



AICE Newsletter

September 2016

Message from the Editor:

Greetings from everyone at AICE.

I am compelled this month to start this newsletter with a rather controversial topic – the investment of government funds into higher education and research. My motivation is two-fold. First, as the presidential election in the United States approaches, the rhetoric in the media is very politically charged. Second, I recently read an article published in Times Higher Education titled “Nordic Higher Education in Decline?” which bemoans the reduction of higher education and research funding in Scandinavian countries, particularly Finland. A question that came to my mind is this: how much of a priority should higher education and research be to a national budget?

Higher education and research is a national priority, because it drives innovation, and provides solutions to new challenges in an increasingly complex world. In an hypothetical scenario with unlimited resources, supporting universities and academics is not even a question. However, when it comes to allocating funds in a budget to universities and academics, while at the same time diverting them from other infrastructures is a difficult choice. The reason for this is that the output of universities and research institutions is difficult to quantify.

In business, measuring return on investment is a primary factor in deciding whether or not to continue investing. The Times Higher Education article describes several ways Nordic governments are attempting to measure this return – quantifying graduates in certain disciplines, or publications by academics and researchers, or measuring the notoriety of the journals of said publications, among others. Without

paraphrasing the entire article, I am left with a concept much more familiar to credential evaluators – that the output of higher education institutions – universities, research centers, etc, is as difficult to quantify as it is difficult to mathematically calculate how much 'knowledge' is gained by earning a certain academic credential.

Sincerely,
Aleks Morawski
Director of Evaluation Services
Foreign Credits Inc.



AICE Symposium Planning Committee

Preparation is already under way for the next annual AICE symposium, which will take place April 4-5 in Minneapolis, MN following AACRAO's annual meeting. The Planning Committee is busy preparing an engaging program of panel discussions focusing on Setting the Standard for Graduate Admissions.

AICE® Forum Highlights

This section includes highlights from the monthly AICE® Forum in August 2016. Although this is meant to serve as a synopsis of the discussion, additional details can be obtained by contacting the Members listed by each topic.



Turkmenistan – Vocational “Kombinat” programs

It was determined that vocational programs completed in an institution called “Kombinat” are part-time on-the-job training, and therefore not equivalent to academic coursework in

the United States. Furthermore, the lack of regulation or standardization of education in Turkmenistan in the 1990s makes evaluation difficult, and subject to forgery and fraud, requiring extreme caution.

~Aleks Morawski, Alexander Agafonov

Cuba – Falsified Documentation

Several members of AICE expressed a recent increase in the submission of forged academic documents from Cuba submitted for evaluation and translation. As a result, much of the forum involved an overview of verification resources in Cuba, and discussion of sample authentic and forged documentation. Although there are few reliable sources of verification, special thanks is owed to Barbara Glave for sharing many sample documents and reviewing how to spot forgeries in Cuban documents.



~Barbara Glave, Drew Feder



Spain – Update on the King

For post-secondary documents from Spain, the hallmark of determining official vs. unofficial (aside from specific nomenclature) is the presence (título oficial) or absence (título propio) of reference to the King of Spain.

Official degrees until 2014 started with:

“Juan Carlos I, Rey de España, y en su nombre, el Rector de...” Beginning June 19, 2014, they should read: “Felipe VI, Rey de España, y en su nombre, el Rector de...”

~Barbara Glave

Nigeria, Sierra Leone – New Grading Scale for WAEC Certificates



AACRAO EDGE adopted new grade conversion scales for the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) Senior School Certificate (SSC) grading scale of 1-9. Interestingly, the lowest passing grade on the proposed scale is C, noting that this is a secondary-level credential, many AICE members considered D to be the lowest passing grade instead.

~*Aleks Morawski, Jasmin Saidi-Kuehnert*

Publications

- AACRAO has a new publication: **The AACRAO International Guide: A Resource for International Education Professionals**. Beth Cotter and Jasmin Saidi-Kuehnert (Endorsed Members of AICE) contributed to this publication (sections on Outsourcing Foreign Credential Evaluations: History and Implementation and Diploma Mills and Fake Degree). You may order this publication online or by post.

- A number of AICE members are contributing authors for the **NAFSA Online Guide on Education Systems Around the World**, including the following members:

Alan Saidi – *Republic of Korea*

Jasmin Saidi-Kuehnert – *Hong Kong, Iran, Senegal, United Kingdom*

Professional Development and Events

It's not too early to start thinking about the **2017 AICE Symposium, April 5-6, 2017 in Minneapolis, MN**. This year's theme is **"Setting the Standard for Graduate Admissions: Three-year degrees and other admissions dilemmas"**. Stay tuned for more information!



SAVE THE DATE
AICE Minneapolis Symposium
 Setting the Standard for Graduate Admissions: Three-year degrees and other admissions dilemmas

April 5 – 6, 2017
 Downtown Minneapolis, MN
 Come for AACRAO, stay for AICE!

AICE

Collaborate with evaluators as we discuss standards for graduate admissions

REGISTRATION INCLUDES:
 • Opening Reception •
 Presentations • Panel Discussions •
 • Networking •

LEARN MORE AT: WWW.AICE-EVAL.ORG

MINNEAPOLIS

Conference Presentations:

- NAFSA Region I, Anchorage, AK

“Chinese and Indian Credentials: What to Expect, Reject, and Investigate”
October 12, 2016 8:30 AM - 9:45 AM

Presenter: Sonya Brauchle, Foreign Credits Inc.

- NAFSA Region XII, Palm Springs, CA

“Syria: Education in Crisis and Providing Pathways for Refugees”
November 3, 2016 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Presenters: Jasmin Saidi-Kuehnert, President & CEO ACEI, and Zepur Solakian, President CGACC

- NAFSA Region VII & III Biregional, New Orleans, LA

Seminar: **“Benchmark Credentials for Undergraduate Admissions”**
November 6-10, 2016

Presenters: Elle Shroyer, Beth Cotter, Drew Feder, Barbara Glave, Brentni Henderson, Freda Clement-Willis

Blogs

ACEI hosts “*Academic Exchange*,” a blog on education-related topics:

[Visit Blog!](#)

OPINION

In response to the Editor's Message, *Jasmin Saidi-Kuehnert* writes a commentary on the importance of education at all levels in the developing world. Reprinted from the ACEI Blog *AcademicExchange*: [Education for All – A UNESCO Challenge](#)



[Video - CCTV Interview Jasmin Saidi-Kuehnert](#)

Sharing a Reality (in International Education)

Drew Feder



With the oh-so-fun election season in full swing here in the U.S., it is more difficult than usual to ignore how people can operate in such different realities. People can't seem to agree on what is a "fact". In many cases, this is for good reason, because so much around us has subjective meaning.

However, a shared reality does seem to exist. If it didn't, then mathematics would be meaningless. The "fact" that $1+1=2$ is true for you, for me, and for everyone connects us all, independent of our subjective realities. Fantastically, this also seems to mean that if a group of different people living in their own subjective worlds can collectively learn enough about our shared reality, they can successfully invent something that will blast off from our planet and fly to a precise place in the previously unexplored depths of space-time! And then do it again, and again!

Working in international education with credentials, I sometimes feel like I'm searching for relationships between separate "educational realities". Of course, credentials and educational situations are complicated issues involving a significant amount of subjective human behavior. As a result, simple arithmetic is insufficient for understanding comparative education, and we may never have credential evaluation solutions as precise as the results of a mechanical-physics equation. Nonetheless, I certainly believe we can reduce biased decision making in our field and improve fair treatment of applicants by using transparent and consistent, evidence-oriented methods. Eventually, if we collect and exchange enough information in a coherent manner, we might even build our own shared reality in international education!



Drew Feder

President, Credential Consultants

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*Credential Consultants is an Affiliate Member of
Association of International Credential Evaluators*

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Academic Credentials Evaluation Institute

MEMBERSHIP

Interested in becoming a member of AICE? Please visit our website at www.aice-eval.org and learn about our membership categories and contact us at info@aice-eval.org with any questions you may have.

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