To shape their students' behavior, many private universities administer "military style" management, which means students are monitored in the classroom as well as in their dormitories. They fence in their campuses and do not allow students to go off campus during the week, and staff check dorms every day to learn which students did not return to sleep. Students are strictly monitored for their class attendance records, and class directors, who are teachers assigned to work with students in all aspect of their lives, closely follow students' lives, constantly talking with them and organizing extracurricular activities to occupy their free time. Private universities use such measures to ensure their students acquire the needed skills and develop the discipline to be employable.

In another attempt to increase job opportunities for their students, private universities are moving toward establishing what they call "education conglomerates." Beijing Jili University has set up such a model. Jili University was founded by Jili Inc., which currently owns five other colleges and vocational technical schools. In addition, the corporation owns companies that manufacture cars, motorcycles, and other products and is also involved in the biological industry and tourism. By 2005, the Jili, Inc. intends to provide 8,000 to 10,000 jobs to the graduates of Jili University. Jili and other private universities are hoping to use this strategy to provide funding for the institutions to continue to survive and grow and also offer their graduates job opportunities.

CONCLUSION

In some parts of the country—such as Xi'an—private universities have leapt from their initial stage to form a "collective strength." Many have become huge campuses with 6,000 to 30,000 students and have won the recognition of society. Taking advantage of this new reality, they are trying to hire more-qualified teachers, raising the bar of their educational qualifications; they are also trying to hire more full-time teachers, increasing the ratio from 30–50 percent to 70–80 percent. Universities with good graduate employment rates are also beginning to raise the bar for student admissions, although most private universities remain highly unselective and accept nearly all applicants.

The future of China's private universities will continue to hinge upon their employment record. They will need to improve their teaching quality and administrative efficiency,

paying attention to student needs. Private universities are already setting goals to strengthen their niche programs, although they face strong competition from public universities. The family-style management, which characterizes many private universities, needs to be reformed to give more power to faculty and administrators. As long as there are diverse needs from China's booming market economy, private universities will continue to exist and grow. ■

Private Universities and Government Policy in Japan

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Japanese private universities have recently been said to be losing ground to national (including local public) universities. In June 2005, Hagi International University, a small private college in the rural western part of Japan, was forced to start a legal rehabilitation process to avoid the closing of campus due to a sharp decline in enrollments. According to a government agency (the Promotional and Mutual Aid Corporation for Private Schools of Japan), 160 of the total 542 four-year private universities now have lower student enrollments than the enrollment quota (*teiin*) approved by the Ministry of Education. This situation threatens many small institutions that rely exclusively on tuition revenue for operating.

Most observers attribute this situation to the declining college-age population, myopic strategies of private institutions (such as investing in a new campus with a small and ill-focused program despite fashionable names), a lack of strong endowments, the low quality of teaching, and other issues. However, the demographic change has had an uneven impact on the higher education system, with the biggest blow affecting the lowest-ranked institutions. This situation seems to have emerged from the inconsistency between government deregulations, the demographic trend, and the strategies of private universities to survive in the industry.

THE QUESTION OF DEREGULATION

Japanese government has been deregulating the higher education system over the past 10 years. However, even after the recent major reform in 2004, the ministry still maintains the authority to approve the establishment of new institutions or major academic programs (*gakubu*) at any type of institution by reviewing the proposed curriculum, facility, faculty-student ratio, and expected enrollments.

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