

cent), Catholic Church organizations own 3 (12.5 percent), while the Islamic organizations also own 3. The rising profile of indigenous Pentecostal churches that own private universities is especially noteworthy. These churches have large membership and enormous wealth; they are concentrated in the southwest region of the country, which is where the majority of the private universities are located.

Enrollments show significant potential for growth—at least based on evidence from one of oldest new private universities. Madonna University, which graduated 390 students during its first convocation ceremony in 2004, had 7,000 students as of

*The ownership of private universities in Nigeria is dominated by religious organizations.*

2005.

Tuition fees range from US\$769 to US\$3,285 annually. Some universities include meals and textbooks with their fees while others do not. The fees charged differ across universities and also across disciplines in the same universities. As in Kenya and Uganda, both high and low fee structures exist side by side. Also as in Kenya, Nigeria has some American-type high-cost private universities. Three notable ones are the Pan-African University in Lagos, ABTI-American University in Yola, and Igbinedion University in Okada. This price differentiation represents a normal feature of a market-driven higher education system, especially with diverse ownership structures.

#### ANY VALUE ADDED THUS FAR?

Currently setting the pace in some of their services and functions, private universities have become a challenge to their public counterparts. So far, they have continued to maintain stable academic calendars unlike the often-disrupted public universities. The new private universities have nipped in the bud the secret-cult organizations present among students in public universities; the clashes, violence, and killings involving these groups have become a regular feature for well over a decade now. The teaching and learning environment has generally been better in the private than in the public universities. With respect to standards, on average the privates have done much better in the National Universities Commission's accreditation process than their public counterparts. For example, in the commission's 2005 accreditation, none of the programs evaluated in five private universities failed accreditation as did many of their public counterparts. The 2006 accreditation again confirmed the higher rating of private universities. Here may well lie the greatest contributions made by the privates so far, as the emerging institutional competition would eventually help to restore the lost glory of higher education in Nigeria—after the devastation wrought partly by the long period of military dictatorship. A private quality edge would also counter the

more prevalent African situation in which the top universities continue to be located in the public sector. ■

## Chinese Higher Education in an Open-Door Era

PHILIP G. ALTBACH

*Philip G. Altbach is Monan professor of higher education and director of the Center for International Higher Education at Boston College.*

China is opening its doors to foreign higher education providers at a time when competition and markets are being expanded domestically. Today, about 1,400 foreign higher education institutions have been approved by various education authorities in China to operate in the country. This large number brings both promise and peril. The opportunity to bring new academic ideas and practices into the country may also be interpreted as a powerful invitation for problems and crises.

As Chinese higher education is being increasingly deregulated internally, the Ministry of Education is permitting foreign providers to operate. Many Chinese universities face financial shortfalls and thus explore new ways of generating revenues. Among these new market ideas are linkages with foreign providers—the thought being that an overseas connection will bring prestige, a sense of cosmopolitanism, and perhaps some new educational concepts. The central government, provincial and municipal authorities, and university administrators have all embraced internationalization for many reasons—the most important of which are commercial benefits and the need to provide access to those seeking a postsecondary degree.

#### FOREIGN MOTIVATIONS AND PROGRAMS

China's expanded freedom of access coincides with a growing interest in China among other countries. Again, the main foreign motivation is commercial, but there are mixed rationales from abroad. Universities worldwide see China as a major market—for recruiting students to study abroad, for "buying" some of the brightest Chinese scientists for academe and industry, and now for exporting educational programs and institutions. Chinese policymakers and institutions should remember that while foreign partners' own purposes and motives may often coincide with Chinese interests, it is possible that sometimes they might not.

Foreign institutions and governments have other motivations as well. A few foreign universities have strong historical links to China, and their motives are mainly academic. For example, the Hopkins-Nanjing master's program has been operating for more than two decades, and the ties between the

prestigious American Johns Hopkins University and Nanjing University ensure strong academic values and quality. Similarly, a longstanding linkage between a consortium of American Jesuit universities and Peking University in the area of business studies has produced joint degrees and a strongly collaborative curriculum. Other foreign universities are interested in providing a place for their own students to study in China—to learn about language, history, and culture, as well as to provide direct experience in a rapidly changing Chinese academic, social, and business environment. These programs are part of the internationalization strategy of many American and European universities.

Most foreign academic institutions are interested in China as a “market” for their educational products. They sell degrees, curricula, and other educational programs, often in partnership with Chinese institutions. They also offer opportunities for Chinese students to study abroad. Now, with fewer restrictions placed on foreign educational entrepreneurial activities in China, the scope of foreign activities will expand and will include foreign branch campuses.

#### WHO COMES?

While there has been no accurate census of foreign educational providers in China, it is possible to make a few generalizations. Most of the foreign academic institutions interested in the “China market” are not the top institutions in their own countries. Further, the prestigious foreign schools tend to link up with the most prominent Chinese universities in metropolitan areas, while the others mostly focus on provincial areas. At the top end, Yale and Cornell in the United States and several

*As Chinese higher education is being increasingly deregulated internally, the Ministry of Education is permitting foreign providers to operate.*

Australian institutions are now working in China with a variety of motivations—including providing opportunities for their own students and faculty to learn about China, expanding their “brand” to the Chinese market, and recruiting top Chinese students and staff to their home campuses.

For the United States, many of the lower-prestige colleges and universities tend to collaborate with smaller provincial institutions in China—precisely those institutions that have a minimal understanding of the complex US academic marketplace and hierarchy and little knowledge of their partners. The US institutions, for their part, want to earn money while providing a useful educational program. In Australia and to some extent the United Kingdom, universities have been told to recruit international students and establish overseas academic partnerships and branches to earn income to make up for reduced government allocations. Foreign institutions generally provide academic programs that are inexpensive to set up

and operate and can quickly attract a local market willing to pay for the product. Business management, information technology, and related fields are particularly popular for these reasons.

The Japanese experience with foreign transplants may be useful. In the 1980s, a number of mostly lower-tier American colleges and universities entered the Japanese market at the invitation of local governments or institutions in provincial parts of the country. When these US schools found that recruiting local students was more difficult than anticipated and that the Ministry of Education was not so friendly, they pulled out of the country. Without question, if most foreign partners find that the Chinese market proves difficult in terms of earning money or for operational reasons, they will withdraw as quickly as they entered.

#### ACCREDITATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

In the United States, almost all academic institutions are accredited by the nongovernmental US regional accrediting agencies. While these accreditors are quite effective and respected by the higher education community and government authorities, they do not provide any assessment of quality. They provide a basic floor of academic performance below

*For the United States, many of the lower-prestige colleges and universities tend to collaborate with smaller provincial institutions in China*

which an institution cannot go and still receive accreditation. Thus, many unimpressive institutions, including some in the new for-profit sector, do receive accreditation. In much of the world, quality assurance is at an early stage of development, and it generally provides a fairly basic assessment of performance. Thus, Chinese reliance on the mechanisms will provide only an assurance that foreign institutions do not fall below a rather modest standard. Further, some current efforts to provide international quality assurance standards may serve the interests of those providing higher education services rather than those at the receiving end.

#### WHAT TO DO?

China needs to carefully consider the new influx of academic institutions and programs. It is a mistake to simply open the door wide and hope that the “market” will take care of any problems that might occur. Chinese national needs, the “common good” as a major goal for higher education, and quality assurance need protection in any foreign academic relationships.

The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) of the World Trade Organization, currently being negotiated as part of the WTO Doha round, can have significant implications for China. GATS proponents seek to force countries to open their doors to foreign academic institutions and programs from

abroad. It is in China's interests to ensure that its national needs are kept in mind and that China, at least in the foreseeable future, has only a small export market for its educational programs and institutions.

It is not at all clear that accredited but low-quality foreign colleges and universities are serving students or the Chinese academic system well. There should be a working system to evaluate foreign academic institutions seeking to enter China—including a thorough assessment of quality and an understanding of the position of the institution in its home environment. Such an arrangement, set up by Chinese researchers or with assistance from objective foreign experts, could help to evaluate potential foreign partners. Singapore, for example, has developed a list of overseas institutions considered appropriate for government-sponsored scholarships or other collaborative higher education programs.

Consideration should be given to the institutional motivations as well as the terms and conditions of any agreements with foreign partners or schools desiring to work in China. Is a foreign institution offering its best quality programs and staff? Is there appropriate accountability for performance? Do the programs offer more than the prestige of an international linkage? Is staff and institutional development part of the agreement? What is the "business plan" of the foreign provider? Questions need to be asked to ensure that the best interests of the host institution and the students are well served.

It is likely that in some cases local institutional or government authorities may fail to adequately examine overseas collaborations or may lack the expertise to make appropriate judgments. National or at least provincial agencies should have

*China is not alone in facing difficult decisions concerning foreign academic relationships*

authority to review overseas programs. The review process should be as transparent as possible.

Decisions concerning foreign academic relationships or granting permission to foreign institutions to operate in a country are important. They have significant implications for the local higher education community—a good partner can bring new ideas and good quality education. An ineffective link may be costly to host institutions. And perhaps most relevant, students may not be well served. China is not alone in facing difficult decisions concerning foreign academic relationships. India, Malaysia, South Africa, and other countries find themselves in similar circumstances in an increasingly globalized world of higher education. Despite an internationalized environment, higher education remains a key responsibility of nations to supervise to ensure that their national interests are served and both access and quality are preserved. ■

## Internationalizing Higher Education in South Africa

ARIEL LIBHABER AND RYAN M. GREENE

*Ariel Libhaber is an education policy analyst and consultant to the Education Policy Unit at the University of the Witwatersrand, and a research associate at Brandeis University. E-mail: libhaber@brandeis.edu. Ryan M. Greene is an ABD visiting scholar at the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria and a PhD candidate in international education policy studies at the University of Maryland, USA. E-mail: rmgreene@umd.edu.*

Apartheid clearly left a very unequal higher education system of privileged and disadvantaged institutions. However, in just over 10 years we find a changing scenario of newly formed inclusive public universities, universities of technology, and a growing number of private institutions responding to a new market.

### THE ADVENT OF INTERNATIONALIZATION

One of the most salient features of this new context of higher education involves coming out of isolation and joining the global community. South African higher education has clearly been developing new international paradigms, programs, and relationships. Lately, the country has also become a favored destination for foreign students, mainly from other parts of Africa, seeking postgraduate degrees and better job opportunities. The number of international students studying in South Africa stood at about 14,124 foreign nationals in 1995. However, the number rose sharply over the recent decade to stand at 46,687 in 2002, representing a total of 7 percent of the entire higher education enrollments. A new market has opened for local institutions that perceive the influx of international students as both a source of diversity and revenue for their campuses.

As part of the realities of globalization, higher education faces increasing pressure to compete both locally and internationally: for better students, faculty, funding, and research opportunities. South African higher education, as most systems of higher learning around the world, falls under the open-market ideas of the General Agreement on Trade in Services. This and other market forces have clearly impacted on expansion of the private higher education sector and the new funding constraints in the public sector.

As the education market expands, so does the demand for other products—leading to the growth of the private sector. However, private institutions comprise only a low percentage of the nation's enrollments, mostly attracting white students seeking an alternative route into the job market or degrees they can use overseas—since most degrees offered are in the areas