

Chinese Higher Education in a Time of Transition

General Description of the Collaboration

For the past five years, the Department of Educational Administration and Human Resource Development (Higher Education Administration Program) has been working and collaborating with the Chinese national Academy of Educational Administration. The National Academy of Educational Administration (NAEA) reports directly to the Chinese Ministry of Education and is the national training arm for higher education administrators throughout China. NAEA and Texas A&M University's (TAMU) Department of Educational Administration and Human Resource Development (EAHR) have formed a multi-year partnership to develop research and training opportunities around all aspects of higher education administration. There are many interesting questions revolving around macro changes in the environment of the Chinese system of higher education. Similarly, U.S. higher education is facing many significant issues that need to be addressed, many of which have an international component.

The current collaboration has been ongoing since 1999 resulting from a visit of officials of the NAEA begin conversations around potential collaborative opportunities. As a consequence of these discussions, the Department of Educational Administration and Human Resource Development welcomed a Visiting Scholar for the NAEA who studied with faculty in the Department. This Visiting Scholar, with the encouragement of the NAEA, then applied for our doctoral program in Higher Education Administration and was accepted. That individual is now completing her last semester of coursework and beginning her dissertation. In November of 2000, Dr. Bryan Cole, then Professor and Department Head was invited to lecture at the NAEA in Beijing and Jiao Tung University in Xi An. Further discussions of collaborations were also conducted with the staff of the NAEA. In September of 2002, the Executive Vice President of NAEA and members of his staff visited Texas A&M University to work with Dr. Cole and other Departmental faculty to develop specific plans for collaborative ventures. Primary in these discussions was the NAEA's desire to train a number of higher education administrators from several research universities in student affairs administration. This training was seen as a significant priority of Chinese higher education in light of the changing dynamics of Chinese higher education and the changing relationships between students and institutions. Other plans for collaboration included two TAMU faculty (Dr. Yvonna Lincoln and Dr. Carolyn Clark) going too Beijing in the Summer of 2003 to give lectures at NAEA on qualitative research methods and translation of Dr. Lincoln's book on Qualitative Inquiry. Due to the SARS situation those lectures were postponed.

Benefits of SINO-US Collaboration

Mutual benefits of collaboration between Chinese and U. S. higher education provide opportunities for building understanding and enhancing higher education in both countries. Comparative education has long been an area of study to self-assess and

develop improvements based on these self-assessments in light of educational successes in other settings. Additionally, pursuits of common agendas, e.g. research, addressing common problems and building individual and institutional capacity, offer expanded and synergistic approaches to the complex issues facing higher education today and in the future. Improved higher education in turn can result in increased economic development and improved quality of life.

Existing Success Stories

As noted above, the following activities have resulted in successful collaboratives:

- The work of the visiting scholar and subsequent enrollment of the scholar in our doctoral program
- Dr. Cole's lectures at the NAEA
- Dr. Kelli Peck-Parrott, EDAD faculty member, visited NAEA in September, 2003 to work with NAEA officials on finalizing the curriculum for the Student Affairs Seminar and to provide lectures on student affairs administration
- In October – November of 2003, 15 Chinese higher education administrators attended a three-week training seminar for learning about student affairs administration. This program was supported both by the NAEA and the Chinese Ministry of Education and was a great success. As Professor Yu Jiaqing, Executive Vice President of NAEA wrote to Dr. Cole after the program, "this project between NAEA and TAMU is a precious sapling cultivated with our joint effort and will no doubt grow into a big tree." Feedback from seminar participants, which included representatives from NAEA, the Chinese Ministry of Education and twelve of China's major universities, was exceptional and confirmed the value of such collaborative ventures. The China-U. S. Relations Conference provided an outstanding culmination to this seminar.
- The Higher Education Research Roundtable as part of the China-U.S. relations Conference which was attended by Min Wei Fang, Executive Vice President of Peking University, the 15 Chinese student affairs administrators and many TAMU and other higher education administrators
- Translation of Dr. Lincoln's book on Qualitative Inquiry into Chinese

Future Collaborative Projects

In the next few years, NAEA and TAMU will jointly explore topics such as: academic affairs, research development, student affairs management, university governance, curricular change, and policy. In the near term, plans are in the works for Dr. Lincoln and Dr. Clark to go to the NAEA in Beijing during summer, 2004 to present the seminar on qualitative inquiry which was postponed in 2003. Discussions are also being conducted to develop a training program for American school teachers to learn about Chinese language, history and culture.