

Iraq Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research

Weekly Update

CPA Higher Education Team Current Policies and Initiatives, Issue 4, Saturday, 9 August 2003

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

This week's highlights:

The MHESR headquarters moves to new offices at the Iraqi Commission on Informatics in Baghdad.

Senior Advisor returns from meetings in Washington to promote US-Iraqi academic relations: On August 9, Dr. Andrew Erdmann returned safely from his trip to US during which he held successful meetings with officials from the Department of State, USAID, and university and college professional associations to discuss US assistance to Iraqi higher education.

MHESR's New Temporary Offices

After much effort and anticipation, the MHESR moved into its new offices at the Iraqi Commission on Informatics on 9 August. USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) provided the ministry with the office furniture, equipment, and supplies. As soon as the MHESR staff has fully settled into the new facilities, we plan to have a formal opening ceremony. Invitations to this ceremony will be forthcoming as soon as the precise date and time are set.

Operating Budgets

Ensuring the rapid disbursement of the July-December 2003 operating budget continues to be a top for the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research (MHESR) team. This budget is a critical step toward the resumption of normal operations throughout the entire higher educational system. The operating budget for the remainder of the year totals \$32.8 million, with an additional \$4.0 million allocated for major capital expenditures.

Primary responsibility for prioritizing the spending of these funds – and ensuring that they deliver maximum impact as rapidly as possible – rests with the Iraqi higher education leadership. Funds will be allocated each month and the higher educational institutions are required to report to the MHESR on the money spent by the 10th of each month.

The initial 2004 budget estimation is due 25 August. Those of you who are working closely with the higher education institutions (e.g.,

Civil Affairs teams, CPA regional teams, local Coalition forces) are encouraged to offer assistance to them in this effort. The submission of accurate budget estimates will allow us to expedite the overall budget process, help ensure that the vital needs of all institutions throughout the entire higher educational system are met, and lay the foundation for the preparation for the upcoming UN-sponsored international donor's conference in October.

New Higher Education Database Aims to Help Those Seeking to Rebuild Iraqi Higher Education

Dr. Diego Esposito, the CPA higher education team information technology specialist, completed the initial development of a database to track essential information about the institutions of Iraqi higher education. This database contains basic information ranging from the number of faculty and students per university to which institutions have departments of history to the names of department chairmen. Such information had been previously unavailable in a single, searchable database.

The CPA higher education team is now equipped to more rapidly access and analyze basic information on the institutions of Iraqi higher education.

This database is intended to assist in the developing and coordinating plans to assist Iraqi higher education.

Currently, Dr. Diego is working to link the database to our homepage so that the users can search the data themselves.

In the meantime, the CPA higher education team offers its assistance in searching this database to support those developing projects to assist in the rebirth of Iraqi higher education.

Senior Advisor Meets with Officials in Washington to Discuss Forging New US-Iraqi Academic Ties

On 5-7 August, Dr. Andrew Erdmann, the CPA Senior Advisor to the MHESR, met with key government officials and representatives of American institutions of

higher education to discuss new opportunities to help end the isolation of Iraqi students, scholars, and scientists.

On 5 August he met with the USAID Iraqi higher education team to discuss the review and implementation the HEAD program, a \$20 million initiative to help forge new partnerships between US universities and their counterparts in Iraq.

At the State Department, Dr. Erdmann discussed the current needs and future opportunities in Iraqi higher education with Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs (and Acting Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy & Public Affairs) Patricia Harrison, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Academic Programs Thomas Farrell, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Professional Exchanges Sam Wunder, and other academic and citizen exchange officials in meetings on 6-7 August. The State Department is committed to supporting Iraqi higher education and will soon announce a series of important initiatives to help restore the once strong academic ties between the US and Iraq.

At the offices of the American Council on Education (ACE) in Washington, Dr. Erdmann briefed representatives from the major associations of American higher education and academic exchange – including ACE, the Association of American Universities, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, the Council of American Overseas Research Centers, American-Mideast Educational and Training Services, Inc., and the Council for International Exchange of Scholars. Through such contacts, the CPA higher education team is attempting to promote greater understanding within the US of the needs of Iraqi higher education.

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Opportunities for Foreign Study

The CPA higher education team is committed to help end the isolation of Iraqi higher education. At every campus we visit, students stress their desire to study abroad. We are delighted that every week more such opportunities develop.

To update last week's mention of South Korean International Youth Forum in Seoul, we have a well-deserving winner: Ms. Saja Rasheed, a recent graduate from University of Baghdad. Saja will be representing Iraq in the National Council of Youth Organizations and International Work Camp in Seoul between 18-24 August. The 14th annual International Youth Forum's theme will be "The Helm of International Society Towards World Peace." The CPA higher education team wishes Saja a successful trip as a pioneer among young Iraqis in this new era of free academic travel.

The Italians are still narrowing down the 30 applicants to 10 names for the Foggia University scholarship in the field of Food Sciences and Technology, Tourism Management, and Conservation of Cultural Heritage. This grant covers 7000 Euros per year, including all travel, accommodation and living expenses.

CPA Higher Education Team in the News

The efforts of the CPA higher education team to help transform Iraqi higher education were covered in two major stories this past week:

"Iraqi Students Set a New Course: Culture of Open Debate Sweeps Across Baghdad University" appeared on page 1 of the *Washington Post* (August 2).

"Righting Iraq's Universities" appeared in the Education Life Supplement to the *New York Times* (August 3).

British Council's Visit

The British Council delegation visited Baghdad from 8-11 August. Martin Davidson, Adrian Chadwick, and Wendy Jordan represented the Council.

The main purpose of the visit was to assess the needs of the Iraqi people in the post-Saddam era and to explore the idea of setting up a British Council office in Baghdad.

The CPA MHESR team is committed to assisting foreign governments, NGOs, and academic institutions establish contact with Iraqi higher education. In this case, the CPA MHESR team helped coordinate the Council's program in Baghdad and arranged a number of important meetings.

Events Calendar:

August 11 – Advisory Council Meeting, hosted by University of Technology

August 10-14 – Academic Consortium for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution's Conflict Resolution Curriculum Revision Development Project seminar, hosted by Dohuk University

August 13-14 – Conference on the Status of Technical Education in Kurdistan Region and Its Future Aspects for Federal Iraqi States, hosted by Erbil Technology Institute

August 16-22 – USAID HEAD program proposal review in Washington, DC

Please e-mail questions, comments, or suggestions:
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