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 workforce, 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.

Characteristics of the Plan
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.

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.

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.

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.