

HOPE Updates – 2022 No.5

15th May 2022, Edited by: Daniel Zheng



**A volunteer delivers food in a compound
in Shanghai during lockdown**

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News and editorial from HOPE

- *From the editor: Stay calm and we'll never walk alone*
- *HOPE pre-departure briefing sees a full house*
- *HOPE UK office's visits to partner universities get full support*
- *UK schools: How to maintain academic strength and pastoral care?*
- *HOPE's English UK membership renewed*
- *UCL Career Service Workshop hears HOPE's voice*

Highlights from local media

- ✧ *Renmin University pulls itself out of overseas ranking systems*
- ✧ *Dates set for China's 2022 national college entrance exam*
- ✧ *Sino-US ties in education face challenges*
- ✧ *China denies suspending passports, invalidating foreign residency cards*
- ✧ *Rumor about confiscated passports at local airport dismissed*
- ✧ *Xi's letter offers encouragement to British students tackling climate change*

From the editor: **Stay calm and we'll never walk alone**

This spring is destined to be a challenging one for HOPE. Lockdown in Shanghai continues and it has been almost 50 days for staff in Shanghai not to be able to leave their compounds. It could be so depressing while life and work should still go on. Meanwhile, various disturbing rumors and “guesstimation” on government policies and international affairs have been prevailing in the country which create further uncertainties on the international education market! What shall we do? Shall we stand still or stay calm and find solutions?

Fortunately, we choose the later one, and we are still busy and enjoying the work! While enjoying more time with our families and kids, we have been thinking hard to diversify our business, seeking more opportunities to work with you, and working hard to organize various online events. We are in a position to explore more educational products and services to our clients both domestically and internationally. Apart from direct students recruitment, we are also spending more workload on students online training, teacher development and training, students' career service, extra curriculum activities with international elements, in-country international summer and winter camp etc.. In the past month, we also organized quite a few online events, such as our annual pre-departure briefing, seminar for career service, panel discussion with UK schools on post-pandemic services for students, and panel discussion on international education planning with local bank. Our UK office visited several partner universities in April and early May from which the videoed interviews will be used for media promotion here in China.

We're very grateful to you for all the support you gave us, and going forward, we'll work more closely and widely with you to serve our clients. As a LFC fan, I am personally very confident that, as the tune in Anfield, **we'll never walk alone!**



HOPE pre-departure briefing see a full house

HOPE's annual pre-departure briefing for students was held online on Saturday 14th May attracting over 140 families to attend. This is our yearly event to help the students going to the UK this autumn fully prepare their visa application, accommodation booking, luggage list, traveling, studying skills, and culture adaptability as well as knowledge on guardianship services, security and health and banking in the UK,



Due to the pandemic, students and families are facing a lot of uncertainties and unexpected changes of policies, and are very eager to get any suggestions from the experts. The event offered the students detailed advice and practical knowledge and skills they need. Apart from HOPE's senior managers in China, HOPE UK office, HSBC and a students apartment service company also joined this highly commented event.



HOPE's visits to partner universities get full support

In order to better promote our partner institutions and support our students currently in the UK, HOPE UK office started a series of university tour from February. Dake Xu, Senior Project Manager who is based in London, planned to visit 15-20 partner universities during which he would interview international offices, career offices, admission offices, relevant academic schools, and HOPE students. Short video of the interviews and campus tour will be used to promote the institutions via various media. The campaign has been welcomed by the universities and got their full support.



Dake Xu (left) is visiting Cranfield University

After the visits to Loughborough University, University of Leicester, Liverpool John Moores University, and York University, York St John's University in February and March, Dake visited Cranfield University, University of Essex, University of Sussex and UCL in April and early May. The short videos and some live interviews and dialogue with students in China have been very popular among both current and potential applicants. Dake will continue his university tour in May and June including a trip to Scotland.

UK schools: how to maintain academic strength and pastoral care

An online panel discussion on “How UK schools and colleges maintain both academic strength and pastoral care” was organized by HOPE on 27th April. Hosted by Judy Zhu, Chief Counsellor for school application from HOPE, four panelists, Danielle Clarke(Principal) and Sabrina Deng (International Liaison Manager) from St. Joseph’s College, David Cooper (Oxbridge Admission Tutor/Ex-Principal) and Arran Quickfall(International Manager) from John Leggott College shared their experience with 45 families via Zoom.



Four panelists: Danielle Clarke (up left), Sabrina Deng (Up right), David Cooper (down left) and Arran Quickfall

Due to the pandemic, the ever-increasing school applications have been down for two years compared with the figures in 2019, as most parents in China worry about the safety of their kids and progression to good universities under current study mode. In order to showcase UK school's continuing effort and capability to offer the quality services to international students, HOPE invited both boarding school and state sixth form college representatives to speak directly to the parents to ease the worries.

The panel discussion was followed by a Q and A session, and most parents commented the event "practical" and "rumor dismissing" according to the feedback collected by HOPE counsellors.

HOPE renews its English UK membership

HOPE's English UK membership was renewed in April for another two years. HOPE joined as English UK partner agency in 2016.



English UK is the national membership association of accredited English language teaching centres in the UK. Its 340+ member centres are fully accredited by the

British Council to teach English. It represents the UK's ELT sector nationally and internationally, promoting the highest quality in teaching and student service.

HOPE has been working with quite a few member centres to recruit students for pre-sessional academic English, summer schools as well as teacher training programme. Since the outbreak of Covid-19, HOPE also works closely with some member centres for online one-to-one tuition due to the increasing demand from the China market.

UCL Career Service Workshop hears HOPE's voice

Daniel Zheng, Managing Director of HOPE was invited to attend UCL's "Working in China" panel event on Wednesday 27th April, via Zoom. The event forms part of IOE Careers Festival running over several weeks from the end of April. This event is specifically for students from UCL's Faculty of Education and Society (the IOE).



As one of the four panelists, Daniel shared his view during the panel discussion and the Q and A session conducted by UCL Career service advisor Colm Fallon, on the following topics: what's the biggest difference between working in China vs the UK; what is the best time to apply to jobs, internships, graduate programmes? the value of UK education to employers? Daniel also gave his tips for successful applications and interviews based on his experience in staff recruitment.

Three other guests joining the panel include representatives from Daystar Academy, Shanghai United International School, and Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University.

Renmin University pulls itself out of overseas ranking systems

By ZOU SHUO | China Daily | Updated: 2022-05-11 10:04

Renmin University of China has decided not to participate in any overseas university rankings, the website of China National Radio has reported, citing multiple sources familiar with the matter.

The university's administrators have reached a consensus and made the decision to withdraw the university from overseas rankings, which conforms with the overall direction of China's education development and will become a trend, the report said.

The withdrawal reflects the autonomy and courage of Chinese universities, education and culture, a source said, adding that China's knowledge system, which has lasted for thousands of years, is the longest and most extensive in the world.

Previously in its 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) and overall plan of building world-class universities and disciplines, Nanjing University said it no longer considers overseas rankings as a development target, according to a recent release from the website of the Communist Party of China Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and the National Supervisory Commission.

A source from Lanzhou University told CNR that the university has never participated in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings.

It submitted information to QS World University Rankings once when approached by the institution but has not done so afterward, the source said.

Educational autonomy featuring high quality, profound cultural inheritance and Chinese characteristics have long been envisioned and underscored by top authorities in China.

In his visit to Renmin University of China last month, President Xi Jinping called on young people to blaze a new path in building world-class universities with Chinese characteristics, rather than simply following foreign standards and models.

In a visit to Peking University in 2014, Xi said there will never be a second Harvard, Yale, Stanford, MIT or Cambridge, but there will always be a first PKU, Tsinghua, Zhejiang, Fudan and Nanjing university.

By simply following others and letting go of Chinese characteristics, the country's building of world-class universities will never be successful, he stressed.

Hong Dayong, director of the Ministry of Education's department of degree management and postgraduate education, said no consideration was given to the rankings of universities or research papers published in reviewing universities to include in its list for the "double world-class project".

The list encourages universities to pursue distinctive and differentiated development, serve national development strategies and nurture top and innovative talent, he said at a news conference.

In response to a proposal made in 2019 by a deputy of the National People's Congress about regulating university rankings published by social organizations, the ministry said these rankings have played a positive role, but also have many shortcomings.

The ministry said it would guide universities to treat the rankings rationally. In its evaluation of universities and disciplines, the ministry pays more attention to their talent cultivation and actual contributions.

The ministry would also work with authorities to punish acts of unfair competition in the rankings.

Xiong Bingqi, director of 21st Century Education Research Institute, said while Chinese universities and disciplines have risen steadily in overseas rankings in recent years, their global influence and attractiveness to top international students have not improved much as climbing the rankings is mainly due to more papers being published.

Judging whether a university is world-class or not depends on whether it has cultivated top talent and made original and significant research for world development, he said.

Zhou Guangli, education professor and executive director of the evaluation research center at Renmin University of China, said that for a long time, "foreign standards and rankings" based on research papers published has put huge public opinion pressure on Chinese universities.

These rankings value the university's scale, number of papers, academic research and development in natural science, while overlooking talent cultivation, educational quality and social sciences, he said.

Xie Bo, a professor at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, said different university ranking institutions have different standards of evaluation, so some universities actively promote their high positions in certain rankings while hiding other low rankings.

The rankings have far-reaching impacts, such as in student enrollment, teacher recruitment, and even resource allocation and social impact, Xie said in an article published in Guangming Daily.

Universities can be evaluated, but they should not be ranked, which leads to excessive competition, and they should return to their most fundamental task of cultivating talent, the article added.

Dates set for China's 2022 national college entrance exam

Xinhua | Updated: 2022-05-07 21:05



A high school senior studies behind piles of books at a school in Handan city, North China's Hebei province, May 18, 2021.

BEIJING -- China's national college entrance exam for 2022, also known as *gaokao*, will be held on June 7 and 8, the Ministry of Education (MOE) announced Saturday.

The MOE called for efforts to strictly implement COVID-19 prevention measures and improve contingency plans for possible COVID-19 resurgence amid the upcoming national college entrance exam.

In 2020, the national exam was held on July 7 and 8 after being delayed by a month due to COVID-19, but it was back to schedule last year.

The Shanghai Municipal government Saturday said the city's entrance examinations for colleges and senior high schools will be postponed for a month due to the latest resurgence of COVID-19 infections.

Gaokao is deemed critical to social mobility and national talent selection in China. More than 10 million students took the exam across the country in 2021.

Sino-US ties in education face challenges

By YIFAN XU in Washington | China Daily | Updated: 2022-05-05 07:26



Staff members chat behind Chinese and US flags displayed at the 2021 China International Fair for Trade in Services in Beijing, on Sept 4, 2021.

Disruptions in two nations' academic links 'not likely to see reset', expert says

Decoupling in higher education is real and reciprocal as educational exchanges between the United States and China face challenging times, experts said.

In an in-person and online event hosted by the Wilson Center and the Carter Center on April 21, panelists discussed the trend of education decoupling and how the two countries should address it based on a new report, "Finding Firmer Grounds: The Role of Higher Education in US-China Relations."

"For the past few years, the pervasive view in Washington about educational exchanges with China is no longer one of hope for positive change through engagement but rather one of fear that these engagements may undermine American supremacy and American security," Cheng Li, director of the John L. Thornton China Center, said at the event.

Li is a senior fellow in the Foreign Policy program at the Brookings Institution and one of the report's authors.

He mentioned former president Donald Trump and his "game-changing policy initiatives", including but not limited to sensationalizing China as an existential threat to the United States, launching the since - discontinued China Initiative to target Chinese and Chinese American scientists, and claiming that Beijing is "weaponizing" Chinese students enrolled at US universities.

Some expected a different approach from the Biden administration, but that has yet to materialize.

"The Biden administration has reversed some of these initiatives and has made it clear that the educational exchange in China will continue. But noticeably, the bipartisan Strategic Competition Act of 2021 by the US Congress was very much in the same spirit as the Trump administration's approach," said Li.

That act addresses the US supply chain along with research and development issues to reduce dependence on Chinese-manufactured products in semiconductors, critical electronics, defense components and automobile parts.

Julia Chang Bloch, founder and executive chair of the US-China Education Trust, talked about the drop in the numbers of Chinese students in the US and of US students in China. She also mentioned the decline of institutional relationships between educational institutions of both countries.

The election of President Joe Biden brought a change in tone but not much change in policy, Bloch said, adding that China-US educational ties are not likely to see a reset anytime soon, as previously hoped.

"Education decoupling has become real. It is two-way, and it is more than just a casualty of the pandemic and rising tensions in US-China relations," she said.

Bloch noted that some long-existing problems have gotten more serious in recent years.

"In 2009, eight times more Chinese students came to the US for education than Americans who studied in China, but in 2018, the imbalance multiplied to 30 times," she said.

"Both countries need to consider the consequences of a future without Americans who have firsthand knowledge of China to manage the bilateral relationship. This is arguably even more critical when tensions run higher," Bloch said.

The US should not underestimate the strong Western influence on Chinese elites resulting from four decades of educational exchanges and should realize that educational decoupling with China would hurt the US edge in science and technology, said Li.

Li also pinned much of the hopes for better US-China relations on the younger generation. He mentioned Gu Ailing, a freestyle skier born in the US who competed for her mother's homeland of China, winning two gold medals and one silver at the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics.

"Perhaps like many youths, I was stunningly impressed by her brilliance in both sport competition and at her press conference. She reflects the post-2000-generation or Generation Z: progressive in values, cosmopolitan or global-minded in vision, sharp and nondogmatic in voice," said Li.

Polls conducted in the US over the past decade have consistently shown that people in the US under age 29 have a 15 to 30 percent more favorable view of China than older generations.

"It is all up to Generation Z to save US-China ties," Li said. "China will always be a factor in US foreign policy, global politics and everything. There is no problem, no global problem in the world today, that can be solved without China," Bloch said.

The organizer and one of the authors of the report, Yawei Liu, senior adviser to China Focus at the Carter Center, introduced the report as the third in a series under the theme "Finding Firmer Ground".

The first one is on the role of civil society, and the second report discusses agricultural cooperation. The next will explore the role of high tech in US-China relations.

China denies suspending passports, invalidating foreign residency cards

Reuters 13:10 UTC+8, 2022-05-13

China's immigration authority is still providing services for necessary trips outside the country, it said on Friday, denying rumors that passport issuances were halted and that residency cards for living in foreign countries were being invalidated.

Officials have promptly processed certificates for people who need to travel abroad for necessary and urgent matters such as study, scientific research, trade and businesses and medical issues, the National Immigration Administration said in a statement.

The NIA was responding to what it said were "foreign media reports" that falsely said the agency had suspended passport issuances and had invalidated residency cards issued by foreign countries to Chinese citizens eligible to live overseas by cutting off the corners.

The statement followed the NIA's announcement on Thursday that it would "strictly limit" unnecessary overseas travels by Chinese citizens to minimize the risks of a resurgence in COVID-19 cases caused by infections among international travelers.

"There remain great uncertainties in the development of the pandemic and a big risk of getting infected during trips overseas," the NIA said in the statement on Friday, which was published on social media.

"People in the country should continue not to travel abroad for unnecessary, non-urgent purposes," it said.

Source: Reuters Editor: Wang Qingchu

Rumor about confiscated passports at local airport dismissed

Lu Feiran 14:01 UTC+8, 2022-05-13

The Shanghai General Station of Immigration Inspection dismissed a rumor that it confiscated two passports and French residence cards.

A rumor spread online that two people "tried very hard" to reach Hongqiao International Airport during lockdown to catch a flight back to France, but had their passports and residence cards confiscated by customs officials.

In a statement issued on Friday, the station of immigration said inbound and outbound services from Hongqiao Airport were suspended in March 2020, and there haven't been any international flights departing from Hongqiao since then.

Immigration officials urged people not to fabricate and spread such rumors.

Source: SHINE Editor: Wang Yanlin

Xi's letter offers encouragement to British students tackling climate change

Source: Xinhua April 23, 2022

LONDON, April 23 (Xinhua) -- "It's really exciting," said Manon, an 8-year-old British girl, after receiving a reply letter from Chinese President Xi Jinping on Thursday.

Manon is a student from Francis Holland School, a girls' school in London. Year-4 students of this school wrote a letter to Xi about the urgency of tackling climate change, conveying their cherished wish for the future of humanity.

On Thursday morning, Zheng Zeguang, Chinese ambassador to Britain, delivered Xi's letter to Francis Holland School.

"With your mind set on preserving the planet we all call home, you sent a letter to President Xi Jinping about climate change. President Xi took this matter very seriously. Despite his busy schedule, he read your letter carefully and wrote back, expressing wholehearted care for your concerns and ardent expectations for your generation," said Zheng.



Chinese Ambassador to Britain Zheng Zeguang (L) hands a reply letter from Chinese President Xi Jinping to Lucy Elphinstone, Headmistress of Francis Holland School, at the school in London, Britain, April 21, 2022.

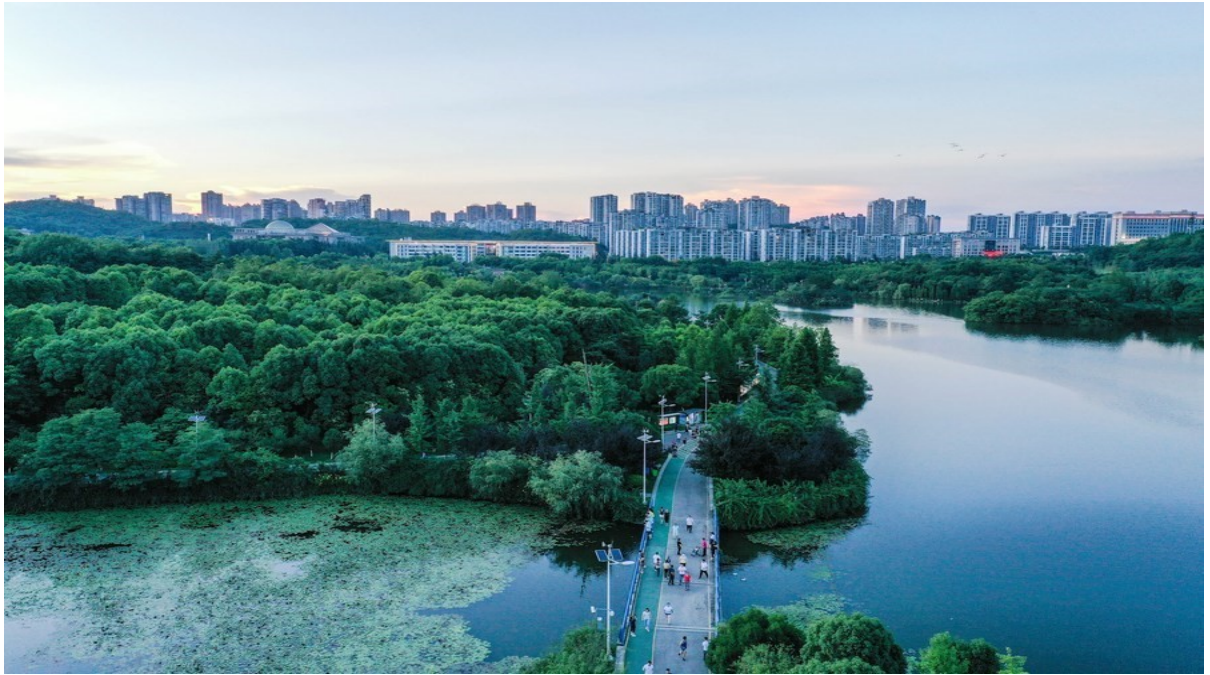
In his letter, Xi encouraged the British pupils to communicate with their Chinese peers, allow the concept of green development to take root in their hearts and grow up to become active builders of the beautiful home for mankind.

"I want to tell President Xi, thank you for responding," Manon told Xinhua after listening to Xi's letter. "We care about climate change, and we think it's really important to help the world become better."

On behalf of students in her grade, 9-year-old Nina Lai wrote the letter to Xi. She told Xinhua that she was thrilled to receive Xi's reply.

"It was a lovely letter," said teacher Lottie Adams. "Xi said that rivers and mountains are just as important as, if not more important than silver and gold. For

me, that was the line that really stood out and really touched me. That's such a powerful message for the girls to learn."



Aerial photo taken on July 7, 2021 shows residents taking a walk at Guanshanhu Park in Guiyang, southwest China's Guizhou Province.

"The letter was beautifully worded," said Lucy Elphinstone, headmistress of Francis Holland School, adding Xi "is a man who appreciates the beauty of the planet and the wonder of nature."

Elphinstone said Xi's letter is an encouragement for the students and signals to them that "the world is a beautiful and precious place, full of resources that we must protect, and the children of the world must work together to ensure that future is safe."