

Iraq Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research

Weekly Update

CPA Higher Education Team Current Policies and Initiatives, Issue 9, Saturday, 27 September 2003
http://www.cpa-iraq.org/ministries/higher_education.html

This week's briefs: Graduations occurring in the south. Three graduations are scheduled for the universities in the south during the coming weeks. These graduations continue to affirm that the universities are back to normal operations.

The Arrival of the New Senior Advisor and His Deputy

Dr. John T. Agresto arrived in Baghdad, Iraq, 15 September to assume his duty as the new Senior Advisor for the CPA Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. Dr. Agresto comes to Baghdad with a wealth of experience in high level management. He was a Senior Research Fellow in the Liberal Arts, Wabash College, in Crawfordsville, IN. He was/is President of John Agresto & Associates. JA&A is a consulting company specializing in curricular renewal in the liberal arts, accreditation assistance, and long range planning for colleges, foundations and schools.

Prior to his consulting work, Dr. Agresto was President of St John's College in Santa Fe, New Mexico for 11 years. Dr. Agresto also held positions as an Assistant, Deputy and Acting Chairman for the National Endowment for the Humanities in Washington, D.C. for seven years. The NEH is a federal funding agency in support of the humanities and humanities education. He is author of numerous books and articles. Dr. Agresto received his Ph.D. in Government from Cornell.

Along with Dr. Agresto, Ambassador Joseph Ghougassian, Deputy SA, also arrived on 15 Sept. AMB Ghougassian has a Ph.D. in Philosophy as well as a Jurist Doctorate (JD). He was an Ambassador to Qatar in the mid to late 80's. AMB Ghougassian also brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the ministry. All of us would like to welcome them both. Please make them

feel welcome by stopping by to say "Hello."

Visit by Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), Ms. Patricia Harrison.

Ms. Harrison and her team of advisors with ECA arrived 24 – 26 September. The Bureau of ECA's job is to "foster mutual understanding between the US and other countries through international educational and training programs." The ECA team met with several different CPA ministries on various issues. They also met with CPA MHESR team and the 4 university presidents in the Baghdad area to discuss exchange programs to include the Fulbright program. Everyone at the CPA and the ECA are committed to starting the Fulbright program for Iraq as early as January, 2004.

Al-Naharain University Graduation

On Sunday, Sept. 28, the CPA Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research team attended the graduation of approximately 600 students at Al-Nahrain University, on the Baghdad University Al-Jadiriya campus. Originally scheduled for June, it was postponed until now for security reasons. Again for security reasons, the ceremony was held in daylight rather than at dusk. Al-Nahrain was formerly Sadaam University, and is known for accepting the best high school students. Medicine, law, science, engineering and political science are their specialties.

The CPA Strategic communications team was there in force, plus reporters from the Iraqi Media Network (IMN), and some local Iraqi media. Everything went off without incident.

The next graduation is at Mosul University and the Technology Institute in Sulaimaniyah, both on

October 2. The University of Kerbala will have its graduation on October 9.

New Beginning for the Universities

All universities in Iraq are scheduled to start 1st week of October. Within the next month or so, all universities will be provided with new computers arriving from the Oil for Food (OFF) Program, Internet Centers and classroom furniture.

The delivery of 1500 computers together with the Internet centers provided, thanks to the financial support of the South Korean government, will mean an important step toward bringing the universities to a competitive international standard.

In addition, USAID will finance Internet facilities for the Foundation of Technical Education (all technical colleges) and also classroom furniture supplies to all universities and technical colleges. This should be one of the last steps in the reconstruction of the campuses after the post-war looting. All those efforts such as computer and furniture supplies will contribute to our goal to start the new academic year in the dutiful term.

New Senior Advisor visiting universities in the Northern Governate

Since their arrival, Dr. John Agresto, Senior Advisor, and AMB Joseph Ghougassian, Deputy SA, have been deeply involved in all aspects of ministry activities. One of their first goals is to visit as many universities as possible. Already having visited all the universities in the Baghdad area,

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their visits to the northern Governates are next and include Tikrit University, Sulaimaniyah University, Kerkek University, Sulahaddine University, Dohuk University and Mosul University. They wanted to assess the universities first hand so they can prioritize the critical needs of the different universities. Next week's newsletter will provide more details of their visit.

October 4 – President's Advisory Council meeting

October 9 – Attend Kerbala University Graduation Ceremony

New Opportunities for Foreign Study

More opportunities to study abroad are coming in every week. The CPA Ministry of Higher Education team is promoting such opportunities to bring the world closer to the faculty and students of Iraq.

As mentioned last week, the Center for Economic Research and Graduate Education – Economic Institute (CERGE-EI) of Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic, is offering scholarship opportunities for Ph.D. in Economics. Czech government is interviewing students this week and the final winners will be announced soon.

Another scholarship opportunity for students in Iraq is a Fulbright Scholarship. Fulbright is a flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the US Government. Iraqi students will enroll as early as January 2004. The first scholarships offered will focus on Master degrees in the following fields: petroleum engineering, political science, education, journalism, agriculture, public health, any of the social sciences and humanities.

Events Calendar:

September 27–October 2 – SA visit northern universities, Kirkuk, Tikrit, Sulaimaniyah, Erbil, Mosul and Dohuk

October 2 – Attend Mosul Graduation Ceremony