

Dispatch Case

The U.S. Agency for International Development says it has no plans to change how it monitors the work of universities that are awarded agency grants, despite recent problems with a Harvard University project.

The agency this month canceled a \$14-million grant to a Harvard program set up to help the Russian government move to a free-market economy. The agency had accused two of the program's administrators of using their positions for personal gain. The officials denied any wrongdoing.

"Just because we found a particular problem in a particular situation, that doesn't mean suddenly we try to micromanage or tighten the screws," said Donald L. Pressley, deputy assistant administrator for the agency's Bureau for Europe and the New Independent States.

A separate division, the Office of Investigative General, handles the monitoring of grants and any investigations. The agency also relies on "the institutions themselves to oversee employees and use employees who are of the highest caliber," Mr. Pressley said.

"The structure we have set up is the way we still want to continue," he added. "If something turns up, we deal with it. We're not going to go on a hunt."

The Madison and Milwaukee campuses of the University of Wisconsin are pooling resources to expand their international-education activities.

Madison's International Institute and Milwaukee's Center for International Studies will collaborate on a range of joint projects. Professors will join forces to teach Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, Japanese, and Polish on both campuses. The centers also will develop a plan for incorporating foreign-language study into disciplines such as science and engineering.

The centers will focus some of their efforts on international activities outside of the university. They will offer joint seminars on international topics to the general public and offer consulting services to Wisconsin businesses.

The collaboration is being supported by a grant of more than \$975,000 from the U.S. Department of Education.

Six graduate students from South Africa are in the United States as Mandela Economic Scholars.

Named for South African President Nelson Mandela, the program provides full financial support to disadvantaged South Africans to pursue graduate work in economics at U.S. institutions. The students are expected to return to South Africa and work in government. The program is sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development.

International

Hong Kong's Universities Experience Heightened Anxiety as July 1 Nears

A controversy over a sculpture illustrates the tension as students and professors await Chinese rule

BY JAMES HERTLING

HONG KONG
LESS THAN A MONTH before Hong Kong's transition to Chinese rule, a two-ton political hot potato landed in the lap of the University of Hong Kong, the colony's oldest and most prestigious institution of higher education.

Students wanted to display on the campus a 26-foot-tall sculpture commemorating the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. Called "Pillar of Shame," the metal sculpture, by Jens Galschiot, a Danish artist, depicts 50 bodies twisted like wreckage. It was a centerpiece of the June 4 candlelight vigil in Victoria Park here, marking the eighth anniversary of the violent crackdown on the students in Beijing.

But university administrators balked. They said strong winds during the coming typhoon season could topple the structure, endangering passersby. The university's reaction dismayed free-speech advocates, who saw it as an example of local anxiety about offending Beijing.

Once the conflict landed on local front pages and talk radio, it was quickly resolved. The statue, which was being assembled on the campus last week, is to stand outside the student union at least through the July 1 "handover," as locals refer to the impending return of the British colony to Chinese control. The head of the university also issued a ringing defense of academic freedom.

"We reiterate the freedom of expression of the University of Hong Kong by any members, including staff and students," said Vice-Chancellor Cheng Yiu-chung. "I deny any allegations that there has been an attempt at political censorship."

Happy ending notwithstanding, the incident underscored heightened sensitivities in Hong Kong this month. China is coming, and, after 156 years of British rule, no one here knows quite what to expect—although everyone has an opinion. As capitalism sweeps the world, the handover of Hong Kong is the first time in this century that control of a territory has peacefully passed from a democracy to a totalitarian regime.

AUTONOMY FOR 50 YEARS

China has promised Hong Kong autonomy for 50 years: the "one country, two systems" proposition. Under the 1990 Basic Law—the mini-constitution that will take effect with the transfer of power—Beijing says Hong Kong will be able to govern itself in all areas except foreign policy and defense.

Depending on whom you ask, when the British Governor, Chris Patten, and the Prince of Wales board the royal yacht *Britannia* in Victoria Harbor as June 30 ends at midnight, it may mark a cataclysm, or it may be the end of just another day—a public holiday—in this bustling commercial



The U. of Hong Kong initially balked at displaying "Pillar of Shame," a sculpture, shown here on its side, commemorating the Tiananmen Square massacre.

hub, which has, in many respects, already been absorbed into China.

Optimism about Hong Kong's continued role as China's financial window to the world drove the local stock and real-estate markets through the roof this year. The hope is that China won't move to stem the free flow of information, or to override the rule of law or the autonomy of local institutions, which undergird Hong Kong's prosperity.

Supporters of Beijing note that China's pragmatic authorities wouldn't kill the

goose that supplies so many golden eggs. But the leader of Hong Kong's Democratic Party, Martin Lee, worries that Beijing's penchant for control could overwhelm its promises. "There are lots of dead geese in China," he says.

JULY 1 DEMONSTRATION PLANNED

Students like Patrick Wong won't wait long to find out. The president of the student union at the University of Hong Kong and a leader of the campaign to display the "Pillar of Shame," he is helping to organize a student demonstration on July 1 in a direct challenge to new restrictions on public assemblies and other curbs on civil rights already approved by China's hand-picked legislature. The lawmakers are replacing Hong Kong's democratically elected body, which China will dissolve at midnight on June 30.

The new rules require police approval for all demonstrations, unlike current law, which requires only that the police be notified. A coalition of pro-democracy groups was denied permission to stage a rally on July 1.

"But we will engage in civil disobedience," says Mr. Wong. "They don't want opposition here, they want to control society."

It will take longer to see if conditions change for scholars such as James Tang, who teaches international relations at the University of Hong Kong. His courses include discussion of Taiwan, which Beijing regards as a renegade province. Chinese officials—including Hong Kong's incom-

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VINCENT YU, M PHOTO, FOR THE CHRONICLE
Chia-Wei Woo, president of the Hong Kong U. of Science and Technology: "Education and technology will fare much better under the new government."

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ing chief executive, Tung Chee-hwa—have said they will bar anyone here from advocating independence for Taiwan or for Tibet. School textbooks in Hong Kong will no longer mention the Republic of China, which is what Taiwan calls itself, and instead refer only to the “province of Taiwan.”

How those changes will affect Dr. Tang is unclear, as is just what will constitute “advocating independence” for Taiwan. “In what I discuss with my students, Taiwan would have to be raised,” he says. “I can’t avoid that.” While he will continue to raise “politically sensitive” topics, he also knows that this may not be possible indefinitely. “I work in the field of China studies,” he notes, “and I appreciate the restraints academics have on the mainland.”

Those restraints include knowing what sort of comments and publications can get you into trouble.

Self-censorship among scholars and journalists in Hong Kong is widely assumed to be increasing, although it can’t be documented. “There are perfectly natural and human impulses not to jeopardize careers with provocative or dangerous publications or views,” says Raymond Wacks, a professor of law at University of Hong Kong for 13 years.

Still, he says, “I’ve got my antennae up, and so far, I’m pleased to say, I’ve not

“There are perfectly natural and human impulses not to jeopardize careers with provocative or dangerous publications or views.”

picked up anything to show that this university is clipping its wings.”

Chia-Wei Woo, president of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and a local adviser to Beijing for several years, goes further than that.

“Education and technology will fare much better under the new government than ever before,” says Dr. Woo. “Funding for both are expected to rise after we get through the initial period of transition. Finally, Hong Kong will commit itself to nation-building.”

PROMOTING CHINESE PATRIOTISM

Universities and education here have remained bastions of colonial policy. School officials already have announced sweeping changes in primary and secondary-school textbooks and curricula, most aimed at stoking more Chinese patriotism. But change will come more slowly to the universities.

Incoming Chinese officials, backed by the presidents of Hong Kong’s universities, are aiming to restructure undergraduate education as a four-year degree program rather than the current three-year model, which mirrors the British system.

Educational institutions here also are expected to come to rely more on ethnic-Chinese academics and less on Western expatriates, who long have earned among the most generous salaries paid to faculty members in the world.

According to the state-run Xinhua News Agency, Beijing’s top education official said last week that China would not interfere with Hong Kong’s education system.

Zhu Kaixuan, the minister in charge of China’s State Education Commission, said that after the handover, mainland universities would take steps to make themselves more accessible to Hong Kong students. But it would be up to Hong Kong universities to set the regulations for mainland students to attend institutions here, he said. “The State Education Commission and its Hong Kong counterpart will not be subordinate to each other,” Mr. Zhu was quoted as saying.

Already, universities here are offering more courses on China, and more students and faculty members are spending time in exchange programs at mainland institutions.

A decade ago, Hong Kong began to expand access to higher education, seeking

to create a more highly skilled work force as more and more manufacturing jobs moved north across the border to China. As a result, almost 20 per cent of all high-school graduates here now pursue postsecondary education, up from 5 per cent in 1980.

But the increased spending on education has triggered a backlash. Now, along with the new political concerns, calls for more accountability and efficiency weigh on Hong Kong’s universities.

New professors are being hired on a contract basis, usually for three-year terms, and they will not enjoy the protection of tenure if controversial comments or publications get them into trouble. That, combined with a budget cut of 10 per cent over the next three years, will have a noticeable impact on the universities.

“When there is a hidden agenda,” the University of Hong Kong’s Dr. Tang notes ruefully, “spending cuts could be used as instruments for hidden purposes.”

At the end of the day, as the British like to say, what the Chinese here—even the most ardent pro-democracy activists—seem to agree on is that they are happy to see the colonizers leave.

“The British government made Hong Kong economically powerful and did a lot for democracy and human rights,” says Mr. Wong, the student leader. “But we are very happy it is the end of the shame of colonialism.”