Fewer Chinese to study in US

By Kenneth Snow

According to a report from the US - China Education Clearinghouse in Washington DC, Chinese officials have said that the pool of students and scholars who need to study in the US has begun to shrink and that there is no limit to the number of new students and scholars of about 300 a year. By mid 1981 there were about 4,000 students from China studying at American Colleges and Universities.

The report stated that the Cultural Revolution produced a large number of students needing to go to American Universities as soon as exchanges became possible. "For a variety of reasons including assignment to jobs, impossibility of more stringent age limits, and the fact that many of the best candidates from this group have already been sent abroad - this pool is being depleted rapidly."

The report notes that eventually many of China's new rigorous universities will consolidate a new, high quality pool of potential applicants to attend graduate programs at American Universities. The report concludes, "the total number will be smaller from year to year."

In preparing the report on the status of these students, the Clearinghouse sent questionnaires to August and Sent students at colleges and universities that thought to had helped Chinese students and scholars. MIT will receive a copy of the questionnaire.

The 180 institutions that responded said that over a three year period beginning in 1978 - 79, 346 Chinese students and scholars had come to the United States. This total included 399 under graduates, 445 graduate students, and 1945 "visiting scholars." These people are professors and scientists from China who came to the United States for what amount to post doctoral study. The remaining 467 people were classified as "other." These students are primarily students studying English as a second language.

The Clearinghouse has estimated 3,000 Chinese students on State Department statistics on the number of visas issued by the US embassy in Peking and by American consulates in Shanghai and Guangzhou.

The report notes that 3467 is only 54 percent of the 6000 reported by the State Department, even though most schools known to have a large number of Chinese nationals responded to the questionnaire. MIT did respond.

The report suggested many reasons for the discrepancy. These included that Chinese students who receive visas do not come to the US. The remaining 2500 students are distributed among more institutions than the list compiled by the Clearinghouse. Also, many more students from China come to the US than US students going to China. The report adds that strict numerical equivalence is not and should not be a factor shaping exchanges.

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