JWT

WORK IN PROGRESS
UNIVERSITY LIFE

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"**T**he task of a university is the creation of the future, so far as rational thought and civilized modes of appreciation can affect the issue." So said in 1938 British mathematician, logician and philosopher Alfred North Whitehead, who spent time at Cambridge, University College London and Harvard. While campus life may not be entirely, ahem, rational and civilized, there is no contesting that universities are all about the future.

Today's students represent the Millennial Generation, a technologically savvy, success driven and hopeful group, despite the terrorist violence and corporate scandals they grew up with. And everyone from marketers to employers wants to learn more about what makes them tick and how they're going to shape the coming decades.

Colleges and universities are a breeding ground for the under-25 culture. Students can spend anywhere from a couple of years to seven or eight on campus with limited or no parental supervision, becoming exposed to new types of people, new technologies, new information, new cultures and new forms of entertainment. The life experiences they gain will help determine how they act and think as they enter the real world.

This issue of *Work In Progress* examines university life today, from how students are learning, spending their free time and planning their lives to how the university structure itself is evolving.

WEB 3.0

Jaclyn sends a Facebook message to a friend asking for notes from the class she missed this morning. Will's suit-clad avatar in Second Life is at a job interview while Will himself sits in pajamas in his dorm, sending his professor a paper via Blackboard. Anna uses Skype to chat with her boyfriend, who's studying abroad (she talks to him more than she does her mom, who still hasn't figured out how to IM).

With the advent of Facebook, Blackboard, Skype and other electronic tools that were still in their embryonic stages just a few years ago, the dynamics of university life are changing fast to keep up with the tech-centric lifestyles of students, many of whom grew up with mobile phones attached to their ears and keyboards all but glued to their fingers as they explored the Web.

In this new world where the campus's physical boundaries bleed into the virtual world and vice versa, debates center around whether virtuality is good, bad or just a fait accompli. "Some aspects of the classroom will trend towards a digital environment, but I don't necessarily think the virtualization of learning is a good thing," argues Ben Barney, a student of the University of Texas at Austin. "Education is as much about learning how to work with people and learning about people as it is filling up with info you'll have to siphon out four years down the road."

Counters Tom Tait, Duke University '08: "Everything is on the Internet, even lectures. It has revolutionized the way I research." Students from São Paulo to Taiwan echo this push-pull between the traditional and the virtual.

Many institutions of higher education are now using virtual technology to supplement classroom learning. Programs such as Blackboard, Moodle and iClass allow professors to post assignments and lectures online and students to hold discussions and send in homework and papers. While "traditional" learning still flourishes from Thailand to Mexico, many students are learning from the Net as well as from professors.

An array of universities—among them New York University (NYU), Harvard, the University of Southern Queensland in Australia and University of Edinburgh— have bought islands and set up campuses in the virtual world Second Life. The Public University of Navarre in Pamplona in Spain is sponsoring Universidad SL, which is open to all Spanish universities interested in exploring the possibilities of virtual worlds. Here, students attend classes and interact with their classmates in real time; they can also meet any of the other 7 million Second Life subscribers. While the higher sense of community fostered by the rich graphic environment—populated with brands like Adidas, IBM and BBC Radio— may appeal to those who feel standard online classes are impersonal, communication is limited to text because real-time audio has yet to emerge.

Technology is spurring more students to consider distance-learning institutions such as the University of Phoenix and U.K.-based ICS (International Correspondence Schools), which are becoming increasingly popular. Primarily

geared toward older students with busy schedules, these online programs allow students to log in to class at their convenience from wherever they happen to be. They don't yet carry the regard that an on-campus education does, however: In the words of one student, "Earning a degree online is bogus."

Web learning programs are predominantly audio-based, unlike the visual emphasis of Second Life. Praxis, a language-instruction service, offers daily podcasts, and students can get individual instruction by phoning a Praxis employee in Shanghai via Skype, the Internet telephony service. TutorVista, an online tutoring company, connects students with tutors in India who can help with a multitude of subjects. And since students are generally paired with the same tutors each time, they can forge real connections. Many of these services are cheaper than hiring local tutors, expanding the benefits of one-on-one help to more students.

When it comes to socialization and communication at universities, everything is now "word of mouse." Face-to-face communication is complemented with—and sometimes substituted with—virtual communication, whether it be e-mail, instant messaging, Facebook, Webcams, Skype, blogs and so on. It no longer matters whether the person you want to talk to is in a room down the hall or studying halfway across the world; he or she need only have access to the Internet. As these tech-immersed graduates enter the workforce, they are well-prepared to manage the fast pace of information sharing and networking on a global level. They are more likely to e-mail or instant message a co-worker than to shout over a cubicle wall. And for this generation—many of whom have been in relationships with a partner studying abroad—holding virtual meetings with distant clients seems like second nature.

POPPING THE BUBBLE

As the world becomes flatter, technology more ubiquitous and universities borderless, students are becoming more worldly than ever—politically, culturally and socially. Students in Rome download the latest tracks from a student DJ in Dubai. Egyptians studying at private institutions are hip to the latest Western fashions, music, TV shows and movies. The widespread news coverage of the recent tragedy at Virginia Tech spurred an online debate over gun control laws among officials and citizens from Iraq to Australia.

As access to other countries and cultures becomes more widespread, a global university with no boundaries and many millions of students is fast developing. It's getting harder to distinguish the small liberal arts college from the University of the World (U of W) as students expand their minds beyond their geographical footprint.

While a bubble mentality is a fairly consistent trait of campus life—"A lot of college students really do live in a vacuum," points out Anne Liberman, a student at Ramapo College of New Jersey—it's almost impossible to be blind to the world

at large when students from Manila to Manchester are tapping into the same online resources. It's not an either-or proposition; with access to just about anything from anywhere on the Web, students can pick and choose which global trends to follow. Local culture will usually dictate how these choices are made. For example, while Egyptian students are crazy about imported house and trance music, many hold onto traditional values (living at home until marriage, etc.).

Regardless of how much global news students read or how many foreign-made YouTube videos they watch, there's no better way to understand another culture than to experience it firsthand. Today's students can't sign up fast enough for study abroad programs, which are becoming one of the world's largest export industries. The number of students taking part in these cross-culture exchanges is staggering: In 2006, for example, almost 80,000 students from more than 120 nations studied in Singapore; 600,000 students from China, India and other developing nations studied in the U.S.; and more than 330,000 foreign students were in the U.K. Even local community colleges are providing study abroad programs—according to the American Association of Community Colleges, 78 percent of community colleges sponsor study abroad trips or work with programs that do.

International students bring alternative perspectives with them and serve as cultural ambassadors of sorts. (Some have suggested that the U.S. encourage more students to study abroad in order to improve foreign perceptions of America.) Exchange students also contribute to a university's bottom line (because they generally pay higher tuition) and a country's economy. In Australia, the study abroad industry is worth about $10 billion to the national economy. In Singapore, foreign students—primarily from China, Malaysia and Indonesia—contribute about $8 billion. In response, countries such as China and India, whose students comprise a significant portion of those studying in English-speaking countries, are attempting to improve local institutions in order to retain students (and their money).

Increasingly, countries where English isn't the first language are making the transition easier for international students. "We're shifting to English," says Laurent Bibard, dean of MBA programs at ESSEC in France in *The New York Times*. "Why? … It's the language for international teaching. … English allows students to be able to come from any place in the world and for our students— the French ones—to go everywhere."

While classes are being taught in English from South Korea to Spain, communicating in the classroom during a course taught in English can be difficult. And not all students are embracing this change. According to *The New York Times*, economics students at Ecole Normale Superieure in France posted a petition demanding that classes be taught in French. While acknowledging that most economics research is published in English, they deemed it "unacceptable for a native French professor to teach standard courses to French-speaking students in the adopted tongue of English."

Universities are also creating partnerships with other institutions around the globe. Students interested in the environment can get a bachelor of science in international environmental science through a partnership between Dublin City University, the University of Colorado at Boulder and the University of Wollongong

in Australia. The requirements include participating in videoconferences with the other schools and studying at one of them for at least six months. NYU School of Law and National University Singapore Faculty of Law have recruited students from 23 countries, ranging from Chile to Rwanda, to participate in their dual-degree program.

Universities are also increasingly opening branches abroad. Twenty foreign universities operate branches in Singapore, for example. These allow students to gain an international perspective in their chosen fields. A student with firsthand experience of Australia's environmental issues has a big advantage over one who's only read about the topic. In the future, a university degree won't be enough—students will be lost without the ability to put what they've learned in a global context.

A WORLD OF ENTERTAINMENT IN A DORM ROOM

Easy access has long been a key driver of what constitutes entertainment at universities. Students once brought their music with them via Walkmans; now it's on iPods and other MP3 players. At one time they road-tripped to the nearest city to see concerts and comedians, but now student governments and activity groups bring the entertainment to campus. While the entertainment itself may not have changed much, the modes and enablers of entertainment have evolved substantially.

This generation is technologically experienced, and universities are providing them with everything they need: open networks for peer-to-peer sharing, large servers for downloading and wireless Internet just about everywhere on campus. This has greatly elevated the ease of entry to many forms of entertainment, putting everything from music and movies to casino games at students' fingertips.

Students are becoming accustomed to getting what they want when they want it. They can use their campus wireless access to watch videos on YouTube or CollegeHumor.com or to download current hit movies like Michael Moore's *Sicko*, which was leaked on the Net before it reached theaters. Students no longer need to venture far off campus for entertainment, which can be found instantaneously and quite often at a price students can afford—if not free. (In Saudi Arabia, where gender segregation rules, some students use technology—mobile phones and the Internet primarily—for communicating with the opposite sex.)

The International Federation of the Phonographic Industry estimates that 20 billion music tracks were illegally shared in 2006, and many of this downloading was done by students using peer-to-peer (P2P) file sharing on open university networks. The Motion Picture Association in Malaysia, the U.S., the U.K., Taiwan, Korea and Japan is seeing a similar problem with the piracy of movies on university servers.

The Recording Industry Association of America, the Recording Industry Association of Singapore and the British Phonographic Industry are among some

of the organizations cracking down on students; RIAA sent out 15,000 complaints to the 25 universities identified as hosting the most illegal music downloaders, and the BPI has launched 139 legal proceedings. In an effort to address illegal downloading, the Ruckus Network is providing free tracks from partner record labels to anyone with an .edu e-mail address. The downside? The songs can be played only on personal computers and won't transfer to portable players, and the system is incompatible with Macs.

With more content being "leaked" on the Web and shared through P2P networks, marketers can leverage students' desire for exclusive, early access. Especially because it doesn't look like this generation will change their behavior—most illegal downloaders show no signs of guilt or of stopping.

Driving this development has been the move by many campuses worldwide to go partially or completely wireless. But this technology—intended to allow classroom students to take notes and visit Web sites or view simulations as directed by professors—is frequently abused. Many a student can be found Web surfing, sending IMs or even watching pornography during class. As the *St. Petersburg Times* of Florida reports, for Web-obsessed students, wireless access in classrooms "unwittingly fuels the addiction."

Online gambling is also becoming a problem on campuses. With the popularity of shows like ESPN's *World Series of Poker* coupled with easy accessibility online and stretches of free time, it's not surprising that some students are spending hours, sometimes even days gambling online. A report by the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania found that more than half of college men in the U.S. gamble at least once a month, and one in four gamble weekly; more than half of those who gamble weekly show signs of addiction.

Studies in New Zealand have found that some students, especially those from China (who attribute their gambling to their experience with mahjong back home), engage in online gambling with such persistence that some end up homeless while others think of it as a profession. Many end up with huge debts: Student gambling debt totaled more than $115 million in 2005, according to the Annenberg Public Policy Center. In one case of desperation, Lehigh University student Greg Hogan robbed a bank in 2005 to pay his debts.

While U.S. legislation now bans money transfers to gambling sites, students are undeterred. Eye on Gambling, a gambling news site, reports that students have moved on from major sites like PartyPoker.com (which now blocks all U.S. players), and "instead of directly transferring money from bank accounts to the gambling sites, students are forced to use other payment methods, including Western Union, CVS cards, Visa check cards, FedEx checks or even phone deposit cards in place of credit."

As ever, drugs and alcohol are persistent problems on campuses. When it comes to drugs, a University of Rhode Island student explains that "whatever is most easily accessible on campus as far as money and availability is the most popular." Especially prevalent is the abuse of prescription drugs—which today's youth tended to get from their parents for any and all symptoms throughout childhood—with

students either faking symptoms to get a prescription or buying pills from those with prescriptions, legitimate or not. Adderall and Ritalin, used to treat ADHD by heightening concentration and alertness, are taken as study aids or for weight loss. Modafinil, another "smart drug" that's popular in the U.S. and the U.K. because of its easy availability online, allows students to go for long periods without sleep. Prescription painkillers like OxyContin, Vicodin and Darvocet are also popular.

Growing numbers of British students are experimenting with cocaine, thanks to a fall in the price of Class A drugs coupled with more disposable cash. After randomly testing bathrooms in student unions at 18 British universities, the U.K.'s *Sunday Star* found that 14 came up positive. (A finding that is not altogether surprising considering that the International Narcotics Control Board has reported that Britain's cocaine use now rivals that of the U.S.) In Bangkok, the party drug that is steadily gaining traction among young users is ketamine hydrochloride, an animal tranquilizer commonly known as Special K. Of course, drug use is more rampant in some regions than in others; in Dubai, where drug possession can result in imprisonment or deportation, nightlife centers on music and is supported by a proliferation of student bands and DJs.

THE NEW E CLASS

It's hard to find a university student (or mom or professional or politician) who isn't on Facebook these days. Since its founding in 2004, Facebook has accumulated 26.6 million users worldwide, $12.7 million in venture capital and suitors including Yahoo!, which reportedly offered to buy the social networking site for $1 billion in October 2006. That's a far cry from its dorm-room beginnings at Harvard, where Mark Zuckerberg started the site as a way to prove he could build an online student directory, which the Ivy League had said could not be done. Now 23, Zuckerberg dropped out of Harvard and moved to Palo Alto to focus on growing the business with his partners. Their goal: to "make things that increase information flow between people." As *Fast Company* observes, "You might think that they were naïve, except that they're so damn smart and have succeeded in a way most people never do."

Zuckerberg and Co.'s predecessors are legendary: William Hewlett and David Packard, founders of Hewlett-Packard; Steve Wozniak and Steve Jobs of Apple; Larry Page and Sergey Brin of Google; and Jerry Yang and David Filo of Yahoo!—all of whom dropped out of prestigious undergrad or graduate programs to start multimillion-dollar companies, driven initially by passion, followed by profits.

Taking a page from the playbooks of these entrepreneurs, more and more university students are seeking the eureka moments that will make them millionaires—on paper or in reality—before the tender age of 25. The *Toronto Sun* reports that an Angus Reid poll of 18-to-35-year-olds in Canada shows that entrepreneur is the top profession. A

government survey in New Zealand reported that 79 percent of 15- to 21-year-olds want to start their own business and many are taking courses to achieve this goal, according to *The Dominion Post* of Wellington, New Zealand. Similarly, a UCLA study found that while just 1 to 2 percent of MBA graduates wanted to be entrepreneurs in the 1980s, that figure is now between 10 to 20 percent.

Inspired by stories like Zuckerberg's and armed with a ready-made communications and business channel—the Internet—today's university students are more willing and able to make their business dreams come true. They are not afraid to take risks as they seek success on their own terms.

As more students get the entrepreneurial itch, universities are devising programs and competitions to nurture this new class of entrepreneurs. The hope is to discourage students from pulling a Zuckerberg ("If Facebook ever falls through, I'll consider going back to Harvard," he told *Forbes* last year) and to reinforce the idea that a complete education can make all the difference in a business's success.

Universities are competing to create the best and most innovative entrepreneurial programs. In Singapore, the National University of Singapore, Nanyang Technological University and Singapore Management University all have entrepreneurship courses and competitions. Branching out from the pack, Swansea University in Wales created the first masters in business and law program in the U.K.; it accepts 25 to 30 students, primarily with technology or science backgrounds (the hot subjects for student entrepreneurs), and support the development of their business plans.

Students looking for degrees accredited by a group of international partner universities can study at the Entrepreneur School of Asia in the Philippines, which offers a BS in entrepreneurship, with possible concentrations in information technology, marketing and communications and the possibility to study at a satellite campus in China or one of the partner universities. In the U.S., more than 600 universities offer entrepreneurship courses, and a third of those offer an entrepreneurship major or minor, according to *BusinessWeek.* In the United Arab Emirates, where competition for professional jobs is intense, both the government and universities provide incentives to entrepreneurial students. Armed with skills learned through such programs, Gordon Murray, professor of management at Exeter University's School of Business and Economics, told the *London Times* in January that students "do not have to learn by failure."

Many universities are now holding local competitions for young entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs' Organization, made up of over 6,400 entrepreneurs worldwide, holds the Global Student Entrepreneur Awards each year for undergraduate entrepreneurs who are the owners, founders or controlling shareholders of their company. The 2007 competition, which aimed to recognize entrepreneurs who successfully balance college life and work life, garnered over 500 nominees from the U.S., Canada, India, Malaysia, Puerto Rico and Sweden, as well as other countries where the program does not have regional competitions.

With the seemingly endless possibilities provided by the Web and role models like Niklas Zennstrom and Janus Friis, founders of Skype, Joost and Kazaa, it's no surprise that many students are tapping into the power of technology to start businesses. One of *BusinessWeek*'s young entrepreneurs, Michele Finotto, is the founder of a Web services

and consulting company, Wonsys, and a university social-networking site in Italy called Unilife. Nick Summers, Columbia '05, and Chris Beam, Columbia '06, created the blog IvyGate to report on Ivy League news and gossip; it receives over 10,000 visitors a day and was nominated for Best Educational Blog in the 2006 Weblog Awards.

Not all student ventures start on the Web. In South Africa, Abednigo Tau of the University of Johannesburg and Keith Gotha of Wits University started Young Entrepreneurs. Their business is all about "empowering students and giving corporates a chance to get their brands out on campus," reports the *Financial Mail* of South Africa. Tau and Gotha recruit students to work for corporations by promoting their products on campus. For them, everything is a learning process; "You don't get rich working for someone else," Gotha told the *Financial Mail*. "We don't pay ourselves a salary yet, but we can wait for that."

Other student entrepreneurs are purely in it for the quick pay-off. Inspired by Alex Tew's million-dollar home page, on which the English student sold a million pixels for $1 each, Graham Langdon, University of Connecticut '08, created the Million Dollar Wiki. His idea is to raise $1 million by selling pages on a wiki for $100 each; page owners have exclusive rights to edit the page and the added benefits of cheap publicity, page re-sale rights and any income from Google ads. Langdon intends to use his profits to fund his real entrepreneurial dream: "My motivation for doing this? That's easy," he writes on his site. "I'm graduating from college with a useless degree and tens of thousands of dollars in debt. Oh yeah, and I don't even own a car. I'd like to move past all this in one gigantic leap, and open a bar in Boston. What type of bar? Well, that's a secret. It will be the greatest bar in the history of the world though, I promise you that."

While financial security and job stability still motivate students from Madrid to Bangkok to take corporate jobs, Emily Malina, Emory University '08, believes that "people are realizing that a college career is really what you make of it. And though a degree has become more and more important in terms of getting a job, it can also pave the way for less traditional paths—opening new doors into the business world through social networking, leadership and creative thinking."

With government and university support, today's students are launching their own innovative businesses, sometimes even before they've earned a degree. This entrepreneurial class is creating a new kind of work culture for peers and future graduates, forcing big corporations to start rethinking the modern work space.

FUTURE PROSPECTUS

Today, many traditional university institutions look very different from how they did 50 years ago or even five years ago. As previously noted, technology is responsible for much of this change. But there are other changes afoot as well.

A student can now study for his game-design major with a professor who looks young enough to be a student and who works on his own video game after hours. Science and humanities departments are starting to look like ghost towns as students scramble for seats in business classes. And the role of the

professor is evolving as tenure becomes more elusive and the need for up-to-date field experience becomes more important. Universities are changing with the times; some making subtle shifts, others planning to revamp curricula and overhaul traditions.

Take the institution of the tenure track. For a variety of reasons, 55 percent of academic staff in the U.S. are not on a tenure track, according to the American Association of University Professors. In what Montreal's *Gazette* calls the "leaky pipe" phenomenon, many women drop out of tenure programs, especially when their biological clocks are ticking. Some professors have trouble finding time to conduct research and publish findings during their busy teaching schedules. Other professors, with the blessing of most schools, prefer to remain active in their industry, especially when it's a rapidly changing field or one that requires field experience. Also, as tenured professors wait longer to retire, there are fewer opportunities for younger professors. Students are paying the price: Their professors are too busy conducting research or seeking out other opportunities to spend quality face time with students. Or they've been in the classroom for too long and are unfamiliar with new developments in the field.

Another tradition that's changing is spring break. While students still head to the traditional warm-weather or overseas destinations, more are opting for service-oriented trips instead, such as helping to rebuild New Orleans post-Hurricane Katrina. Pay It Forward, a group that organizes these types of breaks, started in 2004 with 43 students from Minnesota who traveled to Washington, D.C., with four stops along the way; in 2007, 550 students from eight schools logged 9,000 hours of service in 77 American cities on behalf of the organization. Greg Tehven, one of its founders, told the *Star Tribune* in Minneapolis, "Young people are yearning for opportunities to give back. These trips allow us to do something with our time and our talents."

Student majors are also undergoing a shift. *The Daily Mail* in London reports that the study of sciences, math and languages is on the wane in Britain as "part of a worrying trend of students shunning traditional academic disciplines in favor of trendier degrees such as media studies." There is only one science or math course for every 200,000 to 400,000 Britons aged 16 to 29—causing many to worry over the U.K.'s future in economics and other global issues. Similar concerns are arising around the globe. Humanities professors in Korea are discussing how to respond as students flock to majors with higher employment rates and humanities departments shrink or get eliminated altogether. *The Australian* reports that few universities in Australia still teach Russian, which could become a political necessity if the Cold War is renewed. It's not just Russian that's falling by the wayside; the newspaper notes that "the number of languages on offer at universities has dropped from 66 to 29 in the past decade."

So what are students gravitating toward? Chinadaily.com.cn reports that students want to take classes in international trade, business administration and economics because of the high salaries they think they will be able to command—whether this is in fact true or not. And both *Crain's New York Business* and the *Australian Financial Review* note that game design is the

current hot major. With gaming corporations like Viacom and Electronic Arts Inc. offering appealing opportunities to new graduates, many schools are creating new courses to allow for game design or animation majors, or tweaking existing courses. Skeptics worry that the gaming industry has too much control over these curricula and that the fad will end abruptly if the industry falters.

Rather than simply tweak or add to curricula, both Hong Kong and Australia are overhauling their university course structures to ensure that students get a well-rounded education before entering specialized courses of study. Hong Kong expects to have all undergrad degree programs converted from a three-year British model to the four-year American model by 2012 in a bid to become the "educational hub for the region," according to the *South China Morning Post*. Australia's similar "Melbourne model," which kicks off next year, is expected to be completed in 2023.

Not all university systems are moving forward, however. As the Japanese population ages, the number of college students is shrinking and universities must compete for students. Three institutions have gone bankrupt because of lack of students; others are choosing to shut down or merge. Some are looking for new student populations, from foreign students to retirees with a passion for knowledge. *The International Herald Tribune* reports that universities are also trying to lure students with lavish dorms, reduced tuitions, higher-quality educational offerings, American-style career services and majors geared toward employment realities—health care (think elder care) is especially popular.

A CLOSER LOOK
CAN HONG KONG BECOME AN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL HUB?

The University of Hong Kong—the island nation's oldest institution of higher learning and arguably its most prestigious—held its official opening on March 11, 1912, with the founding of its Faculty of Medicine. One hundred years on, in 2012, Hong Kong will start implementing a reform of its higher-education system, moving from a three-year-degree system to a four-year system. The government hopes this will make Hong Kong's universities more competitive internationally and offer students a more well-rounded education.

Today, prospective students live in a flat world where they can study locally, abroad or anywhere they can find a keyboard, in equal earnestness. In Hong Kong, new admission requirements require students to take courses in Chinese, English, math and one elective liberal discipline in order to be admitted to the new four-year universities.

The University of Hong Kong is setting up 300 new "entrance scholarships" to attract top students, and is expecting a 30 percent increase in the student body, reports the *South China Morning Post*. The institution is spending HK$2.5 billion in order to physically accommodate these additional students. Chinese University has a HK$5 billion campus development plan in the works, and the combined cost of expansion for many of the

city's other universities will total more than HK$2.5 billion.

To assist the shift to a four-year curriculum, American liberal arts academics will visit Hong Kong on one-year teaching grants between 2008 and 2012. "We hope that all students grasp their unique identity as part of the East-West synthesis that is Hong Kong," Glenn Shive, director of the Hong Kong-America Center, told the *South China Morning Post.*

Indeed, Hong Kong's heritage as a former British colony has made it a gateway between the West and North East Asia. Currently 10 percent of university students in Hong Kong come from the mainland. *China Daily*'s Lau Nai-keung explains the popularity of Hong Kong's universities with Chinese students: "Studying in Hong Kong is like studying in any top Western university—but

here it is in a Chinese environment, and all the Western practices have been adapted to suit our Chinese psyche. This crossroads between East and West is uniquely Hong Kong."

Despite China's "one country, two systems" approach to reunification with Hong Kong, the territory's educational system has felt the effects of Chinese oversight. Hong Kong's courses in political studies, reports a Canadian paper, are closely monitored for political correctness. But for the most part, universities in Hong Kong subscribe to a Western style of learning: Students are taught to challenge and question their professors (a foreign notion in hierarchical China), and they learn to treat all hypotheses as temporary.

With Hong Kong becoming a "learning society," as the *South China Morning*

Post observes, Hong Kong's universities are attracting a range of nontraditional students as well. More than a quarter of all Hong Kong adults are enrolled in some form of further education. Some are studying for their second degree in a highly competitive market, and many more are picking up vocational skills, to give them "a balance and depth of education they maybe missed out on at school."

While the high cost of living has made studying in Hong Kong a less attractive option for international students in recent years, its unique appeal endures: Hong Kong is where West and East come together; it's where the world's fastest-growing economy meets the world's lingua franca. With the right incentives, Hong Kong may become one of the world's foremost academic hubs, offering a truly international education.

WHAT IT MEANS

The college years are supposed to be the best of one's life. Whether or not this is true, students around the world are experiencing similar transitions—living away from home for the first time, learning to balance work and play, maintaining relationships and making new ones, and becoming exposed to new ideas and cultures.

Technology is possibly the greatest factor unifying the globe's students. This age group is the first to grow up with personal computers, mobile phones and all the advances made since. Technology works its way into every aspect of a student's life: It's used to communicate, study and research, find entertainment

and socialize. And it's so ingrained in the lifestyle of students that it's not given a second thought—until it's not working.

This provides brands with myriad ways to reach students. Marketers can communicate via the Internet, text messages, in-game ads and more. And as more students travel abroad, use global resources and enjoy entertainment from around the world, brands can broaden their reach.

It's also important to remember that these students will bring the youth culture forged during the university years into the wider world, shaping the broader society. As the millennial generation grows up, the way we work, socialize, parent and even run the world will change—the future is in their hands.

ABOUT JWT: *JWT, which celebrates its 143rd anniversary this year, ranks as the largest advertising agency brand in the U.S. and as the fourth-largest full-service network in the world. It was the first agency to be associated with anthropology and the study of consumer behavior. Its parent company is WPP.*