

Iraq Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research

Weekly Update

CPA Higher Education Team Current Policies and Initiatives, Issue 10, Saturday, October 2, 2003

http://www.cpa-iraq.org/ministries/higher_education.html

Editor, Ambassador Joe Ghougassian, Ph.D., J.D. (ghougassianj@orha.centcom.mil) 1-914-822-4892)

This week's briefs: Graduations.

There were two graduations, one in Mosul and the other at Sulaymania. The next is in Karbala, on October 9

Senior Advisor and Deputy SA Visit Six Universities in Northern Iraq

From September 27 to October 2, 2003, Senior Advisor Dr. John Agresto and Deputy Senior AMB. Dr. Joseph Ghougassian, visited six Universities in Northern Iraq. James C. Mollen, Dir. of U.S. Global Technology, from the State Department, accompanied the delegation in order to explain the new Digital Video Conference System's project funded by State. The system will allow Iraqi universities to confer, see, listen and attend lectures being delivered in American universities, via video.

TIKRIT UNIV.: The CPA's delegation first met with the U. President, Dr. Ghanem Aduri and the Deans of the Colleges in Tikrit. During the exchanges, the administrators requested funds to complete the construction of the buildings which were half built during the era of Saddam. The demands for assistance by the faculty went from English language teachers to scientific laboratory equipment, computers/internet, hiring of new faculty, improving and expanding their curricula, exchange programs for their students and faculty with American and European U. and research centers, to stoking their meager libraries with the latest journals, magazines, books and educational CDs. While touring the College of Law, the dean took the delegation to the law library. The number of books could not be more than 100 outdated texts.

Tikrit U. is a new campus, established in 1988 in the birth place of Saddam and his Hussein clan. It is located outside the city on more than 120 acres. As elsewhere, English is the language of instruction in all the colleges of sciences. Courses are offered in agriculture, education,

engineering, medicine and law. The administration plans to open by 2010 a College of Petroleum Engineering, Teachers College, and a Veterinary College.

While in Tikrit, the Governor of the Province of Tikrit, Hussein Jassim Mohammed Al-Jobouri, received the Senior Advisor and the Deputy Senior Advisor and expressed his vision for a new Iraq with a new persona with the assistance of the Americans.

SULAYMANIA UNIV.: This was the delegation's second stop, and the first in the Iraq Kurdistan region. On September 28, 2003, the University President, Dr. Kamal Hamid Khoshnaw and Dr. Agresto presided at the Deans' meeting. Sulaymania made similar requests for assistance as Tikrit and the Universities in Baghdad, which were previously visited. In addition, Sulaymania wished to see an American University be established in town.

The group toured the campus, spoke with many students in the student union cafeteria, was shown the newly opened computer rooms and library.

Sulaymania U. began the academic year in early September. Since the institution returned back in 1992 to its original place in Sulaymania, the Univ. has made great strides in academic affairs. (In 1981 to punish the Kurds and expand his arabization policy, Saddam transferred Sulaymania U. to Erbil and named it Salahaddin U.). The U. has an impressive curricula and resembles a mid size American institution with heavy concentration in the sciences, agriculture, medicine, engineering, dentistry, veterinary science, along with the humanities, business administration and law. Dr. Kamal is especially interested in developing the field of agro-business. The academic atmosphere and the campus life seems rooted in the value of academic freedom.

While in Sulaymania, the team visited the local Foundation of Technical Institute. Established in 1973, the institute is somewhat comparable to an American junior college except that its focus is exclusively in vocational teaching. The administration made a strong pitch for American English language teachers, and for American teachers in nursing and for pharmacy technology. The Technical Institute celebrated the students' graduation on October 2. Dr. Mohammed Al-Najim of our office, represented us.

In the evening, Dr. Agresto and AMB. Ghougassian paid a call on Jalal Tallabani, a member of the Governing Council.

KIRKUK UNIV.: It was founded in January 2003 by Saddam. It comprises 4 colleges: nursing, education, sciences and law. The college of education has 3 departments: English, Arabic and History. As the new kid on the bloc, Kirkuk U. stated that it needs to move out of the few scattered and dilapidated buildings it occupies, to a new campus. The dean of the College of Sciences said that the department of informatics/computer sciences was to begin classes next week without any available computers as looters had stolen the equipment after the fall of the Baath regime. The dean of the College of Education is looking for at least 3 American English language teachers. The dean of the College of Nursing pleaded for scientific journals and CD teaching aids. Currently, the college has none.

Later, Dr. Agresto and AMB. Ghougassian met with a group of Kurdish professors from Erbil Univ. These instructors were displaced from Kirkuk during Saddam's arabization policy. They expressed their wish to return to Kirkuk and be

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hired to teach at the University. The group leader claimed that there were 127 professors in this situation.

Before departing Kirkuk, Dr. Agresto and his team visited the local Foundation of Technical Institute, where similar requests for financial and material assistance were made.

ERBIL UNIV. (aka SALAHADDIN UNIV.):

On September 30, 2003, the 2 blackhawk helicopters carrying the group, landed at Erbil International Airport.

Dr. Saedi Barzinji, President of the University was on hand to receive the delegation. Erbil's student body is 11,000, with 800 faculty. The University hosts 15 colleges, mostly in the sciences, medical divisions, engineering, agriculture, education, law and economics. The humanities are primarily in art, pedagogy and Islamic studies. Dr. Saedi would like to add a petroleum and journalism department.

Erbil maintains a close academic collaboration and exchange program with its sisters universities in Sulaymania and Dohuk. Also, it has contact with the Conflict Resolution Center of Columbia University.

The Dean of the Dentistry College observed that his students need to learn about "the new clinical procedure in dentistry. They don't know what is going on outside these walls. The internet is not enough and cannot replace the visual, hands-on, and face to face encounter with American dentists. They should either go the States and get some training in dental offices or have Americans come here to transfer their skills". The Dean of the Islamic Studies got the attention of the attendees when he forcefully condemned the acts of un-Islamic terrorists like Osama bin Laden. Dr. Saedi Barzinji concluded the discussions by hoping that an American University would also establish a campus in Erbil.

DOHUK UNIV.: On October 1, 2003, the delegation arrived in Dohuk. Dr. Asmat Mohammed Khalid, President of the University spoke with enthusiasm about his university. He emphasized that Dohuk University was founded in 1992 by the local population and received not one dinar from Saddam. The university is housed in previously owned buildings by the Baath party, Baath jails and military offices. 3,500 students attend the institution. Dohuk is one of the very few universities that has fostered academic ties with a number of foreign institutions. Dr. Asmat spoke with pride about his relations with Baylor, Columbia, American U. and the Conflict Resolution Management Group at Harvard. Dohuk also has academic connections with Saudi, Swedish and other universities. At the meeting, the Deans of Colleges, unanimously stated that Dohuk needed a new university campus. It seems that funds had been allocated in 1998 by UNESCO for the construction of a new campus. However, UNESCO has delayed the expenditures. Today these funds are still with the UN. (The team heard similar complaint from other campuses).

MOSUL UNIV.: Dr. Sa'ad' allah Tawfiq Sulayman is the President. Mosul is probably the second largest City in Iraq after Baghdad. The campus has the feel of a regular American University. All the Colleges and libraries are on the same campus with the College of Agriculture located outside the city for practical reasons. Again, the same demands were voiced for financial, manpower, material and academic assistance. The Dean of the Nursing School summarized the predicament of faculty shortage by stating that her entire department consisted of only 2 faculty to teach all the courses, supervise and monitor the students.

GRADUATION AT MOSUL UNIV.

On Thursday, October 2, 2003, the University of Mosul celebrated the graduation of its students. Though belated, the event was unique because for the first time in 35 years, the university was not compelled to pay homage to the Baath regime or Saddam. The Senior Advisor, Dr. Agresto captured this new era and new spirit as he addressed more than 2000 graduates, their families, faculty and officials. Dr. Agresto said: "Today each of you is looking forward to a prosperous and happy life in freedom.... You are now free. Your country is now free. And now both your own future and the future of your country are in your hands..."

Events Calendar:

October 4 – Council of University Presidents meet at the Ministry.

October 4 - Universities begin their Academic Year, except those in Iraq Kurdistan.

October 7 – SA and DSA meet with the Minister, Dr. Ziad Abdel Razzak Mohammed Aswad.

October 8 – Lt. Col. Dr. Steve Curda departs for CONUS. This office will miss him immensely. (scurda@beyonddesigninc.net).

October 8 – Ann Harrington and Carlton Philipps from the US State Department meet with Deans of Sciences at Baghdad University, Re/ WMD Redirect Project.

October 9 - Karbala University Graduation Ceremony.

October 11 – Qatar Conference on Iraq Higher Education.

Future Newsletters
may be issued bi-
weekly.

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ACADEMIC PROJECTS, INITIATED OR COMPLETED

1. The Higher Education and Development (HEAD) program, through USAID, has awarded 3 grants, totaling \$11,729,717. These grants are in the fields of (i) Archeology and Environmental Research (Baghdad, Mustansiriyah, Mosul and Basrah universities, paired with SUNY at Stony Brook, Columbia, Boston and Oxford); (ii) Agriculture (Mosul university, paired with the University of Hawaii); (iii) Legal Education Reform (Baghdad university, paired with DePaul University and International Institute of Higher Studies in Criminal Sciences in Siracusa, Italy).

2. Connecting universities in Iraq with universities in the U.S. through Digital Video Conferencing systems, has now been initiated. This would mean Iraqi students would be able to participate in on-going classes and lectures with American professors and students.

3. We are aiming at restarting the Fulbright program in Iraq, beginning January 2004.

4. Internet systems have returned to many universities and internet cafes are opening on several campuses.

5. The reconstruction and refurbishing of many damaged colleges has been completed.

6. Science laboratories that were looted have now received new equipment and instruments, others are placing their orders.

7. A security campus program (the Facility Protective Service) has begun on all campuses.

8. A program to help stranded doctoral students in the various sciences is currently under discussion. This project would assist those students who have completed their course work but who would need up to 6 months in American universities to finish their research.