Student-faculty relations strained

By Ron Randall

Aggravated by such events as student strikes and extra-curricular activities, student-faculty relations in India are not generally conducive to effective education. They are controlled by a union. There is some resentment over this, for the money does not get planned back into a diverse and active program of school activities.

Students at Delhi University say that most of this money finances the travels of the student teams. The only other prime source of money for the student government comes from the annual dramatic show, which is organized by the student government.

And where does this money go? Into the purchase of a water-cooler to be placed in a separate part of the campus as the major achievement of the current government.

The students’ lack of extra funds largely precludes the birth of other organized student activities. Their very real economic insecurity also dampens their spirits. The incentive of having a good activity cast as a selling point when looking for a job doesn’t exist. Jobs are very scarce and school activities have as much of a bad reputation as a good one.

Student feedback is not permitted in India because of the school’s petty bureaucracy, which precludes the formal and informal complaints of the students. Outside influences are on the government side, such as the national political parties, which make the school administration primarily wary.

Out of the few, and hence important, sources of student-faculty cooperation lies in the close connection with the activities of the World University Service, which is always representative for any key issue in student-faculty committee. Working on a large and meaningful project, for which significant financial assistance from WUS International might be obtained, both sides are forced to work responsibly and respect each other.

The World University Service has active committees at most of the larger Indian universities. Their accomplishments in student welfare have been real, and more than reasonable for the fee, and for the students especially, than those of the student governments.

Hence WUS is very highly regarded in India; the present Vice-President of India once headed the Indian National WUS Committee, and India has an excellent chance for healing the current strain and state of student-faculty relations over there.