

# Engineering education world

*Contributions are invited for this feature. News items on policies that concern the engineering education world, new courses and curricula either of a unique nature or of international interest, new innovative laboratories and concepts, funding news for engineering research projects involving international participation, special international continuing education courses and news, industry-university interaction, engineering faculty news, and developments in engineering education of international interest. Please send news items and conference information to the Editor-in-Chief. Public relations offices of universities and human resources divisions in industry are requested to contact the Editor with news items concerning engineering education and training.*

## United Kingdom/Asia

### *Top British engineering universities to bolster prestige in Asia*

Student recruitment efforts world-wide are suffering from financial and political crises in the Middle East and Asia. Members of 17 top British engineering research universities are giving a series of lectures in Southeast Asia to counter criticisms that the quality of British higher education is declining. It is expected that the promotional tour may also help student recruitment, highlighting an alternative to Australian and United States institutions. The Universities represented are Aberdeen, Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Heriot-Watt, Liverpool, Newcastle, Oxford, Reading, Southampton and Strathclyde, Imperial College, University College London and UMIST, all of whose engineering departments have high research ratings. With backing from the Royal Academy of Engineering the group is giving lectures on advanced engineering research in Singapore and Malaysia, as well as a special lecture series for undergraduates. **Tim Sellar**, director of Imperial's international office, said there had been bad publicity, particularly in Singapore, about falling standards and dubious admissions procedures in Britain. 'I am not giving any credence to such rumours. But we

are trying to redress the balance. We would wish to be compared to Harvard and MIT', he said.

## Denmark

### *New degrees are controversial*

Denmark's rectors and students fear that a planned comprehensive reform of 195 institutions that includes giving them powers to award controversial bachelor degrees, will 'dilute academic education'. Similar moves in Germany, to make the country more competitive, including Master's degrees, are initiated more carefully as pilot projects. The plan envisages that engineering colleges, teacher training colleges and other institutions offering non-degree courses will either collaborate with universities or form separate regional, cross-disciplinary centres of education. One aim of the new degree courses is to encourage 38,000 school-leavers entering higher education to choose shorter courses at institutions with spare capacity, rather than study the full 5 or more years at the traditional universities. **Ole Vig Jensen**, the minister of education, will give the four-year courses, bachelor status 'so the graduates can get access to certain university courses above bachelor level'. Opponents of the scheme claim that the Bachelor

graduates have poorer chances of employment. The prestige of research at universities is also affected due to the cross-over facilities from the Bachelor to graduate studies. **Henrik Toft Jensen**, rector of Roskilde University Centre, said: 'The bachelor title goes with education based on research. If you are educated outside the universities, you won't have easier access to our post-graduate courses just because you've been awarded a bachelor's degree'.

## USA

*This year's ranking list of graduate and professional universities is out*

'America's Best Graduate Schools', which *US News and World Report* has published every year since 1987, rates more than 800 graduate and professional programs in the United States. The graduate and professional programs named as the best in their fields included:

- Columbia University's Teachers College (education)
- Harvard University (architecture)
- Harvard University (medical research)
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology (engineering)
- New York University's Stern School of Business (part-time business)
- Stanford University (business)
- University of Washington (primary-care medicine)
- Yale University (law)

The rankings have come under strong criticism in recent years for being too narrow, for being based on poor methodologies, and for driving colleges to submit false information decisions to improve their rank. Some students and college administrators in the last few months have called on universities to refuse to provide *US News* with data for the survey or to otherwise boycott the rankings. There are other rankings which may turn out very different from the famous *US News* list. A typical comment comes from University of Wisconsin Vice Chancellor **John Torphy**, 'Rankings in *US News* and other magazines—high or low—should be taken with a grain of salt. We feel that other reviews of graduate programs, such as the National Research Council (NRC), are more methodologically rigorous and accurate'. Editors at the magazine have said, however, that the rankings are offered as one tool among many for people trying to figure out how best to spend their money on education.

*Student survey on use of computer technologies*

As the use of computers and the Internet is increasingly incorporated into curricula, a new survey establishes the usefulness of media technologies in higher education. The survey will collect students' opinions on whether media technologies were beneficial for their studies.

Comparison of courses that did not include e-mail discussions with courses that did will be made. Students are asked how likely they were, in the course that included e-mail, to participate in discussions, to talk to experts outside the classroom, and to receive timely comments from their instructor. The questions asked are in two sections, educational strategies and student academic and demographic information. The Educational Strategies program is designed to measure technology use and changes in six types of teaching and learning practices: active learning, collaborative learning, student/faculty interaction, time on task, project-based learning, and student retention. The Student Academic and Demographic Information program is designed to help evaluators make comparisons across groups, identify special populations, and control for differences among groups. The survey is conducted by the TLT (Teaching, Learning and Technology). It is affiliated to the American Association for Higher Education, and its mission is to help colleges integrate information technology into their classrooms. The questions are available on diskette or paper, and they come with a 160-page handbook. License fees range from \$550 to \$2,500 for non-profit educational institutions, depending on the size of their enrolments. Contact: [flashlight@wiche.edu](mailto:flashlight@wiche.edu)

## Israel

*Private scheme to upgrade degrees*

Israel College is a model of a foreign university which has been set up in Israel. It offers continuing-education programs leading to a bachelor's degree from New England College or a master's degree from Clark University, both US institutions. The programs at Israel College are aimed largely at Israelis who are already employed but seek a degree or an additional credential to help them advance professionally. **Yigal Ne'eman**, president of Israel College, says that the college meets a need that is not covered by the state system. In Israel, one can attend a technical college and become a certified 'practical engineer' in two years. But if that person wanted to go on to earn a bachelor's degree in engineering, he was forced by Israeli universities to start over again, with no credit for earlier studies. 'So practical engineers went to the United States', where, Mr. Ne'eman says, they completed an engineering degree in a year or two. 'Then they would get job offers in American industry, and they stayed there'. As a member of the Board of Governors of the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology, Mr. Ne'eman says he tried without success to persuade it to develop a continuing-education program for people who wanted to turn professional certification into an academic degree. The program which he set up involved two semesters of study in Israel, followed by a summer semester at the partner

American institution. New England College and Clark University accepted the idea, and now Israel College offers qualified students a chance to earn bachelor's and master's degrees in communications, and other subjects. About 900 students are enrolled this year, half of them in the advanced-degree programs. They pay \$7,900 for the bachelor's-degree program or \$8,500 for the master's. The fee includes tuition as well as roundtrip airfare and room and board on the US campus for the summer session. This model is a result of pervasive cross-over difficulties for students studying for professional degrees under Continental systems. The largest engineering system with such crossover problems is the German system where the professional engineer and the university engineer study in non articulated stages.

### Conferences

#### **The International University, Local and Global Roles**

3–5 April 1998

London, UK

Contact: The American International University,  
Richmond, TW10 6JP, UK

Tel: +44 181 332 8286; Fax: +44 181 332 1297

#### **CALISCE '98**

##### **International Conference on Computer Aided Learning**

15–18 June 1998

Chalmers University, Goteborg, Sweden

e-mail: calisce@pedu.chalmers.se

<http://www.pedu.chalmers.se/calosce98.html>

#### **ED-Media & Ed Telecom 98**

##### **World Conference on Educational Multimedia and Hypermedia**

##### **World conference on Educational Telecommunications**

20–25 June 1998

Freiburg, Germany

Contact: ED-Media 98/AACE

P.O. Box 2966, Charlottesville, VA 22902, USA

Tel: +1 804 973 3987; Fax: +1 804 978 7449

e-mail: AACE@virginia.edu

<http://www.aace.org>

#### **American Society for Engineering Education Annual Conference**

28 June–1 July 1998

Seattle, Washington

Contact: ASEE,

1818 N Street, Washington, DC 20036, USA

Tel: +1 202 331 3500; Fax: +1 202 265 8504

#### **Higher Education for Europe H3E**

Gent, Belgium

1–5 July 1998

Contact: Semicco,

Lange Kruisstraat 12D, B-9000 Gent, Belgium

Tel: +32 92338660; Fax: +32 2338597

e-mail: h3e@vtk.rug.ac.be

<http://www.student.rug.ac.be/vtk/h3e>

#### **IEEE Multimedia Engineering and Education Conference**

7–9 July 1998

The City University, Hong Kong

Contact: Robin Bradbeer,

Dept. of Electronic Engineering, The City University of  
Hong Kong

Tel: +852 27887199; Fax: +852 27887791

e-mail: eertbrad@city.edu.hk

#### **Tenth Conference on Assessing Quality in Higher Education**

Penang, Malaysia,

27–29 July 1998

Sponsored by Indiana University-Purdue University

Indianapolis

Co-hosted by Institut Teknologi Mara & Universiti  
Malaya

Contact: H+E Associates,

12a Church St, Stiffkey, Nr. Wells-next-the-Sea,

Norfolk NR23 1QJ, England

Tel: +44 1328 830355; Fax: +44 1328 830339

e-mail: 106316.3622@compuserve.com

#### **SEFI Annual Conference**

##### **European Society for Engineering Education**

2–4 September 1998

Helsinki, Finland

Contact: SEFI Conference Secretariat,

Lifelong Learning Institute, P.O. Box 8000, 0215 Espoo,

Finland

Tel: +358 9414009; Fax: +358 9451 40 60

#### **Global Congress on Engineering Education**

6–11 September 1998

Cracow, Poland

Contact: Zenon J. Pudlowski,

Monash University, Clayton, Melbourne, Australia

Tel: +61 39905 4977; Fax: +61 39905 1547

e-mail: zjp@eng.monash.edu.au

#### **EQAS '98**

##### **Second International Conference on the Quality**

##### **Assurance Within Engineering Education**

13–16 September 1998

Zakopane, Poland

Contact: EQAS Conference Secretariat,

University of Mining and Metallurgy,

Al. Mickiewicza 30, PL-30-059, Cracow, Poland

Tel: +4812 6173103; Fax: +4812 6173531

e-mail: EQAS98@UCLAGH.EDU.PL

#### **Engineering Education '98**

##### **International Symposium IGIP**

14–18 September 1998

Moscow, Russia

Contact: MADI TU,

64 Leningradsky Prospect, 125829 Moscow,

A-319, GSP-47, Russia

Tel: +7 095 15510171; Fax: +7 095 1517911

e-mail: igip@madi.msk.su

#### **Pedagogics in Design Education**

19–20 November 1998

State Scientific Library, University of West Bohemia,

Pilsen, Czech Republic

Contact: Prof. Stanislav Hosnedl,

Dept. of Machine Design, Univerzitetni 8, 306 14 Pilsen,

Czech Republic

Tel: +420 19276253; Fax: +420 19279990

e-mail: boruskio@kks.zcu.cz