

22 March 2005

Senator Steve Hutchins
The Chair
Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee
Suite S1.57
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator

In response to your call for submissions to the Inquiry into Australia's Relations with China, as Dean of the Faculty of Commerce at Charles Sturt University (CSU), I would like to contribute to the Inquiry by providing the Committee with the following information about CSU's strong links with Chinese educational and research institutions. This type of collaborative partnership with countries is extremely important in the internationalisation of Australian education and is a strategic focus for CSU.

Charles Sturt University is a bold and innovative leader in providing an accessible, adaptable and challenging learning environment to develop graduates and research that meet the needs of our regional communities in Australia and of our region of the world. For example, as a member of the Association of Commonwealth Universities, CSU has international links with institutions in countries including China, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand.

In 2003, CSU Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ian Goulter, accompanied the Federal Minister for Education, Science and Training, Dr Brendan Nelson, on a six-day visit to China and India. The delegation of senior Australian educators included the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training, senior members of the Minister's staff, Vice-Chancellors of three other universities, Chairs of the Australian Council of TAFE Directors, the Australian Council of Private Education and Training (ACPET) and a representative of the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee. In China, the delegation met with the Chinese Minister of Education and Vice Minister of Education (International Cooperation), the Chinese Minister of Science and Technology and the Head of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. The trip proved to be very fruitful, resulting in closer education ties between the two countries through an historic China-Australia agreement to mutually recognise higher education qualifications.

Chinese Partner Institutions

In 2004, CSU enrolled over 35,000 students, approximately 20 percent of whom were from overseas with Malaysia, China, United Kingdom, Canada and Hong Kong ranking as the top five sources. We have approximately 6,000 students in partnership agreements both onshore and offshore. In 2003, more than 20,000 students from China (onshore and offshore) were studying with Australian universities, and China has become the fourth largest education export market for Australian higher education (*Campus Review*, 18 March 2003, pg 5).

In collaboration with a number of partners, Charles Sturt University has been expanding its operations in China. As part of this process, we have been successful in having four of our degree offerings formally recognised by the Chinese Government. This is pleasing as only 17 Australian degrees in an overall total of 80 overseas degree programs have been formally recognised by the Chinese Central Government.

Partner institutions, delivering CSU courses in English include: Tianjin University of Commerce; Yangzhou University; Changchun Taxation College; Lixin Accounting Institute; Shanghai Finance College; and Yunnan University of Economics and Finance.

Also worthy of mention is CSU's Faculty of Health Studies' close collaboration with the radiography profession in Hong Kong resulting in the development of courses to meet the needs of local radiographers. The University offers undergraduate and postgraduate courses in nursing, postgraduate courses in medical imaging, health services management, medical laboratory science and emergency management in Hong Kong an initiative that has resulted in one third of Hong Kong radiographers being graduates of CSU. CSU also provides qualifications to personnel of the Hong Kong Police Force and offers a Master of Emergency Management with the Hong Kong Fire Service.

Student and Staff Exchange

Academic and administrative staff from our Chinese partner institutions come to CSU at Bathurst on an educational exchange program focussed on the development of teaching skills and gaining an understanding of research and the CSU culture. In addition, CSU has welcomed a leadership role in university management, with a delegation of 22 senior education administrators from all over China visiting CSU's Bathurst campus in 2004 to learn about the management of a multi-campus university.

There is also a CSU exchange program for students under the Universities Mobility in the Asia and Pacific (UMAP) scheme. CSU offers an integrated set of four subjects which Australian CSU students undertake towards the award of the Bachelor of Business.

Charles Sturt University intends to develop these important educational links with staff and students from Chinese educational institutions through an exchange program and in doing so contribute to the enhancement of relationships in the industry.

Research

There are clear synergies between CSU, a young university with the emerging research culture in China's university system, and Chinese educational institutions. Opportunities can be fruitful for both Australia and China. In particular, we have identified opportunities to share our leading edge agricultural research and education expertise, and we are continuing to develop these.

The Faculty of Commerce is continuing to develop its interest and expertise in Australia-China relations. Research currently underway is examining the effect on foreign direct investment of the proposed Australia-China Free Trade Agreement. The project will research the assessment of the proposed agreement by Chinese and Australian business. It is anticipated that this project will be completed towards the middle of 2006.

The Faculty is also organising an international conference in Bathurst on Australia-China business relations for April 2006. The university anticipates that this will be a significant international three-day forum in which Chinese and Australian experts will be invited as keynote speakers on the economic, financial, marketing and management issues in the Australia-China relationship. An international invitation will also be extended for academic papers on the theme of developing Australia-China business relations.

It is our intention to develop these dimensions of the university's relationship with China so that both countries can reap the benefits to be derived from this unique approach by an Australian university. It is important in building educational relationships that our partnership arrangements are enhanced, our courses become accredited with the Chinese Government, Chinese educators are assisted in their development, and collaborative research projects become part of the relationship. It is clear that there are economic advantages to Australia flowing from the expansion of the higher education industry into China. However, we would

also like to point out to the Committee that there are considerable advantages of mutual benefit as well. These are important in building long-term trust between nations.

Recommendations

- 1 That Charles Sturt University's continuing role and expertise in the Chinese higher education system result in an involvement in any future government policy development regarding the future of the Australia-China partnership in higher education.
- 2 That the Australian Federal Government explore the provision of funding for collaborative Australian-Chinese research initiatives
- 3 That the Australian Federal Government provide assistance, both financial and diplomatic, to facilitate Australian university recognition by the Chinese Government.
- 4 That the Australian Federal Government increase scholarship assistance for Australian students wishing to participate in Australia-China exchange programs.
- 5 That the Federal Government establish a network between relevant government departments and interested Australian universities to maintain contemporary information and contact points; a clearing house on policy initiatives and key players.

I hope that this brief outline of CSU activities and collaborative partnerships in China will offer the Inquiry insight into the current level of engagement between Australian higher education and Chinese educational and research institutions.

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