

The current situation of higher education in Taiwan and the educational development in Asia and the World

For Asia University President's Forum

by Dr. Min-Teh Yu,

Providence University, Taiwan

October, 2005

I will give a brief review on the current situation of higher education in Taiwan and discuss how the situation in Taiwan can link with the educational development in Asia and the World. The review covers four dimensions: number of students, tuition, government subsidy and other resources at public and private and international students.

1. Birth Rate, Students and Admission Rate

Table 1A: Significant Birth Rate Drops in Recent 20 years

(in thousands)

Year	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Birth	413	404	382	370	345	308	313	341	315	335	321	321
Year	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Birth	325	322	329	325	325	271	283	304	260	247	226	216

(Source: statistical data from Ministry of the Interior)

Table 1B: High School Graduates: General vs. Vocational

(in thousands)

Year	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
General	76.78	79.36	84.02	89.58	101.69	105.49	112.60	124.74	119.29
Vocational	157.93	162.64	159.24	158.55	152.58	143.38	134.01	114.04	99.11

(Source: statistical data from Ministry of Education)

Table 1C: Admission: Students and Rates

Year		1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
General Universities	Admitted Students	72471	75281	77455	78562	87059	89035	88991
	Admission Rate (%)	59.83	57.70	61.36	80.41	83.22	87.05	89.08
Technical Colleges	Admitted Students	---	---	---	48460	62422	62940	63470
	Admission Rate (%)	---	---	---	48.00	64.51	73.03	70.25

(Source: University Admission Council, and Technical and Vocational Colleges Admission Federation)

2. Resources Allocation at Public and Private Universities.

The resources available at the public universities are much more those at private ones, but the gap is narrower due to the decline of subsidy to the public universities.

Table 2A: Cost per University Student

(in thousands NT\$)

Year	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Public	211.6	229.6	196.5	203.6	183.2	188.0
Private	99.8	119.5	115.1	121.8	124.4	124.1

(Source: Ministry of Education)

The main difference of the gap in resource is because that the subsidy of the MOE differs substantially between the public and private ones. For each individual student, the public universities on average receive 7 to 10 times of subsidies from MOE than their private counterparts.

Table 2B: MOE Subsidy to Each University Student

(in thousands NT\$)

Year	199	199	199	199	199	199	200	200	200	200	200
------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4
Public	202	186	224	184	166	161	148	144	137	129	118
Private	12.8	13.4	12.8	15.1	17.2	18.9	21.4	21.3	20.5	20.7	19.7

(Source: Ministry of Education)

The public universities still rely heavily on government money. In addition to the MOE annual subsidy, National Science Council (NSC) provides research grants to the academic researchers in the public and private universities. The NSC grants ranges from 5 to 25 percent of university budget, and the percentage is generally lower at the private and higher at the public. NSC grants are meant to support to research activities of academic projects and generally do not help the university operation financially.

Table 2C: Sources of Funding for Public Universities

(in percentage)

Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Tuition (%)	12.8	15.1	17.0	18.0	18.8
MOE Subsidy (%)	56.3	55.9	54.2	52.0	50.5
NSC + Others (%)	30.9	29.0	28.8	30.0	30.7

(Source: Ministry of Education)

The private universities, on the contrary, rely mainly on tuition and MOE subsidy for operating. Donations among most universities, private and public, are an insignificant portion of the budget except for 2 or 3 private enterprise-sponsored universities.

Table 2D: Sources of Funding for Private Universities

(in percentage)

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Tuition (%)	56.9	59.1	60.8	59.6	64.4
MOE Subsidy and Donations (%)	21.0	25.7	19.8	19.2	20.6
NSC + Others (%)	22.1	15.1	19.4	21.2	15.0

(Source: Ministry of Education)

Table 2E: Student-Faculty ratio in Higher Education

Year	1994	1997	2000	2004
------	------	------	------	------

Public	14.17	15.11	17.25	20.28
Private	25.37	27.15	30.33	30.12

(Source: Ministry of Education)

3. Tuition

College tuitions in Taiwan are highly regulated by the Ministry of Education (MOE). Any proposed change in tuition has to be approved by the MOE. Recent economic slow-down has made MOE being very restrictive towards approving any request of tuition hike.

Table 3A: Variation in University Tuition

(in percentage)

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Public (%)	4	2.92	0	5.48	- 0.71	4.72	0.04	- 0.01	0.09	2.31	0.51
Private (%)	12	11.11	9.97	10.95	2.89	9.18	4.34	2.73	2.05	1.51	0.32

(Source: Ministry of Education)

As a percentage of NI (national income) per capita, both the tax burden and the tuition are low when compared with other major countries.

Table 3B: College Tuition Among major Areas in 2003-2004

(in percentage)

Country		TW	Kore a	Japan	China	HK	Singapore	USA	UK	Ger.	France
Tax to NI per capita (2003)		16. 8	20	27.1	14.3	8.8	15.8	29.6	37. 4	37.9	45.3
Tuitio n to NI per capita (Public	14. 0	14.36	15.5	53.2- 64.9	22. 3	53.5-223.2	11.7- 49.4	6.5	0	0.5-2.4
	Private	25. 5	26.7	25.1- 31.8	NA	NA	NA	60.2- 76.3	65. 1	53	10.1- 23.9

(Source: Ministry of Education)

5. International Students

While there are many international students come to Taiwan to learn the language (Chinese), the full-time international students for academic program are still very few.

Table 5: Number of International Students

Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
USA	490,933	514,723	547,867	582,996	586,323
Canada	89,910	170,967	133,022	68,820	61,303
France	122,126	129,469	141,616	159,463	180,418
Germany	165,994	175,065	187,027	206,141	227,026
UK	213,206	219,124	205,400	235,174	270,089
China	43,000	52,150	60,000	85,829	77,715
Japan	55,755	64,011	78,812	95,550	109,508
Korea	6,279	6,160	11,646	11,825	12,314
Australia	162,865	188,277	233,408	273,855	303,304
Taiwan	892	945	1,118	1,283	1,568

(Source: Ministry of Education)