

Iraq Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research

Weekly Update

CPA Higher Education Team Current Policies and Initiatives, Issue 2, Saturday, 26 July 2003
http://www.cpa-iraq.org/ministries/higher_education.html

This week's highlight:

- **Graduation Ceremony at the University of Sulaimaniyah:** This week's graduation at the University of Sulaimaniyah marks the third in Iraq this year. Other graduations will follow in the coming weeks throughout the country. Each successful graduation is another step on the road to normalcy for the higher educational system and, more broadly, for the Iraqi people.

University of Sulaimaniyah Graduation

Universities are functioning throughout Iraq despite the difficulties they have faced during this academic year. No event is more important to the academic year than traditional graduation ceremonies. This week, University of Sulaimaniyah celebrated its 18th annual graduation ceremony.

Significantly, for the first time in over a decade, leaders from the Universities of Mosul, Kirkuk, and Mustansiriyah attended the ceremony. Their attendance symbolizes how the Iraqi higher educational establishment is overcoming the policies of the previous regime to come together again. Also attending the ceremony were the representatives from the CPA Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR) team. Dr. (LTC) Stephen Curda, representing Senior Advisor CPA MHESR Dr. Andrew Erdmann, addressed the graduating class about the opportunities of this new era.

MHESR's New Temporary Offices

Working closely with MHESR staff, the Acting President of Iraqi Commission on Informatics, and USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), the CPA MHESR team has approved the move of the main ministry operations to new temporary office space at the campus of the Iraqi Commission on Informatics in Baghdad. Ministry staff and contractors have been working hard to refurbish this facility. The

CPA Higher Education team toured the new facility on July 21 and identified final improvements needed before the move could begin. USAID OTI will assist with a "Ministry in a Box" kit, consisting of essential office furniture and equipment such as computers. This support will allow the MHESR to resume essential services as soon as the staff moves into the new complex. The move from the MHESR's current offices at the Main Library of Baghdad University will begin before the end of this month.

University Visits Continue Throughout Central and Southern Regions

The CPA Higher Education team is committed to visiting every university in the country to ensure appreciation of the particular needs of each institution as well as coordination of national level policy and allocation of resources. In the coming weeks, CPA MHESR team members Dr. Faruk Darweesh and Dr. Mohammed Al-Najim will conduct preliminary visits to universities in the central and southern regions. On the schedule of universities to visit are: Kerbala, Kufa, Al-Quadissia, Al-Anbar, Wassit and Thi-Quar. CPA MHESR personnel will be conducting the first hand assessment of the universities as well as meeting with the faculty and students to discuss their concerns.

New Opportunities for Foreign Study

A top priority identified by faculty and students on campuses throughout Iraq is reestablishing opportunities to travel, study, and communicate with the rest of the academic world. The CPA Ministry of Higher Education team is promoting such opportunities to bring the world closer to the faculty and students of Iraq.

There is also great interest around the world in reconnecting Iraqi students, scientists, and scholars to the international academic community. For instance, the Italian delegation in Baghdad is working closely with the Foggia University and Italian National Commission for

UNESCO to offer scholarships for female students at Foggia University in the field of Food Sciences and Technologies, Tourism Management, and Conservation of Cultural Heritage. The grant amount covers 7000 Euros per year, including all travel, accommodation and living expenses.

Jordan, Macedonia, and South Korea have also offered special fellowship opportunities for Iraqi students and scholars.

The CPA Higher Education team is looking forward to reviewing the initial recommendations of the Temporary Advisory Committee on External Relations on August 11. This Advisory Committee, with representatives of all the institutions of higher education in Iraq, will develop specific proposals for what steps should be taken to cultivate new international connections.

Senior Advisor in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Andrew Erdmann, CPA Senior Advisor to the MHESR, traveled to Washington, D.C. this week. On July 25, he discussed future U.S. government support for Iraqi universities with Thomas Farrell, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Academic Programs in the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, and other officials from the Bureaus of Educational and Cultural Affairs and Near East Asian Affairs. The meeting highlighted the U.S. Department of State's commitment to launch as rapidly as possible academic initiatives aimed at ending the isolation of Iraqi students and scholars, including the prestigious Fulbright fellowship program.

In the coming weeks, Dr. Erdmann will hold further consultations with

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officials from the U.S. Department of State, USAID, and non-governmental organizations interested in assisting Iraqi higher education.

Progress on Operating Budget for July-December 2003

The restoration of operating budgets for the higher educational institutions is a top priority. This process began in June with the provision of a one month emergency operating budget to the MHESR and the preparation of a budget for the July to December 2003 period. Ambassador Bremer approved in early July the overall July-December 2003 operating budget for the Iraqi government, including the MHESR; the MHESR was allocated \$32.8 million for operating expenses for the remainder of 2003.

Since then the CPA MHESR team has been working closely with its counterparts in the MHESR and the CPA Ministry of Finance team to finalize the procedures for the distribution of funding to the public universities, colleges, and institutes of Iraq. The first disbursement of funds from the July-December 2003 operating budget to the universities will be available shortly, thus marking another important step toward the resumption of normal operations throughout the entire higher educational system.

Events Calendar:

August 10-14 – Curriculum revision seminar on Conflict Resolution in Dohuk by Peace Keeping Institute

August 11 – Advisory Counsel Meeting.

August 14 – CPA Higher Education Team participates in Mosul University Graduation

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