PROGRESS IN THE REFORM OF THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY ENROLLMENT SYSTEM

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On January 29, 2008, the Ministry of Education issued the “2008 Regulations on University Enrollment.”¹ The Regulations improved the enrollment system, which was the starting point for this year’s reform of the college entrance examination system. Anhui Province utilized public forums to reform the college entrance examination. With the adoption of the new examination policy, the “parallel application policy” was smoothly implemented.

I. Improvement of the University Enrollment System

By comparing the Regulations from 2007 and 2008, we can see that the 2008 Regulations have undergone 11 obvious changes with regard to governmental responsibility, student rights, examination confidentiality, and openness and transparency in the examination process.

A. Government Functions

The 2008 Regulations increased the responsibilities of the admissions committee. According to Article 3, provincial-level enrollment institutions are responsible for ensuring the authenticity of applications. Article 14 strengthens the confidentiality of the scoring process. Article 20 requires provincial-level admissions committees to adopt practical measures to ensure the accurate scoring of examinations.

Candidate authentication, examination confidentiality, and the scoring process have caused problems in the past few years. In 2007, the answers to the language component of an examination being administered in appeared online midway through the exam. As a result, the

2008 Regulations stipulate strict measures to ensure confidentiality of test content. On June 26, 2007, statistical errors appeared during the scoring of the liberal arts component (文科综合成绩) of the Anhui Province university entrance examination. The college entrance examination reports were sent back to the scorers and the minimum passing score for the liberal arts section was reset. The Anhui Province Examination Department apologized to the students and their parents. This event prompted the outline of the new Regulations to ensure a fair and impartial examination.

B. Student Qualifications and Behavior

The former Regulations contained rules with respect to ideological and political background checks on candidates. In previous years, two conditions were considered not up to ideological and political standards: First, words or deeds against the Four Fundamental Principles (四项基本原则), or participation in a cult of any sort; and second, bad moral traits (道德品质恶劣) and a refusal to repent after rehabilitation. The 2008 Regulations define the following two circumstances as contradicting ideological and political standards: First, the opposition of basic principles determined by the constitution, or participation in a cult; second, the violation of public security administrative provisions (治安管理规定). This revision signifies that the judgment of a student’s right to take the examination is no longer based on moral aspects, but on legal aspects.

In September 2008, the “National Education Examination Irregularities Measure” 《国家教育考试违规处理办法》 was promulgated to divide student illegal activities into nine violations and fourteen methods of cheating and staff illegal behavior into nine violations and ten forms of cheating. The Measure stipulated that any student in violation would have his test results thrown out.2 The Measure became the temporary basis on which the exams were legally scored (this was prior to the promulgation of the “Examination Act” 《考试法》).

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2 Ministry of Education. “Guojia jiaoyu kaoshi weigui chuli banfa 国家教育考试违规处理办法” [China Education Examination Irregularities Measure].” http://www.edu.cn/20040521/3106122.shtml