

Article originally published in Chinese in “China Daily Youth”, China’s leading newspaper among students, on March 4, 2008. The original article is available online [here](#).

Vesalius College is to Recruit in China

Xinghui Zhang, Correspondent of China Youth Daily in Brussels

March 4, 2008

“At the end of March, I will go to China. This will be my first visit to China, and the first time for our college to recruit in China. Therefore, this is a challenge for me and our college,” said Ms Pamela Dalby to the Chinese correspondent at the office. Her tone of conversation showed how excited she is about the forthcoming trip.

The degree of the college is widely recognised by Europe and China

Ms Dalby is in charge of recruitment of students at Vesalius College. Patient, friendly and warm-hearted, she impressed the correspondent as a very capable person. Ms Dalby explained that Vesalius College is approved and recognised by the Flemish Education Ministry and the college has already a history of twenty-one years. Following the European Commission’s “Bologna Process”, the education system of Vesalius College has been changed from the previous four years of education to the current three years. The students who have studied three years and passed all the exams in this college will have their bachelor’s degree recognised all over Europe.

Prof. Dr. Jing Men told the correspondent, “The degree of Vesalius College has been recognised by the Chinese Education Ministry. From recruitment, education and graduation, our college has a strict system of management and is a good college.” Dr. Men got her bachelor’s and Master’s degree at Nankai University, China. After coming to Belgium, she got her Ph.D. at Vrije Universiteit Brussel. Currently, among the teaching staff of the college, she is the only Chinese.

In order to reform higher education in Europe and harmonise the certification system, 29 European countries signed an agreement at Bologna, Italy in 1999 to create a “European space of high education”. This is also called the “Bologna Declaration”, or “Bologna Process”. Up until now, 45 countries have signed the agreement. One of the major elements of the agreement is that the length of study for bachelors degrees is three years. For masters degrees, students need to study one or two years more. So far, Vesalius College only offers teaching programs for bachelors’ degrees.

A small number of students but very international

According to the number of students and the programs offered, Vesalius College can be called a “small college”. It has three majors in total: business, communications and international affairs. The number of registered students is nearly 300. However, “these students are from more than 70 countries, and the languages they use are more than

35.” Ms. Dalby said, “From this point of view, the source of our students is highly international. Students have a multi-cultural background.”

In order to guarantee the quality of education, Vesalius College does not have a plan of expansion. “We will maintain the plan of recruiting about 100 students per year,” says the Dean of the college, Prof. Dr. Bert Mosselmans, “In this way, we can keep our education ‘mutual-interactive’”.

According to the regulations of Vesalius College, the number of students in each class cannot exceed 35. If it is more than that, the class needs to be split into two. In such a class, professors and students can be mutually interactive, and professors can pay enough attention to each individual student.

Irina Negoita is a girl from Romania. She told the correspondent that the professor-student relations are good at Vesalius College. Professors often give instructions to individual students. She said, “I like it here.”

All the courses are given in English

The official languages of Belgium are French and Flemish (Dutch). The teaching languages are often restricted to these two languages. According to the rules, the English courses in Belgian universities cannot exceed 10 percent of the total number of courses. For example, Free University of Brussels is in fact two universities (Université Libre de Bruxelles and Vrije Universiteit Brussel) due to the language differences. In such a context, Vesalius College is unique in Belgium with all its courses offered in English.

Vrije University Brussel and Boston University co-founded Vesalius College in 1987. Up until now, Vesalius College still keeps close relations with these two universities. “This is a college of social science with an American style. Our teaching style is the American style. We have many American professors and many American students.” Dr. Mosselmans, the Dean of Vesalius College said, “Our relationship with VUB is very close. Our college is situated close to VUB, and our students share with VUB students the facilities such as library, sports centre and classrooms. VUB professors also teach at our college. But this does not mean that we are a subsidiary of VUB. We are a completely independent college.”

Josephine Colson, who grew up in Belgium, told the correspondent, “I study here because this is the only English teaching higher education institution and I like to study in an English teaching college.” She continued, “We should have more students from China and Asia, their arrival can enrich the culture of students here.”

Ms Dalby added, as far as she knows, that at Vesalius College there have been no students directly from China. There was once a Taiwanese student who came from South Africa. Currently, a Chinese student from Greece is studying at Vesalius College. “The Chinese economy grows rapidly, and China’s international influence has been rising. From now on, we will go directly to China to recruit some excellent students there. Our college will keep its vitality internationally,” said Prof. Dr. Mosselmans confidently.