NEWS @ SEFI 3/2012

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40th SEFI Annual Conference - «Engineering Education 2020: MEET THE FUTURE» - Call for Papers

The objective of 40th Annual Conference is to contribute to the reflection on this near future and to recommend ways for the implementation of new and innovative actions. It takes place from the 23rd - 26th of September at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

Deadline for submission of abstracts: April 17, 2012
Notification of acceptance: May 7, 2012
Deadline for submission of papers: June 6, 2012
Notification of acceptance: June 30, 2012
Deadline for submission of final manuscripts: July 15, 2012

The deadline for early registration is June 30, 2012.

Contact:
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The Secretariat of the Faculty of Engineering, info@eng.auth.gr

In SEFI:
Francoise Côme, Secretary General, francoise.come@sefi.be
Jacques Schibler, Communication Officer, Communication_officer@sefi.be

New Members

We are pleased to introduce our new members

Individuals:

Deolinda Maria Lopes Dias Resterno, Coimbra Engineering Institute, Portugal
Razvan Rughinis, Polytechnic University of Bucurest, Romania
Bagiat Alkatarina, MIT, USA
Milos Cambal, Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava, Slovakia
Luis Manuel Sanchez Ruiz, Universidad Politécnica de Valencia, Spain
Alfredo Squarzoni, Universita di Genova, Italy
Thomas Redgman, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

Corporate Partners:

National Instruments, France

SEFI Workinggroups

SEFI CEE WG Workshop at IACEE conference in Valencia

Please join our SEFI CEE WG workshop in Valencia (ES) on the 16th May at 16.30 during the IACEE world conference. The exact room will be announced at the venue. They will look at the EU 2020 strategy and flags and consider what CEE can do to support to achieve the goals / tackle the grand challenges. From that starting point we will together define the goals and activities of the CEE WG for this and the coming years. The workshop will begin with a short introduction by Kirsti Miettinen (Aalto University) and Lars Frølund (Aarhus University).

For further information please contact Kirsti Miettinen at kirsti.miettinen@aalto.fi or Lars Frølund at frolland@adm.au.dk

Other activities of our Workinggroups

WG on Curriculum Development
SEFI CD WG in Alladolid, Spain, April 26-28, 2012. Urbano Dominguez, chairman of the WG, University of Valladolid

WG on Engineering Education Research
Nordic Network in Engineering Education Research seminar, Aalborg, Denmark, May 23-25, 2012. Prof. Robin Clark, Chairman of the WG, Ashton University

WG on Mathematics and EE
SEFI Mathematics Working Group Seminar in Salamanca, Spain, June 28-30, 2012. Dr. Burkhard Alpers, Chairman of the WG, University of Applied Science Aalen

WG on Ethics in Engineering Education
Responsible Conduct in Training and Practice for Scientists and Engineers:
Twin International Meeting, at the University of Bradford, United Kingdom, July 9-11, 2012. Dr Esat Alpay, Chairman of the WG, Imperial College London

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News from SEFI
Task Force on Bologna Process and cooperation with EU institutions published a new position paper

In March 2012, SEFI and BEST joined their forces to publish a Joint Communication on “Engineering Education and the Bologna Process” in view of the 8th Ministerial Conference to be held in Bucharest on 26-27 April. The recommendations made by SEFI and BEST refer to the following topics: “Promoting Interdisciplinarity and Transdisciplinarity “, Emphasising Engagement” and “Stimulating Entrepreneurship and Innovation”. In this document, SEFI and BEST support the direction in which the Bologna Process is leading engineering education whilst emphasising a series of actions to be encouraged and implemented in European Higher Engineering Education.

Pdf version of the publication

General News

European Engineering Deans Council (EEDC) – New Organisation for European Deans founded

On March 2nd, 15 Deans in Engineering from European Universities signed the Act of Constitution of the EEDC aisibl at the notary office in Brussels

The elected Officers are:

President: Prof. L. Froyen, Dean of Engineering, KU Leuven (B)
Vice President: Prof. J. Rocha, Dean of Engineering, Instituto Superior the Engenharia Porto (P)
Members of the Board: Prof. G. Mueller, Dean of Engineering, University of Technology München (D)
Prof. R. Ivanov, Dean of Engineering, University of Ruse (BUL)
Prof. M. Murphy, Dean of Engineering, Dublin Institute of Technology (IER)
Secretary General: F. Côme (B)
Treasurer: Prof. F. Maffioli, Politecnico di Milano (I)

The creation of the EEDC is an achievement of the EUGENE LLP project coordinated by the University of Florence (Prof. Borri/Mrs. Guberti), Transversal Action 2 lead by SEFI (F. Côme) and ISEL (Rector Quadrado). It also received the financial support of Dassault Systems and of HP. The EEDC aisibl. Office is located in Brussels, Rue de Stassard 199, in the SEFI office.

The Deans present in Lisbon, the sponsors and the organisers, Lisbon, 27/9/2012

The First General Meeting of the EEDC was held in Birmingham on 30 March, 2012 and was a great success. More details you will find in the next issue of NEWS@SEFI. There will be also an Extraordinary General Assembly held in Florence at the 13 September, 2012.

The EEDC web site will be operational at the end of April.

A first meeting of the future European Engineering Deans Council had been held in Paris, Lycée Louis-Le-Grand, on 24th February 2011. On this occasion, 15 Deans from European engineering institutions partners of the EUGENE agreed with the creation of such a Council as an international non-profit organisation under Belgian Law.

For further information: Françoise Come
Source: www.sefi.be

Participants of the first EED Council meeting, Paris, Lycée Louis-Legrand

European Convention of Engineering Deans – ECED

The Convention, held in Birmingham (29-30 March, 2012) was a great success. Thanks to the organizers in Birmingham! We want to thank Cesaer for the fruitful collaboration also. Because running out of time you find further information in the next issues of NEWS@SEFI and on the SEFI website

SEFI and EUA

Last year Sefi had become associate member of the society European University Association (EUA). Initiated by SEFI, Milan Vestergaard and Anette Kolmos held keynote on motivation of next generation for social responsibility at the EUA conference held at Warwick University, March 22-23. The theme of the conference was the “Sustainability of European universities” and there were four tracks: European funding, Innovative campus management, collaborative research and the impact of technological and social change on higher education learning. There was a very good debate on how to develop both the research, learning and campus management in direction of a more green balance.
Social Media In Education

Public web 2.0 universities

What could a student from California and a student from North Romania have in common? Until recently you couldn’t mention too many remarkable things, but now you can say that the two of them could share the same class at Stanford along with many other students from various corners of the world.

Ever since the proliferation of the Web 2.0 technologies and portals, students could find their topics of interest easier than before. Many renowned universities have posted some of their most popular classes on YouTube or published their slides online attracting thousands of curious students eager to acquire the same knowledge and skills as any other student of these universities.

Yet, the impact of these classes has been difficult to measure and the opportunity hasn’t been exploited fully by both the students and the educators. Last year, in a brave initiative, Prof. Sebastian Thrun and Prof. Peter Norvig from Stanford University have launched an online open course on Artificial Intelligence for free.

Subscribing students could choose their level of participation in the class, from spectators to active participants taking all the assignments and tests. The professors recorded interactive videos of themselves teaching and drawing sketches and translated them in over 40 languages, while students could communicate with the professors and other colleagues on a dedicated forum. The initiative was a huge success as 160,000 students have joined the class and 23,000 of them graduated it. The professors noticed that 248 students had perfect scores on the assignments and exams, while no Stanford student has managed to achieve this. Moreover, the female participation in the class was considerably higher comparing to the regular lecture, and even a whopping 80% of the regular class attendees preferred to watch the online version.

This success hasn’t been ignored by other American top universities and recently MIT has announced the launch of MITx, their own platform for online learning. MITx kicked-off in March with an introductory class on Circuits and Electronics. 3 other American universities (University of Michigan, Stanford University and University of California) have joined their efforts and created Coursera, a web platform aiming to give free access to world-leading education that has been so far available only to a tiny few.

Professors from these universities have already opened several modules on topics such as Probabilistic Graphical Models and Software as a Service, while others are preparing to launch even more various modules like Computer Vision, Anatomy and Making Green Buildings.

The race for making high-quality classes available to all students in the world, from Pakistan to Chile, has been launched. So far, all parts seem to be winning: the professors and the universities are getting a higher visibility and participation in their lectures, while students are getting for free the knowledge and the skills they were aiming for. We will be keeping an eye on the field and let you know if there will be any other initiatives from Europe and Asia and if there will be any new interesting outcomes and conclusions from the next generations of online students.

Andrei Bursuc, SEFI Administrative Council, BEST
Source: www.coursera.org and http://mitx.mit.edu

News from SEFI Members

University of Valencia

13th World Conference on Continuing Engineering Education – Registration is NOW OPEN

By Patricio Montesinos & Rita Diranzo – Universitat Politecnica de Valencia

Conference dates: 17th to 19th May 2012

Register until the 31 of March 2012 to benefit from the lower early registration fees.

Early registration (before 31st of March 2012): 450€ for members and 550€ for non-members.
From 1st of April 2012: 550€ for members and 650€ for non-members.

In addition to the three conference days, three Pre-conference Workshops will take place on 14 May and on 15 May.

Pre-conference Workshops

Update your competencies. Attend the workshops that are designed for your on-going skills improvement.

The fees for the Workshops (4 hours duration each) depend on the number for which each participant registers, with a significant reduction in cost for registration in multiple Workshops.

Source: http://wccee2012.blogs.upv.es

Projects

About the EU-VIP project*

The European Commission supported project EU-VIP (Enterprise-University Virtual Placements) looked at how virtual mobility can support or even enable international work placements and addressed the three stakeholders that are involved in an international work placement: the higher education institution, the student and the receiving company or organization.

As a result of the EU-VIP project, partners have recently published a new handbook entitled “Make it work! Integrating virtual mobility in international work placements.” The publication provides a framework for and a description of the conditions of success for integrating virtual mobility in international internships. Next to this it defines the context and definitions used in the project and it presents the conclusions regarding the perspectives from the different stakeholders: students, higher education institutions and companies.

The handbook is available as a free download from the project website. Furthermore, you can find on the website a quick guide, which summarizes the main findings presented in the handbook.

The quick guide is available in English, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, German, Italian and Polish.

The editors of the handbook are Mariet Vriens and Wim Van Petegem.

Source: www.euvip.eu/
International Federation of Engineering Education Societies Becomes Independent Organization

Statement from ASEE President Don P. Giddens

The International Federation of Engineering Education Societies (IFEES), and its component activity the Global Engineering Deans Council (GEDC), is gaining full independent status from ASEE, effective March 1. ASEE was a founding entity of IFEES when it was created in 2006 in Rio de Janeiro – with former ASEE executive director Frank Huband instrumental in this process – with the goal of taking a global view of the concept that engineering can reduce poverty, boost socio-economic development, and inform decisions for sustainable development. IFEES has furthered its work since that time with an annual summit, its Indo/U.S. Collaborative for Engineering Education, and global student initiative. As can be seen from the IFEES web site, IFEES has been very successful in developing its membership comprising engineering education-related societies and corporations, and it has initiated numerous activities to further engineering education globally. The GEDC was developed through IFEES, and this organization mirrors to an extent the Engineering Deans Council of ASEE. Since IFEES’ founding, ASEE has served as its secretariat and managing body. However given IFEES’ current state of self-sufficiency, it no longer needs ASEE’s management services and, as an independent 501(c)(3), assumes independent control of its management and operations. This eliminates ASEE’s financial obligations for IFEES. ASEE will maintain a close relationship with the organization, via participation in its events and with our own Director of International Programs, Hans Hoyer, continuing to serve as the secretary general of IFEES and executive secretary of GEDC. In addition, ASEE is cosponsoring with IFEES the World Engineering Education Forum in Buenos Aires in October of this year. I believe this is an example where ASEE saw a need to help expand engineering education efforts globally and took a leadership role in catalyzing an international “federation of federations.” Sincer thanks from all of the international community should go to Hans Hoyer, who played a key role in this development. We look forward to continued collaboration with IFEES and the GEDC in these global efforts.

Source: www.asee.org

CESAER

CESAER members elect new President

Professor Gilli succeeds Karin Markides, President and CEO of Chalmers University of Technology who has led the organisation for two years.

Together with the election of a new President the members also unanimously appointed Karel Luyben, Rector Magnificus of Delft University of Technology as President-Elect. From October 2005 to February 2012 Marco Gilli served as Deputy Rector, responsible for Academic Affairs, and on the 21st of February 2012 he was elected Rector of the Politecnico di Torino, as Francesco Profumo had to step down following his appointment as Italian Minister for Education, University and Research.

President and President-Elect will be assisted in their work by Vice President Mads Nygård, NTNU, and Treasurer Muhammed Sahin, Istanbul Technical University who were appointed by the Board of Directors for a term of two years.

Source: http://cesaer.org/

EUA

Inaugural Meeting of the European Platform of Universities Engaged in Energy Research, Education and Training

The inaugural event held at Delft University of Technology, entitled “EPUE – From Concept to Implementation”, attracted 180 participants from 106 universities in 28 countries and other stakeholder bodies including the European Energy Research Alliance and the European Commission, Directorate General for Research and Innovation. Participants endorsed the goals of the Platform and its mission and proposed several new ideas for its future development. "Session discussions focussed on the potential major role of a platform to mobilise the research and education capacities of Europe's universities in order to better coordinate their efforts in the field of energy, to improve educational programmes, research opportunities, and to raise the profile of the university sector in the future policy developments within the Horizon 2020 and the SET-Plan programmes. The Delft event also presented the results of an EUA survey that examined the research and education/training capacities of European universities in this field. Based on a questionnaire completed by 165 universities across Europe, the survey results showed that more than 20,000 researchers within universities are currently active in energy research, with many engaged in collaboration with industry and other external partners (over 50% of research projects and linked doctoral research were conducted with industry partners). Energy was demonstrated clearly as an interdisciplinary field crossing several faculty and departments in science, engineering and technology, bio-sciences or medical/life sciences, but also in economics, social sciences and the humanities.[...]

Source: www.eua.be
Results of EUA consultation on EC Proposal for next education and training programme (Erasmus for All)

EUA has recently carried out an online consultation with its members to collect their views on the Commission’s proposals for the next EU Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport, “Erasmus for All”, that will cover the period 2014-2020. 205 EUA members from 38 countries took part in the consultation, based on an online questionnaire run in December 2011 and January 2012. The questionnaire covered different elements of the proposed “Erasmus for All” programme including: student and staff mobility actions; partnerships; the proposed Loan Guarantee Scheme for Masters Mobility; and international exchanges outside the EU. [...] The consultation also highlights the critical role of partnerships, as they enhance the quality of mobility. Respondents acknowledge the importance of a Large Scale Partnership scheme, provided that it does not include business in the strict sense only, but also enables collaboration with public authorities, NGOs, etc. Universities also supported the intention of “Erasmus For All” to integrate international exchanges better: most institutions have interests in both intra-European and international cooperation and exchange, and would thus like to link and synergise them. Almost all respondents welcome ‘accompanying measures’ to enhance synergy and exchange among projects (symposia, thematic conferences, international weeks, workshops, online tools etc.), but many stress also that this should be integrated into existing fora and networks (associations and networks existing at the European and international level)

Source: www.eua.be

Tracking the Higher Education Student Lifecycle Conference, Copenhagen, Denmark (5-6 June 2012)

The conference “Tracking the Higher Education Student Lifecycle”, on 5 and 6 June 2012 in Copenhagen, will present the preliminary results of the EUA-led project ‘Tracking Learners’ and Graduates’ Progression Paths’ (TRACKIT). Tracking of students and graduates is of growing importance for universities, as it helps them to understand the impact of study programmes and their relevance to the labour market, and thus can contribute to a better learning experience for an increasingly diverse student body. In response to growing interest in this topic and pressures on universities, EUA together with partners is conducting a two-year study project (TRACKIT), which is co-funded by the EC’s Lifelong Learning Programme. The preliminary results from the TRACKIT project will be presented during the conference in Copenhagen, which will be hosted by Aarhus University (Copenhagen Campus) during the Danish EU Presidency. The conference outcomes will feed into the ongoing project work and into the final project report that will be published in September 2012. [...] The TRACKIT project is carried out by EUA, together with its partners the Irish Universities Association/UCD Geary Institute; Hochschul-Informations-System GmbH (HIS); Lund University; University of the Peloponese/Centre for Social and Educational Policy Studies; Aarhus University; and supported by the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union.

Source: www.eua.be

News From Europe

ACA

ACA Guest article by Rolf Hoffmann, Executive Director of the German-American Fulbright Commission

Only one or two decades ago, most European higher education institutions would have considered ‘internationalisation’ to be just another synonym for their student exchange programmes and institutional partnerships agreements. In both cases, they would have actively followed ‘the more the better’ principle, thus equating quantity with successful internationalisation. Parity among partner institutions in ‘mutual’ exchange programmes was to be achieved, as were balanced (non-) payment schemes – all in the spirit of dialogue and cultural enrichment first, and some academic gain too, if possible, but rarely accounted for after the students’ return to the home institution. At many institutions, these international ‘affairs’ were handled by international offices. There was little – if any – guidance from institutional leaders, many of whom were faculty elected to their positions and staying in office barely long enough to handle day-to-day academic affairs. Institutional missions – which only a few European universities had in those times – mostly did not include internationalisation strategies. Furthermore, the lack of professional administration on all levels – as compared, for example, to US institutions – implied that actual exchange was operationally implemented (and sometimes even administered) by faculty members who participated voluntarily in these efforts, together with the staff of international offices. This scenario changed for the majority of European higher education institutions within a few years, though. Step by step, developments such as the institutionalisation of ERASMUS, the implementation of the Bologna Process, the adaptation to changing demographics requiring institutions to turn from elite academic schools into mass education providers (whether they wanted this or not), and the need to compete in an increasingly commercial environment on a global level for the ‘best and brightest’, forced Europe’s mostly state-financed institutions with strong public missions to adapt accordingly. In addition to new corporate identities, newly defined goals and institutional strategies incorporated into a mission, as well as new and more professional governance structures and funding models providing increased autonomy (and greater responsibility), ‘internationalisation’ itself suddenly became a timely tool to shape an institution’s reputation at home and abroad.[...] More importantly, fresh perspectives from external experts can help to define the link between an institutional strategy, governance structures and tools of internationalisation.[...]

Source: http://www.aca-secretariat.be/
ESU

Students to come up with solutions for unemployed young graduates

As the economic crisis is spreading over the European continent, more and more young graduates face difficulties with finding a job. The 23rd edition of the European Students Convention addressed this major problem and made recommendations for European societies to prevent a whole generation from being unemployed. The meeting, gathering around 150 students’ representatives from 38 European countries, took place in Copenhagen, Denmark from 17 to 20 March and was jointly organised by the European Students’ Union (ESU) and the Danish national union of students, DSF. Among the speakers at the event were Morten Østergaard, Danish minister for Higher Education, Deborah Roseveare from the OECD, Danish MEP Emilie Turunen, Lesley Wilson, Secretary General of the European University Association and Germain Dondeliger, Ministry of Education, Luxembourg. Representatives of ESU presented the first glimpses of the ‘Bologna With Students Eyes 2012’ publication which analyses the current state of play of the reforms for the Bologna Process. The first outcomes of the SAGE project, a three-year long project on employability was as well made public at the event. The SAGE project reflects on the role of students in improving policy in higher education related to making students more employable. Next to this, there was an ESU presentation on the ‘Erasmus for All’ proposal from the European Commission and an update of the advocacy progress from ESU on this file. The full agenda of the event, which includes many workshops aimed at improving the knowledge and skills of the students’ representatives can be found on the ESU website.

Source: www.esu-online.org

“The Bologna reforms in most countries not noticeable since 2009”

Given the rapid changes in higher education and numerous reforms ongoing currently, especially in funding systems, the eight Bologna Process Ministerial Conference aims to be yet another milestone in establishing the European Higher Education Area. The conference is to take place on 26 and 27 April in Bucharest, Romania. But perhaps one should be cautious about the future since the implementation of agreed reforms since 2009 has been non-visible in most countries, yet no country has done it all. This is the message outlined both in the upcoming official implementation report and the 2012 edition of the Bologna With Student Eyes, written and published by ESU. Rather, the current reform efforts by a number of governments revolve around policy areas that are not directly a part of the Bologna Process. Even though fundamental parts like funding of higher education touch upon any other aspect. No wonder that then students would either see or are told that also these reforms “come from Europe”, essentially damaging the reputation of the Bologna Process. The Ministerial Conference will define the priorities for the next three years of the process. Currently the draft Communiciqué highlights that most energy should go towards equity in higher education, whereby the aim is to work towards widening participation and bringing underrepresented groups into higher education. [...] But the story is the same old here that there is a need to work on better funding, bringing down bureaucratic barriers like difficulties with recognition and politically motivated problems with immigration legislation and visas. But crucially, as studies have proven that students that do go to learn for a period abroad have a higher socio-economic background, emphasis will be on widening access. Finally, as this conference is taking place at a time that most governments are on an austerity mode, the ministers for higher education will bring the dialogue about funding mechanisms and governance of higher education institutions to the table for the next three years. This is indeed very logical from the point of view that many Bologna reforms should be discussed together with such core issues.

Source: www.esu-online.org

The European Union

EUI MA Project Final Event: Horizon 2020 and the Modernisation of European universities - Dialogue with European policy makers, Brussels, Belgium (10 May 2012)

For the past two years EUA has conducted a major project (entitled EUI MA “European Universities Implementing their Modernisation Agenda”), a coordination action funded under the 7th Research Framework Programme of the European Commission. The project addresses two key elements of the modernisation agenda for European universities: the sustainability of university funding, financial management and development of full costing (EUI MA-Full Costing) and the development of appropriate measurement tools and indicators for the assessment of university-based fundamental research and collaborative research with external partners reflecting the diversity of university missions (EUI MA-Collaborative Research). A transversal focus running through the project has aimed at identifying future human resource and management development requirements. [...] This final event of the project presents these main findings and recommendations and connects them in a timely manner to the current European policy process on the development of Horizon 2020 and its Rules of Participation and the European Research Area (ERA) policy framework. [...] Presentations will be made by key contributors to the EUI MA project (both from universities and external partners/agencies). Invited participants will be those who have contributed to the project’s main activities, European policy makers from the relevant European Commission Directorates General, European Parliament (ITRE and CULT Committees) and the European Council (Member State Permanent Representations in Brussels), and other major European stakeholder organisations including science/research policy journalists.

Source: www.eua.be
Erasmus student exchange program to expand

The European Commission has announced that the number of Erasmus study abroad exchanges will increase nearly twofold, seeing nearly five million students study abroad between 2014 and 2020. [...] The EC has announced it will consolidate seven separate study abroad programs into one "Erasmus for All" initiative, an expansion of the already popular programs in place. Erasmus programs see students study in a foreign country for at least three months, and will also include the Erasmus Mundus program, which is open to students from around the world, not only to Europeans, and will also expand to countries outside the EU.


Reding ready to legislate on quotas for women directors

Only 24 companies have signed up to Reding’s ‘Woman on the Board Pledge’ to increase the proportion of women on their boards. Viviane Reding, the European commissioner for justice, fundamental rights and citizenship, is moving towards legislation that would set quotas for the number of women on company boards. One year after she gave companies “a last chance” for self-regulation, Reding will next week present a report on what voluntary commitments have been made by Europe’s listed companies. [...] On average in the EU, 12% of executives are women, and they account for just over 3% of board presidents. One in three large companies in the EU had no women at all on its board in 2010. Supporters of legislation point to figures showing that 60% of new university graduates in Europe are women. Belgium, France and Italy have enforceable quotas, with the Netherlands and Spain having legal recommendations. [...] Guillaume Cravero of BusinessEurope, which represents employers’ groups from 35 countries, said mandatory quotas would not solve the problem and that a long-term voluntary approach was the only solution. Germany’s chamber of industry, the BDI, said in a statement that legal quotas did not “represent the realities of business” and that changes in workplace culture, encouraging women into male-dominated jobs and improving childcare would have a better effect.

Source: www.europeanvoice.com
The objective of the programme is to promote sustainable development and poverty alleviation by increasing the availability of trained and qualified high-level professional manpower in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries.

The programme aims to strengthen cooperation between higher education institutions (HEIs) in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific in view of increasing access to quality education that will encourage and enable students to undertake postgraduate studies, and to promote student retention in the region along with mobility of staff (academic and administrative) while increasing competitiveness and attractiveness of the institutions themselves.

**Deadline:** 10 May 2012 (as per postmark).

Source: [http://eur-lex.europa.eu](http://eur-lex.europa.eu)
CampusFrance: Update on international students in French universities

[... ] According to UNESCO 2010 data, France is the fourth most popular destination in the world for internationally-mobile students, after the US, the UK and Australia. In all, France hosted 284 600 international students in 2010, with nearly 220 000 enrolled in French universities. Universities in France are spread throughout the French territory and it is interesting to note which regions and universities are the most popular. Predictably, the Île-de-France region – including Paris (with 36 406 international students), Créteil (18 360) and Versailles (15 517) – hosted more than 32% of the country’s international students in 2010. Other major cities (such as Aix-Marseille, Lille, Lyon, Montpellier, Strasbourg and Toulouse) each welcomed more than 9 000 international students per year in the five-year period from 2005 to 2010. Absolute numbers tell one side of the story, but proportions are also revealing. For example, nearly 20% of the total university population in the universities in Clermont-Ferrand and Nice was comprised of international students in 2010. Other figures give insight into the distribution of international students in France in relation to students’ nationalities of origin. The 2010 data show that the most common countries of origin for international students in France are Morocco (21 590 students), China (20 752) and Algeria (20 617) and that these students are mainly hosted by the three major cities of the Île-de-France region (Paris, Créteil and Versailles). However, they are also well represented in all the other main French universities, such as Lyon, Lille, Amiens, Clermont-Ferrand, Dijon, Grenoble, Nantes and Toulouse for the Chinese students; as well as Aix-Marseille and Rouen for the Algerian students. Finally, Paris stands out as a special case in the French context given that this city attracts students from all over the world. Notably, 39% of all American students in France chose the French capital for their study experience in 2010. The same goes for 30% of the Italian students in the country, and more than 20% of the Romanians, Russians, Spanish and Lebanese. Chinese students have discovered Paris, as well, increasing their enrolment figures from 1 600 in 2005 to 2 380 in 2010.

Source: www.aca-secretariat.be

From United Kingdom

Flexible learners are on fast track to success

Students on accelerated two-year degrees often performed better than those on traditional three-year degrees, a report has said. The study by the Higher Education Academy examined the success of a pilot project at eight modern universities, which were each given at least £250,000 by the Higher Education Funding Council for England to develop fast-track degrees in subjects including law, business, accountancy, marketing and English. Only a small number of students took part in the Flexible Learning Pathfinder scheme between 2005 and 2010 (70 enrolled in 2006-07, rising to 390 in total in 2008-09) but they tended to outperform their peers on three-year courses, the report said.[... ] However, the report added that students on such courses were generally highly motivated, older and “not typical undergraduates”. [...]”Campuses 'off menu' in à la carte model” – Classroom-based activities may be a rarity in the university of tomorrow.

The traditional university model is unlikely to survive the next 50 years because teaching, examinations and student social life will be offered separately on an “à la carte” basis, the British Council’s annual Going Global conference has heard. [...] “The conventional combination of activities in a single physical campus – teaching, curriculum, socialisation and networking, credentialing, and in some cases research - is increasingly being questioned,” said Mr Wildavsky, author of The Great Brain Race: How Global Universities Are Reshaping the World (2010). “New approaches and providers allow different functions of post-secondary education to be offered on an à la carte basis,” he added. He highlighted the growth of online higher education providers such as the US for-profit StraighterLine, which has been accredited by several universities. [...]”Over time, as online classes become more common, the market will get much more competitive: colleges that are inflexible and refuse to accept transfer credits from places (such as) StraighterLine are likely to lose students,” Mr Wildavsky said. “So the market incentives for innovative approaches should grow.” Bemoaning an “innovation deficit” in higher education, he argued that the “classroom experience of the typical student today isn’t much different than it would have been 50 or 75 years ago”. “Students go to class in brick-and-mortar buildings, sit in large auditoriums, listen to professors lecture, sit for exams after a set number of weeks and receive course credits if they pass those exams. If they accumulate enough of those credits, eventually some of them will earn degrees,” Mr Wildavsky said. “But for a good number of students, this approach hasn’t been very effective.” The boom in e-learning did not pose a threat to universities, he said. Instead, it would address serious flaws in the sector, such as high dropout rates. “I’m wary of apocalyptic scenarios, either positive or negative, that suggest that the changes taking place today will destroy existing institutions and their values,” he said. “I believe these innovations, while disruptive, are not really threatening - they are opportunities for traditional institutions to become better.” Mr Wildavsky added: “Who knows how it will work out? I’d bet on no single model of change. “But I am pretty confident in saying [that] institutions of higher education, having stayed remarkably similar over the past half-century, will look remarkably different 50 years from now. That’s a good thing and it will give all of us a lot to think about – and a lot of work to do.”

Source: www.timeshighereducation.co.uk

Source: www.timeshighereducation.co.uk

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Asian Colleges Gaining Respect, Report Finds

Every year, Times Higher Education, a magazine in Britain, rates universities on the quality of their teaching and research. In 2011, it began a separate ranking based on a more nebulius criterion: a school’s reputation according to the opinions of about 17,000 academics. The magazine released its second World Reputation Rankings in a report that said, “The West loses ground to the East in the global index of academic prestige.”

The very elite schools, which the magazine calls the “top six supergroup,” are the same American and British schools that top most university rankings: Harvard in Massachusetts; the Massachusetts Institution of Technology; Cambridge in England; Stanford in California; the University of California, Berkeley; and Oxford in England. The United States dominates the list, with 44 of the top 100 universities in the world. Japan is the only Asian nation to crack the top 20, with the University of Tokyo, also known as Todai, keeping its previous spot as No. 8, and Kyoto University squeaking in at No. 20.

Phil Baty, the editor of the Times Higher Education Rankings, said by telephone from London that Japan’s success was “exceptional” and was based on decades of postwar development. “Our reputation as Japan’s leading university is unquestioned,” said Masako Egawa, Todai’s executive vice president. “It is built on Todai’s long tradition of educating the nation’s political, industrial, scientific and cultural elite and its role as a key route for acquiring Western learning, the route by which Japan became the first non-Western developed state.”

The upward movement of Asian schools is seen mostly in the rankings’ second tier. The National University of Singapore moved up to 23 from 27. Tsinghua University in Beijing improved its standing to 30 from 35. Peking University rose to 38 from 43, leapfrogging the University of Hong Kong, which moved up to 39 from 42. “East Asia is consistently creeping up the rankings,” Mr. Baty said. “The notability shift is from West to East. It’s subtle, but significant.” “Everyone is conscious of Asia’s rising and of the increase in government funding. That contrasts with the problems we’ve had, with austerity measures and students rioting in Westminster,” he said, referring to mass protests in London in late 2010 over rising university fees. Tan Chorh Chuan, president of the National University of Singapore, said in a statement that the magazine’s ranking of his institution was “a strong endorsement of our continued efforts to pioneer educational innovations that provide a top quality education, global student exchange and internship opportunities, as well as our cutting-edge research.” Top Asian schools seem to do better when ranked on reputation than on more solid criteria and performance. In the more conventional rankings, Todai is listed at 30 and Tsinghua at a modest 71.

“Reputation is more forward looking,” Mr. Baty said about the discrepancy. “Meanwhile, our regular rankings take a long time to climb, since they depend on criteria like research and citations.” The best-regarded 100 universities are still overwhelmingly Western and Anglophone. China is the only country among the world’s four major developing nations — the others are Brazil, India and Russia — to have a big presence.

Brazil is represented by one school, the University of São Paulo, which ranks among the top 70 schools. India and China have no schools in the top 100. “There’s a real buzz about China, but there are still problems with academic freedom, curriculum and building a culture of inquiry,” Mr. Baty said. “China is producing more research, but it now needs to look at the impact of that research, and not just the quantity of papers. If you look at hard, objective indicators, China has a long way to go.

“For the Harvards and Cambridge of the world, academic freedom is very important. This is the next step for East Asia.”

Source: www.nytimes.com

United States

Expert panel urges focus on student retention to increase STEM graduates

The United States, like many countries around the world, is openly concerned about its ability to produce a sufficient number of highly-proficient professionals and researchers in science, engineering, mathematics and technology (STEM) fields. The President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) – a standing group of the nation’s leading scientists and engineers – has recently delivered to President Obama new food for thought on this subject.

Engage to excel: Producing one million additional college graduates with degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics presents the compelling argument that by merely increasing the retention rate of undergraduate students majoring in STEM fields from the current level of just under 40% to 50%, the US could generate three-quarters of the one million additional STEM degrees it expects to need over the coming decade. Emphasis in the group’s analysis is placed heavily on strategies for improving STEM education during the first two years of college, which the PCAST experts believe is a “crucial stage in the STEM education pathway” [...] The need to focus on teaching and learning in the STEM fields is one that seems to resonate with the US academic community active in this area, which by all accounts has been very receptive to the report’s findings.

Most also agree, however, that implementing the recommendations—and particularly raising the profile of teaching in traditionally research-oriented disciplines—presents real challenges.

Source: http://www.aca-secretariat.be/ or http://www.whitehouse.gov/
QS is proud to announce the first ever QS Best Student Cities ranking.

Based on a complex set of measures taken from public information, surveys and data submitted as part of the QS World University Rankings, the results provide a new way of comparing the best cities around the world in which to be a student. Click the city name in the table below in order to view the full details and profile for that city, including a list of all of the qualifying educational institutions, population size, quality of living, affordability and student mix.

Source: www.topuniversities.com

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The impact of the economic crisis on higher education

Vangelis Tsiligiris, college principal MBS College in Crete, GR, and a PhD candidate at Birmingham City University, UK

Higher education has been placed at the centre of public debate as a result of the 2008 financial collapse and the ongoing economic crisis. The main thrust of this debate centres around a justification of the role of higher education and a redefinition of its funding relationship with government. Nevertheless, most of the discussion fails to mention the impact of the economic crisis on higher education. [...] Lower student numbers on certain programmes – the most expensive ones and those with lower job prospects – has led senior managers in universities to prepare for the worst by making plans to reduce staff at all levels and rationalise their portfolio of programmes. To me, this is a cyclical problem and is not new in higher education. What I think is more important is the long-term impact of the economic crisis on higher education macro planning and policy. The economic crisis has legitimised the long-existing argument that higher education should be treated the same as any other service in the economy and, as such, should be subject to ever-more accountability and managerialist practices. It is important to note that all this has come about in a period when financial neo-liberalism has dominated policy-making globally. [...] As a result, higher education institutions now have to pursue plans to create alternative streams of income more aggressively, while imposing severe cuts on their provision by cutting academic programmes that are not competitive. At the same time, globally, higher education institutions compete more fiercely than ever before to recruit international students and pursue more aggressive transnational education activities. In my opinion, the economic crisis will cement the transformation of traditional destination countries for international students to exporters of transnational higher education services. This is already happening. [...] So what does the future hold for higher education? In a recent online discussion in which I took part, I wrote: “Allow me to argue, wearing my economist’s hat, that higher education will be shaped by the pursuit of monetary objectives (low inflation, balanced budgets, reduction in expenditure on ‘public goods’).” “If governments continue to move away from the ‘higher education as public good’ approach, higher education will continue to become more marketised and less research focused.”

Thus, it seems to me that the future of higher education has been handed over to economists and is now less about higher education as such and more about the political economy.

Source: www.universityworldnews.com

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Top university posts still elude female academics, study finds

Female academic leaders tend to get stuck in bureaucratic middle management roles rather than reaching top university posts, a study has found. Speaking in London at the British Council’s annual Going Global conference (for which Times Higher Education was media partner), Louise Morley, professor of education at the University of Sussex, said her research showed that female academics across the world were often becoming heads of communications, finance or human resources but were unable to ascend to the highest level in institutions.

For instance, women made up 40 per cent of pro vice-chancellors in Australia but only 18 per cent of pro vice-chancellors. This pattern was replicated in countries in Europe and nations as diverse as Sri Lanka, Uganda, Nigeria and Pakistan, according to Professor Morley’s report, International Trends in Women’s Leadership in Higher Education. “It doesn’t matter [whether] the country has had decades of social equality legislation or is under a military dictatorship, the situation is the same,” she told delegates on 15 March during a session on the issue. “Women tend to get jobs with huge amounts of admin – roles that deal with the clutter of universities and keep that clutter away from other senior roles [occupied by men].” Only 13 per cent of higher education institutions in Europe were led by women, while just 9 per cent of research-intensive universities had a female head, the report found. Currently in the UK, only one Russell Group university has a permanent female head: Dame Nancy Rothwell, at the University of Manchester. “The first time I said I was going for this position, a colleague laughed at me,” she told the conference. "I was contesting the post with 10 men and I appeared before a senate and council that was mainly male." Men were unfairly favoured by appointment panels because they were seen to possess "masculine" attributes of power and authority, Professor Anya added. Sidi Osho, vice-chancellor of Afe Babalola University, in Nigeria, added: “In Africa, women are [meant] to be seen and not heard. But more women should be in leadership positions because of their natural instinct to care.” Meanwhile, Gülşün Sağlamer, former rector of Istanbul Technical University, believed many countries could learn from Turkey, where 28 per cent of professors were women. “I established a nursery on campus, which allowed women to have their children close by in case there were any problems. It is this kind of infrastructure that makes it easier for academics.” [...]
Enhancing Learning and Teaching through Student Feedback in Engineering

The VIII Glion Colloquium was held in June 2011 to consider the roles that could be played by the world's research universities in addressing the various challenges of global sustainability. Special attention was given to research universities, how they could prepare students to face these challenges.

Edited by: Chenicheri Sid Nair, University of Western Australia, Arun Patil, Central Queensland University, Australia, Patrice Mertova, University of Oxford, UK

Source: www.woodheadpublishing.com

European Area of Recognition Manual

The European Area of Recognition project (EAR) - presented a manual for fair recognition of qualifications. The manual is based on the Lisbon Recognition Convention and its subsidiary texts of qualifications, it incorporates all relevant recommendations, studies and earlier project results on recognition and sets out clear and uniform standards and guidelines on all aspects of he international recognition.

Source: www.eurorecognition.eu

European vs. national policies for academic mobility — recent trends

This report discusses the mixed feelings on the student ‘mobility for all’ EU policy. New research from ACA shows that some countries do so only to a certain extent. While maintaining a very positive view about “mobility” in general, countries have proven significantly more cautious when it comes to adopting extremely ambitious mobility goals at the national level.

Source: www.aca-secretariat.be

Entrepreneurship Education at School in Europe: National Strategies, Curricula and Learning Outcomes EURODYTE study

The report consists of both a comparative overview and national descriptions. The short comparative overview, covering EU Member States, plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Turkey, shows that the great majority of European countries address entrepreneurship education through national strategies or initiatives. At primary education level, two thirds of European countries explicitly acknowledge entrepreneurship in central steering documents while in secondary education virtually all countries integrate entrepreneurship into the curriculum, either as part of the general objectives of the overall curriculum, or within subject curricula or through a combination of these approaches.

Ed.: Ania Bourgeois

Source: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu


Equality between men and women is a fundamental principle of the European Union, enshrined in the Treaty on European Union, and whereas the Union has set itself the specific task of mainstreaming gender equality in all its activities and whereas, despite the gradual progress in this area, many inequalities between women and men still remain.

Source: www.europarl.europa.eu

Global Sustainability and the Responsibilities of Universities

The VIII Glion Colloquium was held in June 2011 to consider the roles that could be played by the world's research universities in addressing the various challenges of global sustainability in the broadest sense. Of particular interest was the degree to which the imperatives of global sustainability were driving change in higher education around the world.

Edited by: Luc E. Weber and James J. Duderstadt (eds)

Source: www.glion.org

Institutional Case Studies on the Links Between Higher Education Institutions and Business

This study, undertaken by Technopolis presents an analysis of 15 institutional case studies of existing examples of University-Business Cooperation in Member States.

Source: http://ec.europa.eu

New Media Communication Skills for Engineers and IT Professionals: Trans-National and Trans-Cultural Demands

This book gives the reader a comprehensive insight into the proficient use of communication for effective professional participation in the globalized and digitized communication environments that characterize current engineering and IT workplaces.

Edited by: Arun Patil, Central Queensland University, Australia, Henk Eijkman, University of New South Wales at Australian, Defence Force Academy, Australia, Ena Bhat-tacharya, Universiti Teknologi Petronas, Malaysia

Source: www.igi-global.com
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