

## Global Lessons for Higher Education

In today's global economy, China and India are emerging as new economic superpowers. This status has created a rapidly growing workforce in both countries, which has, in turn, created a huge demand for higher education and well-trained professionals. As both countries struggle to meet this demand in terms of quantity and quality of education, their universities have turned to a variety of models and consultants for the answers.

**GUANGZHOU UNIVERSITY CITY, CHINA**  
In 2003, United States firms Ayers/Saint/Gross and Steffian Bradley Associates teamed to provide design consultation for the creation of a university city and a new university campus in Guangzhou, China. Guangzhou and its surrounding province are experiencing the addition of approximately 100,000 students each year to their higher-education system. Thirty-six colleges and universities are currently located in this city of nine million people. In order to free existing land in the urban areas, the province is creating a university city on the 10,000-acre Xiaoguwei Island in the middle of the Pearl River just south of Guangzhou. When complete, the city will house seven university clusters with multiple institutions sharing common facilities. The total build-out will involve more than 100 million square feet, including educational, commercial, cultural, residential, and retail facilities, to accommodate a total of 250,000 students.

The central district of the island includes the Eco-Park, which provides sports and cultural facilities, including a stadium for 35,000 people, a hotel/conference center, a library, a recreation center, and major lakes

and gardens. The park forms the literal and symbolic center of the university city from which knowledge and water flow.

Within the university city will be Guangzhou University, which will provide seven million square feet for 20,000 students and 5,000 faculty and staff. Unlike the United States, China customarily provides housing for all students and a large portion of the faculty and staff. In order to accommodate this and optimize the beauty of the island, the master plan takes advantage of the spectacular frontage and views of the Pearl River, while connecting the campus to the central area of the island through natural open spaces and greenways.

Due to the urgent mandate for higher education in the region, administrators have adopted an aggressive five-year timeline for the completion of this project. Although numbers and schedules such as these are unheard of in the U.S., they demonstrate the unyielding commitment of administrators and government officials to meet China's exploding educational demands.

**SOUTH ASIA INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE, HYDERABAD, INDIA**

Like China, South Asia is experiencing dynamic economic growth, creating similar demands for higher education and a well-trained workforce. In response to this phenomenon, Asian officials have recognized the need for private institutions of higher education in addition to the traditional public ones found in this region of the world. Originally conceived in 2003 in conjunction with the private international education company Sylvan International Universities (SIU), the South Asia International Institute places strong emphasis on preparing students

# The World Gets Flatter

100 million square-feet for 250,000 students and 60,000 faculty and staff



for successful careers, technical competence, and proficiency in technical/professional communication. To facilitate this vision, SIU administrators retained Ayers/Saint/Gross to provide programming, master planning, and design services for an uninhabited 125-acre site in Hyderabad, a city in south-central India southeast of Mumbai.

The proposed campus is located six miles south of downtown Hyderabad. The site conditions present a series of challenges such as a ridge of rock outcroppings that divides the buildable area, a harsh climate of heat and humidity, and a volatile watershed prone to flooding and drought. Tackling the environmental problems posed will insure a sustainable solution and a positive relationship between the built and natural environments. The planning team used the site's physical characteristics and tendencies as a starting point for the design, establishing a fundamental link between climate, site, building, and master plan.

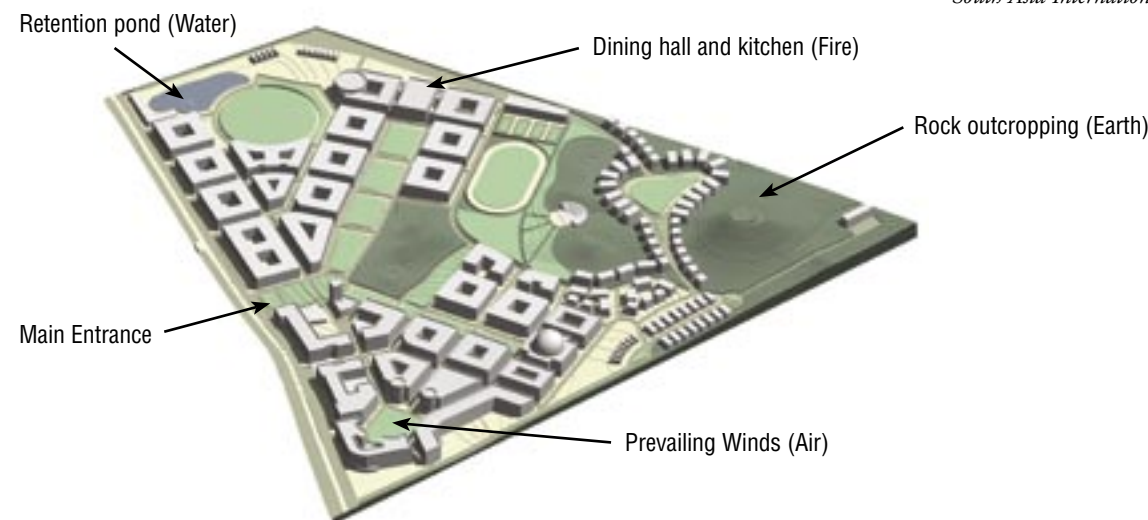
UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

With the end of British governmental control and the birth of the new Hong Kong, this city is facing a dramatic need for a larger and more highly trained professional workforce. In order to meet this need, the region's premiere Far East institution of higher education, the University of Hong Kong, has moved from a three-year model to a four-year model. This decision has led to an immediate need to create space for higher enrollment.

In January 2006, Ayers/Saint/Gross, along with Leigh and Orange, URBIS International, and HKK Associates, was invited to submit planning concepts for the expansion and future growth of the



South Asia International, Hyderabad, India



Indian philosophy embraces Vaastu, a concept based on natural elements and orientation.



Centennial Green and new Learning Center, Hong Kong University

University of Hong Kong. Founded in 1911, the University of Hong Kong is the oldest institution of higher education in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. As the only major institution of English-language education in China, the University of Hong Kong has long been an interface between China and the world. The Centennial Master Plan aims to build upon this historical role and create a physical environment equal to its academic reputation and the international standing of its host city.

Among the biggest challenges were the site's topography and the physical patterns of its natural and built environments. It soon became clear that the most successful strategy would be to strengthen the university's various centers and establish direct connections between them. The topography suggested a campus unified across three distinct zones: East, Central, and West. This was supported in part by relocating several programmatic divisions: Science and Engineering (East), Administration and General Academics (Central), and Liberal Arts and Law (West).



Campus Plan for Hong Kong University

The heart of the Centennial Campus is Centennial Green. A dynamic space of student interaction and relaxation, it is open to the east with a view to Central Campus and to a western view of the city. Its landscaped quadrangle allows casual recreation and formal campus gatherings. Fountains, allées of trees, and lush landscaping provide shade and comfortable seating areas.

Sustainable strategies such as ties to transit, renewable energy, and high performance buildings balance today's needs with the long-term environmental, social, and economic health of the University, Hong Kong Island, and the region. Visual and physical connections between the city and the university are strengthened, buildings and campus spaces increase casual student and faculty interaction, and learning and research centers provide dynamic space for interdisciplinary teaching and public research. The new Centennial Campus is a bold statement on the direction of higher education in the twenty-first century.

Just as the baby boom impacted the eastern portion of the United States in the 1960s and 1970s, along with the current enrollment surge impacting colleges and universities in the western portion of the U.S., the Far East is facing an urgent and costly need to meet an explosive demand for higher education. This is a phenomenon unlike any this area of the world has faced, and it is clear that the trend of turning to the West for examples and guidance will continue in the coming decade and beyond.