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## **International Issues**

- 2 Differentiation Requires Definition  
**Philip G. Altbach**

## **Special Focus: Reforms in Comparative Perspective**

- 3 Implementation of Comprehensive Reform in Italy  
**Roberto Moscati**
- 5 Polish Reforms  
**Marek Kwiek**
- 6 Unfinished Reforms in Croatia  
**Marijan Šunjić**
- 8 Changes in Kyrgyzstan  
**Thomas Wolanin**
- 10 Reforming for International Competitiveness: The Netherlands  
**Marijk van der Wende**
- 11 Adaptation and Change in Russia  
**Anthony W. Morgan**

## **Special Focus: U.S. Developments**

- 13 Higher Education and the Digital Rapids  
**Frank Newman and Jamie E. Scurry**
- 14 International Experience and Knowledge in the United States  
**Laura Siaya**

## **Special Focus: Latin America**

- 16 The Political Nature of Mexico's National University  
**Imanol Ordorika**
- 18 The Student Struggle and its Aftermath at UNAM  
**Alma Maldonado Maldonado**
- 19 Private Initiative in Brazil  
**Claudio de Moura Castro**
- 21 Higher Education Transition in Argentina  
**Marcela Mollis**

## **Countries and Regions**

- 23 Japan's "Top 30" Universities  
**William Currie, SJ**

## **Response and Reaction**

- 24 "Pseudo U" or "What's in a Name?"  
**Daniel C. Levy**

## **Departments**

- 26 New Publications  
27 Departmental News

# Differentiation Requires Definition: The Need for Classification in Complex Academic Systems

**Philip G. Altbach**

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A central characteristic of mass higher education systems worldwide is differentiation. Academic systems have become collections of varied types of academic institutions serving specialized clienteles, with different purposes, funded in a variety of ways, and with quite diverse levels of quality and accomplishment. Academic systems are increasingly large, with hundreds or even thousands of institutions serving a varied student population. Differentiation and massification are perhaps the main hallmarks of the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st. Most countries are coping with the challenges of understanding and controlling this complex new academic reality. However, few have been able to make sense of the often disorderly array of academic institutions—ranging from the most distinguished research universities to modest vocational schools serving a local clientele.

## *Classification Systems*

Classifying academic institutions and systems is within the realm of the possible, although few countries have comprehensively done it. Classification is not the same thing as ranking. The purpose is to categorize institutions by function and role so that it will be easier to understand the differentiations that exist. In fact, the country that built a mass higher education system first, the United States, has had a reasonably effective classification for several decades, although it is in the process of being changed and perhaps dismantled. The well-known Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, started in 1970, has been revised several times, most thoroughly in 1994, when it listed 3,595 institutions of postsecondary education in 10 major categories. In 2000, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching published an interim revision of the classification in which the categories were reduced in number with the aim of emphasizing the teaching function in higher education.

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The Carnegie Classification is not intended as a ranking of institutions, but rather as a way of categorizing them by function. However, some have seen the classification as an

informal ranking, with the Research University I category as the most prestigious. Colleges and universities have often aspired to advance to the “next highest” category, for example, going from Baccalaureate College II to Baccalaureate College I, feeling that a ranking is implied in the categories. The Carnegie Foundation has long argued against using the classification as a ranking.

Few, if any, other countries have attempted to categorize their academic institutions by role and function. While the process is not easy, and the Carnegie Foundation has revised its categories on several occasions, it is not an impossible task. The American task is made easier by the accrediting system. The Carnegie Classification lists only accredited degree-granting institutions that are in the U.S. Department of Education’s Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

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In Britain, stimulated by the amalgamation of the former polytechnic institutions into the university system, by the expansion of the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and by the desire of the government to create a differentiated academic system, the government mandated quality assessments of research and teaching in all of Britain’s academic institutions. While the assessment effort was criticized in the academic community, it was carried out, and “league tables” were created. These tables ranked all universities and many other postsecondary institutions by a common measuring scheme. Widely attacked for its sometimes imprecise measurement techniques, the system did help to define a differentiated academic system, and in a general way classified academic institutions.

## *Carnegie’s Abdication of Responsibility*

In 2000, the Carnegie Foundation began to abdicate its key role in defining America’s differentiated academic system by reducing the precision of its classification. Carnegie is now considering a different approach to classification, focusing on what it perceives to be the main functions of higher education—especially emphasizing teaching and trying to capture the service function of academic institu-

tions. This direction reflects Carnegie's new ideological commitments, and it will inevitably mean that the most useful classification of academic institutions will be much less valuable for understanding the complexity of the American academic system. Where institutions and others could informally "benchmark" themselves against specific categories of colleges and universities, this will no longer be possible.

#### *What Is To Be Done?*

Large, complex, and differentiated academic systems need measurements of institutional characteristics and roles. Such measures will, in a sense, be de facto rankings. But the original goal of the Carnegie Classification, to define the entire U.S. academic system by role and function was a valuable

exercise and succeeded, despite criticisms, in generally being accepted as reasonably objective. Similarly, Britain's quality assessment efforts that resulted in informal "league tables" were useful.

More precise definitions of the various functions of academic institutions are needed, to be followed by an objective categorization of academic institutions within countries and perhaps regions. Thoughtful classification of academic institutions can help prospective students choose the most appropriate institution, provide institutional categories to guide institutional planning as well as funding, and introduce some rationality into analyzing the increasingly complex array of academic institutions that characterize many national systems. ■

## Italy: A Hard Implementation of a Comprehensive Reform

### **Roberto Moscati**

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There have been many attempts to introduce reforms in the Italian higher education system, especially after the 1960s, when social demand exploded in Italy as it did everywhere else in Europe. At that time, a strong egalitarian philosophy prevented the introduction of diversification at the postsecondary level and resulted in the implementation of a complete open-door recruiting policy. Thereafter, the university operated according to the principles of a centralized administrative system (the French model), with academic power channeled through chair holders (the German model), in pursuit of the traditional task of the reproduction of elites. Over the years, the lack of any institutional relationship with the labor market and with society, together with the system's poor level of productivity (high dropout rates and graduation rates barely reaching 40 percent of those enrolled) made clear the need for reform. Some attempts at reform came from the world of politics (the political leaders becoming more and more worried by the "peculiarity" of the higher education system), but these were counteracted by the academic powers that be. Only in the 1990s did some measures undertaken by the government become effective. Basically, these affected the universities' budgets—for the first time giving individual institutions a lump sum every year to be administered independently and linking a small (but growing) percentage of it to the institutional performance (number of on-time graduates per number of students enrolled and so on). Since then, the principle of autonomy for each individual university grew progressively, together with the concept of evaluation of academic performances.

#### *The New Reform Project*

In 1996, the then minister of education, Luigi Berlinguer, created two special commissions for the study of a comprehensive reform of the entire education system. The one devoted to tertiary education proposed a project that introduced several innovations intended to increase the productivity of the system, reduce the average length of studies (normally well above the established standards), and differentiate postsecondary tracks in relation to the labor market and the new professions. The first and most relevant change included the creation of a binary system with a university track made up of a three-level structure of courses and degrees: first level, *laurea*, after a three-year curriculum; a second level, *laurea specialistica*, after a two-year curriculum; and a third level, *dottorato di ricerca* (Ph.D.), after another three years of studies—together with a parallel postsecondary professional track to be organized outside the university at the regional level. In addition, the curriculum of each field was divided into a core group of disciplines to be found at all universities and a second group to be structured independently by each university to enhance its autonomy as an institution. A second step was the introduction of a credit system and the European Transfer Credit System to make individual curricula more flexible and to ease the creation of continuing education programs.

Third, the development of a real national system of evaluation was established, with evaluation offices at each university coordinated by a National Committee of Evaluation. The members of this body were nominated by the ministry but given the task of independently carrying out evalu-

ations of universities, visiting them regularly and distributing incentives and rewards to the best-performing departments. Finally, an organized network of tutoring and counseling was created to assist students in making choices about postsecondary education during the early period of their studies.

The project was discussed for several months by groups of academics nominated by the disciplinary associations to decide on ways of implementing it within the different fields. Subsequently, a number of laws and governmental decrees were passed—in the years 1999 and 2000—reproducing (with some changes) the basic principles of the committee's document.

### *Resistances*

This current academic year (2001–2002) has seen the first phase of reform implementation. However, some instances of resistance became visible as early as last year within the academic world over restructuring of curricula. A number of criticisms were raised concerning the reduction of the duration of the first level by academics, especially in the humanities. In fact, many critics maintain that cutting the traditional length from four to three years will make it impossible to provide adequate science and cultural backgrounds to students. The structuring of the second level of courses led to an incredible proliferation of tracks, some quite peculiar, but in fact representing attempts by prominent members of the faculty to have their own “specialized” tracks. In addition, it has been very difficult to distinguish the number of credits assigned according to the relevance of courses since no one was ready to admit that his or her own course was less challenging, relevant, or difficult (i.e., less important) than the others.

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***The lack of any relationship with the labor market and with society, together with the system's poor level of productivity made clear the need for reform.***

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### *Risks*

This kind of resistance points to the main risks that are endangering the success of the reform. Clearly, those sections of academia most insulated from the changing demands of the outside world are also those that are resisting the reforms since what counts for them is the internal academic world and its logic. Not surprisingly, the resistance is coming not from the applied sciences but rather from the soft sciences, the considerable cultural and scientific traditions of which are not challenged by a changing society. At the same time, the autonomy of the individual university is a relatively new development for a traditionally

centralized system, and thus the professional identity of many members of academia still comes more from their disciplinary field than from their academic institution. Last but certainly not least, not all academics have accepted the idea that at least the first level of the university track should be intended for the majority of the students and not for the top minority (the future elite).

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***The resistance is not from the applied sciences, but rather from the soft sciences.***

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As a result, the danger is that there will be only a cosmetic change in the structure but not in the content of curricula. Consequently, at the end of the first level no student will have attained an adequate training for any professional activity whatsoever and will be almost compelled to go on into the second level of courses, thus de facto stretching university studies from four to five years (consequently, increasing the number of academic places—to the benefit of academia).

### *Positive Aspects*

Nevertheless, the picture is not as dark as it might have been considering the traditional resistance toward change in the Italian academic world. Some positive aspects can be detected from the broad involvement of academics (to a greater extent, but not only, in the hard applied sciences) in the challenging work of restructuring the old curricula and of introducing counseling and tutoring activities. In particular, the large majority of rectors and deans favor the implementation of the reforms. At least, they have the feeling that too much time and effort have already been invested to stop and give up now, even if the new government seems not to be very fond of any innovations introduced by the previous administration. The positive attitude toward reform is the result of several factors including links with the international academic domain (the European Conference of Rectors has probably affected the Italian body); the internationalization of many scientific fields; and the growing impact of the idea of Europe, which in the academic world erodes the traditional consciousness of “being different.”

Under these circumstances, the real danger to successful reform may not come as much from inside academia (as in the past) as from the undeclared opposition of the government, which seems unwilling to give support to higher education and to scientific research in the form of financial resources.

## Reforming Polish Higher Education in the New Millennium

**Marek Kwiek**

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The 1990s have been an extremely dynamic period for Polish higher education. After decades of relative stability (although without academic and political freedoms), the academic community was given far-reaching autonomy through a new higher education law passed following the collapse of communism in 1989. For over 10 years, the system has been in a state of serious discord arising from changes in the social environment and new legislative proposals. At a time of rapid growth in enrollments and in the number of private higher education institutions, the system was confronted by decreasing levels of public funding accompanied by a dozen different government proposals to reform higher education. The passage from central governance to self-governance, institutional autonomy, a market orientation, and intellectual freedom occurred at a time of chronic underfunding of public higher education and predictions of necessary faculty dismissals in the future. After over a decade of transformations, the Polish academic community has begun to adjust to the permanent state of uncertainty in which it is currently forced to operate. However, from a broader perspective, the Polish higher education system may be about to pass from its state of constant crisis in the 1990s into one of near collapse—if far-reaching reforms are not introduced.

The rightist Polish government of the last four years was unable to implement the wholesale reform of higher education (although it did start on the reform of primary and secondary education). As a part of these reforms, a system of moderate salary increases had been planned for fall 2001 but have so far not been implemented. Following the September 2001 elections, won by the left, there is a widespread expectation in the Polish academic community that further attempts will be made to introduce reforms of the higher education system, which is still operating on the basis of the old 1990 law.

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***For over 10 years, the system has been in a state of serious discord arising from changes in the social environment and new legislative proposals.***

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It should be noted that Poland is a country of 38 million people, in which the number of students in both the public and private sector totals 1,700,000 (2001) and the number of full-time faculty employed in public institutions

is almost 67,000 (in the private sector, approximately 6,500). In contrast to most Western European countries, there are a growing number of private higher education institutions, which already claim almost 30 percent of total enrollments. The total number of students increased fourfold in the past decade while the number of faculty stayed at the same level, and in the last academic year (2000–2001) there were over 180 private higher education institutions.

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The general feeling of the public today is that something finally needs to be done to reform higher education. While the Polish educational landscape has changed enormously in the last decade, the social and economic landscape has changed as well: the state has sharply reduced public higher education funding levels in the last decade and has begun reforming the public sector, beginning with reforms of the health care system, the social security system, pension schemes, as well as primary and secondary education. Discussions about proposed reform projects have taken place mainly, if not exclusively, among high-ranking segments of the academic community. Virtually no other stakeholders seemed to be involved, either in the process of drafting the new higher education law together with the Ministry of Education or in subsequent public discussions. There was no wider public debate about the new law, not to mention a more general questioning of the role of higher education in a society of the global age.

It is important to bear in mind that higher education funding levels in Poland at the moment are catastrophic, and the remuneration of academics is extremely low, both for those at the beginning of their careers and for senior faculty as well. In 2001, the share of the public funds assigned to science is 0.426 percent and to higher education, 0.83 percent; each year the percentages decline. The expenditures per faculty member in Poland are the lowest in all OECD countries, four times lower than the average in countries in the European Union, and three times lower than in the Czech Republic. The expectations for 2002 are even worse, with projected budgetary deficits of U.S. \$20 billion and cuts forecast in the public sector.

In at least one aspect, the Polish academic profession does not seem to differ from that in most other countries—namely, in the uncertainty of its future. Polish academics still do not know where they are heading as a professional group as no major reform of Polish higher education has been completed. The future of both the public and the private sector is indeterminate in both financial and legal terms. Working conditions and salaries in the public sector have worsened considerably, resulting in frustration and discontent among academics, but at the same time new opportunities have appeared for some in the booming private sector. Academics have certainly not benefited from the economic transformation and reforms to the same degree as other professionals have, especially in the private sector and in administrative positions.

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***The future developments in Polish higher education include far-reaching changes in the structure of academic staff.***

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The probable future developments in Polish higher education include ongoing declining state support for public higher education and far-reaching changes in the structure of academic staff, leading to greater accountability and managerialism, perhaps to partial privatization; and far fewer full-time appointments in favor of part-time contracts, much higher workloads, and a greater emphasis on teaching activities. At the same time, with the increasing role of teaching at the expense of research as the “mission” of the academic profession, a growing division between core full-time academic faculty and peripheral segments of poorly paid, part-time teaching staff is expected. The university career no longer presents an attractive prospect for graduates and recent Ph.D.s. Career opportunities are poor in terms of promotions and, especially, remuneration, which makes it increasingly difficult to get talented young people to enter academia. Current provisions equivalent to tenure for senior scholars will in all probability not be maintained in any new law on higher education and will be replaced with renewable five-year contracts. The strengthening of the private sector and an increasing movement of academics between the public and the private sectors are also expected. Finally, to indicate at least one brighter perspective for the future: Poland is about to enter the European Union (hopefully by 2004) and there will certainly be new possibilities for higher education resulting from closer cooperation with the Western European academic community. In this context, likely Polish membership in the European Union represents a great opportunity for Polish higher education in the coming decade. ■

## Higher Education in Croatia: Unfinished Reform

**Marijan Šunjić**

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The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 triggered not only political changes in the communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, including Croatia (then one of the Yugoslav republics), but the new pluralist atmosphere also opened the way for the long-awaited reform of the higher education system. Expectations were high, but the road was not to be straight: it soon became clear that, as in other sectors of the society, the damage caused by totalitarian undemocratic rule was much greater than imagined, not only in the visible material destruction but also, and especially, in the mental sphere. This phenomenon was new and unexpected, with no precedents that could provide help and guidance.

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### *The Situation in 1990*

At the moment of the first democratic elections in spring 1990, Croatia had one large university (the University of Zagreb, founded in 1669 and reorganized in 1874, with around 50,000 students) and four smaller new universities (the Universities of Split, Rijeka, and Osijek, founded in the 1970s, with between 6,000 and 10,000 students). Their structure and organization (as in the other Yugoslav republics, but also with similarities to those in the Soviet bloc countries), so different from those of a “normal” university, was a result of almost half a century of Communist Party rule.

The main characteristics of this “model” were: fragmentation of the university, separation of research and teaching, and the bureaucratization of higher education, with no trace of university autonomy or academic freedom.

The university was a loose association of faculties, “independent” research institutes, and other “constituent parts” (e.g., student dormitories, libraries), linked by an agreement transferring certain, mostly formal and ceremonial, functions to the University Assembly, the Academic Council, and the rector. The real power lay in various

paragovernmental bodies that controlled financing and curricula. It was understood that students studied and professors taught in the faculties, not at the university, and there was no mobility. The opening of a new field of teaching or research required establishing a new faculty. Thus, in 1990, the University of Zagreb had 48 constituent parts—including 28 faculties, 3 arts academies, and 11 institutes. Independent research institutes were supposed to organize scientific and applied research (and development) and faculties, the teaching. In spite of differences in size, quality, and so on, all universities and all faculties were nominally equal, their degrees equivalent, with rigid curricula prescribed by law.

Academic promotion and research funding were based on numerical criteria, not on quality evaluation. This led, among other things, to the aging of the university, formalized and often outdated teaching, and poor-quality or no research. In 1990, there were 888 full professors (335 above 60 years of age), 458 associate professors, and 715 docents—versus only 1,186 research assistants—at the University of Zagreb. In spite of this, “pockets of excellence” still existed at this university—brilliant scientists of world renown who could provide its regeneration.

#### *The 1993 Law on Higher Education*

The first democratic elections, in April 1990, created enormous energy and enthusiasm to embark on the long-awaited process of reform at the university as in the rest of the society. In September 1990, a small working group was formed by the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Science and Technology to define the principles of the new legislation.

The legislation was designed to reintegrate existing universities into efficient institutions, with sufficient autonomy in academic matters (curricula and personnel policy) and internal organization and management. Relations between the founder/owner (Republic of Croatia, for the public universities) and the university were to be redefined through the establishing of a newly introduced Board of Governors. The National Council for Higher Education, National Council for Scientific Research, Higher Education Funding Council, as well as the Rector’s Conference were created to provide policymaking bodies and the forum for consultation between the academic community and the ministries.

To differentiate the university from vocational education, a number of appropriate institutions (colleges, polytechnics, etc.) were created. In order to promote postgraduate teaching and research, a system of departments was introduced at the university to replace or complement the existing division into faculties. In addition, the independent research institutes were fully reintegrated into the universities.

Before being presented to the politicians, these ideas were explored, clarified, and reinforced in discussions, both with distinguished expatriate Croatian academics, col-

leagues from Central and Eastern Europe with similar experiences, and international experts (e.g., the Tempus Project of the EU, the Legislative Reform Project of the Council of Europe, etc.).

#### *Resistance to Change and Compromises*

The higher education law proposal was ready in autumn 1991, but it took two more years before passage by the Croatian Parliament. In the meantime, opposition to these reforms grew, so that the final form the law included several modifications. The crucial one was that both the university and the faculties (and other constituent parts) could remain legal entities. This nullified almost all the positive provisions of the law and indicated a lack of political will (especially among the powerful lobby of academics-turned-politicians) to fully reintegrate the universities into the European higher education system.

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***It became obvious that this unfinished reform was paralyzing Croatian universities.***

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In spite of this, some important advances in university restructuring were made—as contained, for example, in the first statute of the University of Zagreb (in 1994)—due to the vision and determination of its leadership. But tensions were rising. The Ministry of Science and Technology, citing the “unfinished reform,” could and did micromanage each faculty separately, approving each salary, purchase, or investment. Therefore, the university had no ultimate control over its budget, personnel policy, investment policy—in short, no possibility of defining and carrying out its own strategy.

Several groups of experts visited Croatia and strongly recommended changes, notably strengthening the university structure (having the ministry deal directly with the rector, introducing lump-sum budget allocation, etc.), but were ignored. Instead, legislative changes in 1996 further weakened the powers of the university management. Uncontrolled proliferation of lucrative study courses offered by some faculties (only with the approval of the ministry) continued. The first vocational colleges appeared (often with no permanent staff or facilities) and also without the approval of the National Council for Higher Education. The power of the ministry increased further after the Board of Governors was eliminated.

#### *Stalemate*

It became obvious that this unfinished reform was paralyzing Croatian universities, which found themselves in the

bureaucratic grip of the ministry and various political, financial, and individual interests. To continue the integration into the European higher education system, the academic community enhanced its contacts with international advisory bodies (Salzburg Seminar Universities Project, CRE Institutional Evaluation Program, Academia Europaea), whose experts visited Croatia in 2000. It was again recommended that university autonomy and management be strengthened.

Still, one cannot detect any political will in the government for such reforms. In fact, one notices some opposite tendencies. The draft of the new law envisions the possibility for the faculties to “leave” public universities; become “independent” faculties; by association, form new universities; or join other newly established (perhaps, even private) universities. This could lead to the privatization of

large segments of the existing public higher education system. Coupled with the introduction of an unregulated free market in higher education (no quality control, no restrictions on enrollments, tuition fees, etc.) this could deprive most Croatian students of the opportunity to study, and ultimately even destroy the existing public higher education system.

In view of the crucial role that higher education plays in the development of a democratic and prosperous society, it becomes essential to study the origins and mechanisms of the resistance to the necessary reforms, from both the academic and political circles. Above all, this resistance needs to be eliminated, in Croatia as well as in other “transition” states of Central and Eastern Europe, before further irreparable damage is inflicted. ■

## Higher Education Reform in Kyrgyzstan

**Thomas Wolanin**

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**K**yrgyzstan is a very mountainous, land-locked central Asian country with a population (4.8 million) and land area comparable to a medium-size U.S. state like Minnesota. It is a former republic of the Soviet Union that gained its independence in 1991. Since independence, Kyrgyzstan's GDP and per capita income have declined by more than 50 percent, and more than 60 percent of the population lives in poverty, including over 20 percent in severe poverty.

### *Problems in Higher Education*

National poverty, the introduction of market capitalism, and the legacy of Soviet centralization have produced four severe problems in Kyrgyz higher education: corruption, a lack of connection between higher education and industry and student needs, redundancy in the higher education system, and low quality. First, corruption—it takes the form of either selling or providing, by the well-connected, of admission places, grades, and academic degrees as well as the theft of valuable resources, falsification of academic credentials, and the awarding of contracts in return for kickbacks. This corruption wastes scarce higher education resources and undermines the legitimacy of higher education. In this corrupt system the core academic value of recognizing and rewarding intellectual merit and achievement is ignored.

Second, higher education is not well linked to either the labor market or student demand. The system produces excess supplies of often poorly trained medical doctors and lawyers, while producing an insufficient number of much-

needed accountants, financial managers, and teachers of computer science.

***National poverty, the introduction of market capitalism, and the legacy of Soviet centralization have produced four severe problems in Kyrgyz higher education.***

Third, because of the explosive growth in the number of institutions and levels of student enrollments, the higher education system suffers from extensive overlap and duplication. The number of higher education institutions has tripled from 33 to 114, and the overall enrollment has grown from 65,000 to 159,000 students in the last five years. These levels are unsustainable given the country's expanding needs and insufficient resources.

Fourth, academic quality has significantly deteriorated as a result of the cumulative effects of corruption, low faculty salaries, an insufficient supply of appropriately trained faculty, shortages of textbooks and library and technology resources, and inadequate facilities. The proliferation of new and weak higher education institutions has exacerbated this problem.

### *Reform Initiatives*

The new minister of education and culture, Camilla Sharshkeeva, who took office in early 2001, is launching a



bold and comprehensive set of reform initiatives to address these problems. The first step is the identification of 8 of the 29 state higher education institutions to constitute a core higher education system to meet essential national economic, social, and political goals. These 8 institutions include 2 comprehensive universities—one in the capital of Bishkek and one in Osh, the major city of the south—a technical university, a teacher training institution, an agricultural school, and three regional universities outside of the major urban areas. These institutions will be the focus of government reform efforts and support. Five major reforms are planned at these institutions. The reforms will be based upon the June report of the broad-based Working Group Examining the Rationalization and Funding of Higher Education in the Kyrgyz Republic.

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***Academic quality has significantly deteriorated as a result of the cumulative effects of corruption, low faculty salaries, an insufficient supply of appropriately trained faculty, shortages of textbooks and library and technology resources, and inadequate facilities.***

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First, a lay board of trustees will assure the governance of each of these institutions. These boards, appointed by the minister of education and culture, will have as a first priority the restoration of financial and academic integrity, and it is expected that they will weed out ineffective administrators and faculty. The boards will be guided by specific mission statements that would, among other things, reflect labor market needs.

A second and closely related reform will be the introduction of generally accepted accounting principles and other measures for financial transparency and accountability. One important new element of this undertaking would be the annual production of consolidated and publicly available budgets showing all receipts and expenditures.

Third, control of the admissions process by individual institutions, a prime opportunity for corruption, would be replaced by admission on the basis of one or more examinations administered by an independent government testing agency. Special emphasis would be placed on security in the production and administration of the examinations.

Fourth, the current convoluted system of providing aid to exceptional students by paying the salaries of the faculty who teach them would be replaced by a national scholar-

ship program. Performance on the admissions examination(s) would be used to determine national scholarship recipients, protecting these awards from corrupt influences. The student support system currently provides about 20 percent of the budget of state institutions of higher education. This is the largest source of government support for these institutions. With national scholarships allocating these funds based on the market choices of the scholarship recipients, the institutions that meet labor market demands and offer the greatest academic quality would receive the greatest benefits from this reform. In the long run national scholarship recipients could use their awards at any state or private institution without limitation, adding a market dynamic to the evolution of higher education.

Fifth, extremely low faculty salaries create economic pressures that lead to corruption and compromise academic quality. One goal of the new reforms is to raise average faculty salaries at the institutions in the core higher education system to the modest level of U.S.\$100 per month. Moderate tuition increases as well as possible support from the state budget or international donors will provide the resources for the subsidies needed to insure a wage floor for faculty.

#### *Long-Term Efforts*

These five initiatives are seen as the fundamental elements of real systemwide reform. In the longer term, other reforms will focus on the establishment of quality assurance mechanisms and on the reduction of the number of institutions. Ideally, the market will determine the number of state and private institutions, where the institutions at the core of the higher education system fare well as corruption-free institutions with high academic quality, clear missions, and enjoying broad political and financial support from the government.

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***One goal of the new reforms is to raise average faculty salaries at the institutions in the core higher education system to the modest level of U.S.\$100 per month.***

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The vision is that this core system will embark on a legitimate cycle of improving quality, financial stability, financial and academic integrity, and effective service to the nation. If these reform initiatives are successfully implemented, Kyrgyz higher education could become a model of higher education reform for the other new nations of Central Asia.

## Reforms in Dutch Higher Education: The National Debate

**Marijk van der Wende**

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The Netherlands is positioning itself as an enthusiastic adopter of the Bologna Declaration. This European-wide initiative aims to increase the employability of European citizens and the international competitiveness of European higher education, by adopting a system of easily readable and comparable degrees (undergraduate and graduate) and by establishing stronger cooperation in the area of recognition and quality assurance. Besides countries that had already implemented these types of reforms prior to the Bologna Declaration (e.g., Italy and Germany), the Netherlands is one of the first countries to do so after its signing in 1999.

### *Reform Initiatives*

Two major reforms are planned for 2002 to position Dutch higher education better internationally: the implementation of a bachelor's-master's system and the establishment of a national accreditation system. The bachelor's-master's system applies to both sectors of Dutch higher education: universities and higher professional education institutions. The bachelor's phase will take three years in universities and four in the professional sector. The length of the master's phase depends on the field of study. In universities, the master's phase will take one year for humanities, social sciences, and law; two years for science and engineering; and three years for some medical fields. These choices are based on the current length of curricula in both sectors. Master's programs in the professional institutions are, in formal terms, a new feature and may last one to two years. There will be professional and traditional academic types of bachelor's and master's programs. The distinction between these types of programs will not be based on the type of institution offering them, but on their diverse content and orientation, which will be reflected in different accreditation criteria.

The universities became defensive during discussions about the master's phase. First, they argued against allowing higher professional education institutions to be formally entitled to award master's degrees, even of the academic or university type, provided they meet the accreditation criteria set for these programs. Master's programs in this sector will, however, not be funded, which led to protests from the professional institutions demanding a level playing field. Second, the universities disputed the one-year duration of master's level studies in the humanities, social sciences, and law and the fact that the extension of these programs to two years would have to be paid by the institutions them-

selves. Third, the universities formally disagreed with the minister's proposal to develop internationally competitive "top master's programs," that would be allowed to select their students and raise tuition fees as much as fivefold. In addition, student organizations and Parliament protested strongly against this new type of program, on the basis of arguments related to long-standing and culturally rooted principles of equal access to higher education. Despite all these protests, the plans did not change much, except that longer master's programs in universities and certain master's programs in the professional sector may be funded in case the need for that is convincingly demonstrated.

### *CHEPS Survey Results*

A recent survey by CHEPS on the implementation of the bachelor's-master's system revealed a number of issues and problems. In general, the institutions have responded very proactively. At the institutional level, however, most attention has been focused on the master's level. An overwhelming number of proposals for master's programs are being developed, more often based on research priorities than on any actual demand analysis. This holds the risk that, as in certain research universities in the United States, undergraduate teaching may suffer. Discussions on the new structure hardly take the links with prior (secondary education) and subsequent (doctorate) education into account. Universities are very resistant to the idea that students may leave the institution, at least temporarily, after having obtained a bachelor's degree. Therefore, all efforts will be focused on motivating students to continue with their graduate studies without interruption.

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The notion of a more diversified graduate population, including more mature students, largely still needs to be developed. The academic drift of the professional sector, in terms of developing academic, research-related programs, seems to be quite limited so far. Moreover, in these ambitions the professional sector continues to lean quite heavily on cooperation with foreign universities. The professional drift of universities is indistinct. Ambitions to offer programs leading to professional degrees are mostly

denied, although such programs are of course offered in the traditional professional areas (e.g., law) and quite a few new ones have been developed over the last years in areas such as business studies. It is unclear to what extent this situation results from definition problems or from the defensive attitude toward the professional sector. Finally, the CHEPS survey showed that, despite their overt critiques, almost all universities intend to offer the so-called top master's programs.

#### *National Accreditation*

The new accreditation system will accredit programs based on different sets of criteria for bachelor's and master's programs of a professional and an academic nature. Since these do not include the type of institutions offering the program, this may lead to a shift from institutional to program diversity. Responses to the blurring of institutional borders are twofold: on the one hand are universities that judge the discussion as mostly immaterial and who would con-

sider mergers with an institution for higher professional education (which will be allowed under the new regulations). On the other hand are universities that hold strongly to their particular status and research profile. Programs will be reviewed every five years by independent review committees. Their report will be the basis on which the National Accreditation Agency will make the actual accreditation decision.

Although accreditation criteria should be based on international standards, programs offered by foreign providers will be included, and foreign accrediting organizations may provide their services in the new system. The new system is also being criticized for a lack of an international orientation. This refers to the fact that it is a *national* system, whereas European-level accreditation initiatives are more desirable in the eyes of some critics. The Dutch strategy, however, is to use this national system as a basis to achieve bi- or even multilateral cooperation in a bottom-up manner. This is just as the Netherlands likes to see itself: as a pioneer in European cooperation. ■

## Adaptation and Change in Russian Universities

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Russian universities have experienced severe financial conditions over the past decade. Higher education expenditures, adjusted for inflation, have declined from an index value of 100 in 1992 to 27.9 in 1998. Yet during this same period, enrollments in the Russian Federation have increased 21 percent. How have Russian universities adapted to such dramatic financial constriction?

Two colleagues and I undertook case studies of three Russian universities in order to study adaptation under these conditions. All three institutions are located in Kazan, the capital city of the Republic of Tatarstan, located about 500 miles east of Moscow. Kazan State University (KSU) is a prestigious classical university of about 12,000 students in the top strata of Russian universities. Kazan State Technical University (KSTU) was a former aircraft industry-related technical institute that has recently transformed itself into a broader technical university. The Tatar Institute for Business Promotion (TISBI) is a relatively new private, for-profit institution that has achieved full accreditation and an enrollment of about 1,800.

#### *Entrepreneurial Efforts to Shift Revenues*

Consistent with institutions around the world, the two public universities here have had to be aggressive in seeking nongovernmental revenue sources. KSU and KSTU have both moved from almost 100 percent government funding

a decade ago to around 53 percent government funding today. Tuition and fees now constitute about 20 percent at each institution. Contract research with various industries are now about 9 percent at KSU and 18 percent at KSTU. Foreign foundation funding and other philanthropic sources now constitute over 8 percent at KSU.

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***Russian universities have experienced severe financial conditions over the past decade.***

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Dramatic shifts have therefore occurred in funding sources. Even with such entrepreneurship, the level of resources available has declined significantly in terms of inflation-adjusted rubles. This has meant that the two public universities are surviving by paying faculty and staff less relative to historical levels of compensation and relative to other professions now. Yet faculty attrition is relatively low and the institutions have not cut programs nor eliminated jobs in other ways as means of coping. As is the case all over Eastern Europe and Russia, faculty survive by holding multiple jobs, which has allowed TISBI and other private institutions to develop by hiring faculty at marginal, part-time rates.

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**Academic adaptations have not, however, penetrated the fundamental structure of degree programs.**

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#### *Overall Institutional Strategies*

The three case study institutions have adopted very different overall strategies. KSU is firmly rooted in the traditions of a classical Russian university—continuing to stress fundamental sciences and research, highly selective admissions, and only mounting new programs that are consistent with its historical role and mission. KSTU, while maintaining its technical and industry-related focus, has been more adventuresome by establishing a series of branches located in regional industries, thereby bringing education to the site and allowing all their advanced students to study on these sites and use more modern industrial equipment than the university could otherwise afford. KSTU is developing an image and programs that cluster around “new technology education for the future.” TISBI is clearly the most entrepreneurial of all—finding or creating and filling market niches. It has created a series of branch campuses in every major city in the republic, bringing previously unavailable local access to higher education.

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#### *Organizational Adaptation*

All three institutions have created a variety of new academic programs and specializations in response to changing demands, but within the constraints of what they see as their institutional mission. Academic adaptations have not, however, penetrated the fundamental structure of degree programs such as length of programs, the highly prescribed curriculum and the large number of hours that students must attend classes. There have also been relatively few administrative structural changes, such as new offices created for managing each major revenue stream. All three institutions have instead largely opted for more informal, personal networking over administrative structures to manage and exploit new relationships with industries, governments, and internal management functions.

#### *Leadership and Change*

The role of the rector at KSU is very much constrained by the power of the faculty expressed through its senate. KSU

is a faculty-led institution. KSTU and TISBI, on the other hand, are characterized as rector-led institutions, following more industrial and corporate models, respectively. KSU is moving slowly and cautiously regarding any change of its historic academic mission and with respect to administrative or structural innovations. KSTU and TISBI are changing much more rapidly, and these changes are being made within strongly hierarchical organizations. Yet faculty interviewed at these two institutions were satisfied with this form of rector-led change. In both cases, the rectors were highly attuned and well connected to industrial, governmental, and other markets for new academic programs. In the case of KSTU, the rector seemed particularly adept at recognizing, encouraging, approving, and supporting ideas generated at the faculty level. So while overall the organization was quite hierarchical in character, the operating style of the rector seemed to encourage suggestions for change from below.

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**This study also reinforced the importance of the cultural context on institutional adaptation.**

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#### *Future Directions*

KSU and KSTU are both “national” universities with strong, historic ties to Moscow from whom virtually all funding flowed. As regional governments like the Tatarstan Republic have taken a greater interest in these universities, there is the possibility of increased funding from the regions (which has occurred in substantial amounts in some areas of Russia) and increased regional influence on these once national institutions. How President Putin’s centralizing policies and supraregional organization will affect past national patterns and more recent regional forces will be interesting to watch.

This study also reinforced the importance of the cultural context on institutional adaptation. The unwillingness of institutions to reshape degree requirements radically, change student-to-faculty ratios, or consider program elimination or any downsizing strategies in general is largely the result of cultural forces operating within the academic community and within the national culture. In these cases, institutional adaptation operated within very powerful, culturally defined parameters that differed substantially from studies of resource reduction and adaptation in the United States and the United Kingdom. So much of our past research on institutional adaptation under conditions of financial stress is based on institutions in these Western cultures that we tend to assume that strategies derived apply more broadly.

# Higher Education and the Digital Rapids

**Frank Newman**

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Over 1,100 colleges and universities in the United States, as well as hundreds of institutions in other countries, are now offering courses on the Internet. As enrollments soar, learning on-line continues to meet many students' needs. A growing body of research is demonstrating that on-line learning can be both effective and satisfying. In the next few years, we can expect even more spectacular growth in virtual education. Yet the tendency of people within as well as outside higher education to focus on distance education has obscured what will be a far more important phenomenon: the impact of digital technology on pedagogy, especially in the traditional classroom.

## *The Computer in the Classroom*

In the United States, the use of the computer and the Internet on campus is steadily growing. Thus far, most faculty members have used technology to perform ordinary tasks more efficiently—providing course syllabi and readings, establishing communications links between faculty members and students as well as among students, and creating the means to improve student research. Increasingly, however, more sophisticated software is emerging that directly engages students in active-effective learning. Based on our analysis at the Futures Project: Policy for Higher Education in a Changing World, a higher education think tank housed at Brown University, we estimate that over the next five or six years, the use of such software will become commonplace. It will transform the way learning occurs in most, though not all, college classrooms.

The evidence shows that, when students actively participate in a self-driven learning project, they learn and retain more than when they sit and listen passively. Yet a recent study conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California at Los Angeles for the Policy Center on the First Year of College, based at Brevard College in North Carolina, found that, while lecturing was the most common methodology, only 21.4 percent of students favored that approach.

Digital technology can allow professors to use teaching methods that are far more effective than lecturing—and without a lot of extra time and effort.

## *Active and Personalized Learning*

New software gives students hands-on experiences in any subject and is particularly valuable in scientific areas that require laboratory work. For example, to provide experience with sophisticated instrumentation for an introduc-

tory chemistry class of 100 or 200 students requires an exorbitant amount of equipment and staff time. Software now allows students to analyze a sample or change the parameters of an experiment in a virtual way—substantially enriching an otherwise abstract and passive class. It also allows every student to conduct a range of experiments, not just single, simple, preset experiments.

Moreover, because actual laboratory experience is still essential, virtual lab time allows more efficient and effective use of real laboratory facilities. Take the measurement of infrared spectra, a fundamental part of lab work in chemistry: the instruments usually require a detailed technical introduction by a professor, but working on the Web, students can measure simulated spectra until they are confident enough to carry out real measurements in the lab in an efficient manner.

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***A growing body of research is demonstrating that on-line learning can be both effective and satisfying.***

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## *Virtual Reality Training*

The emergence of virtual reality technology offers a training supplement for surgeons—a faster, safer, and less costly way to enable students to practice surgical procedures. The software, which can be surprisingly realistic, allows the student to practice a wide range of surgical procedures, repeating each one with somewhat different conditions, until the student is comfortable with the process and ready for the traditional modes of surgical practice. This reduces the risks to patients and the need for expensive use of animals in training.

Faculty could make at least some of the improvements in learning outlined here without using digital technology, but this would require an extraordinary commitment of time and effort on the part of faculty members and students. With limited effort, the new digital technology simply makes learning much more interesting—even exciting.

## *Future Developments*

The technology in use today is crude and limited compared with what will emerge over the next few years. One need only look at the evolution of computer games to recognize the potential for engaging students. As the inexorable

improvement in digital technology and our understanding of it continues, we will experience further improvements in its capacity, reliability, cost-effectiveness, and ease of use. Soon it will be impossible, even with great effort, to achieve the same learning results without the use of the new technology.

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**Higher education institution should recognize that digital technology has already begun to change how students learn.**

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In looking ahead, every higher education institution should recognize that digital technology has already begun to change how students learn in every setting—online courses, elementary and secondary schools, and training centers as well as traditional classrooms. Indeed, as the capacity and use of technology continue to advance, the traditional classroom and the on-line course will look more and more alike to the student. Each venue will use technology to enhance learning, encourage active learning, and provide for frequent communication with faculty members and other students. In both settings, faculty members will move toward the role of mentors and guides of learning rather than as the primary sources of information.

All of these changes will raise important questions for higher education institutions. For example, the debate over technology has serendipitously moved the goal of improving teaching from the periphery to the center of the institution's concerns, raising the possibility of a renaissance in the efforts to improve the level of student learning. What incentives for faculty performance should institutions develop in response to the impact of new technology on pedagogy?

Moreover, those institutions skilled in the use of technology to improve learning will soon be seen as more dynamic and effective than their less-engaged competitors. Therefore, institutions and faculty members that focus on excellent teaching will need to excel in the use of technology to remain leaders in teaching. How should the institution support faculty members as they make this transition?

Finally, students, too, must be proficient at using digital technology. Every new wave of students arrives on campus with greater, but still uneven, experience in technology and with ever-higher expectations. What infrastructure and support should institutions provide students from all backgrounds to ensure a high level of technical expertise?

In short, as technology's impact on pedagogy becomes more profound, every institution will need to develop a strategy for its use. Higher education is in the digital rapids. And as any whitewater veteran will tell you, in such circumstances, it is far better to steer than to drift.

## International Experience, Attitudes, and Knowledge in the United States

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There is little debate anymore over the need for U.S. higher education to infuse an international dimension into course content, program offerings, and campus climate. National economies have become increasingly interdependent and leaders realize they need to work with other countries to ensure their own prosperity. This new reality has altered the world undergraduates will face following graduation. Knowledge of the international system, intercultural skills, and the flexibility to function in diverse environments is no longer the purview of just a few area studies or international relations majors. These are skills and knowledge essential for every undergraduate.

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**The public views higher education as an important provider of international knowledge and skills.**

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Unfortunately, as demonstrated in a recent American Council on Education (ACE) report, *Preliminary Status Report 2000: Internationalization of U.S. Higher Education*, by Fred M. Hayward, most colleges and universities are not adequately preparing students for these new challenges. The report reviewed the literature and found that foreign-language enrollments are lower now than in the 1960s, when compared to total enrollments; less than 3 percent of students will participate in a study abroad experience by the time they graduate; and only 7 percent of U.S. students have a minimal level of global preparedness skills and knowledge. Even more surprising was what the ACE review did not find. Despite the recent popularity and activity surrounding internationalization there is little documentation to assess its status and even less to suggest a positive impact on students.

To more fully examine the state of internationalization, in 2000 the ACE undertook two surveys. One used a national sample of 1,000 individuals 18 years of age and older to examine the extent of the public's international experience, attitudes about international education, and general knowledge about the rest of the world. The other survey, carried out in conjunction with the Art & Science

Group, was a national sample of 500 high school seniors, all of whom were starting a four-year college or university in the fall of 2000. The aim of this survey was to discover the degree of students' international experience, attitudes about international education, and expectations about participating in international activities while in college or university. The answers from both surveys test whether the disappointing levels of internationalization found in the first report were due to the lack of international experience, interest, or knowledge on the part of the public or students.

### *International Experience*

Both surveys demonstrated that respondents had a significant amount of international experience. To gauge international experiences the respondents were asked about their experiences traveling outside the United States, foreign-language ability, and interest in international news. The student group was asked questions about travel and foreign language.

More than 55 percent of the public sample and 62 percent of the students said they had traveled outside the United States. Seventy-eight percent of those in the public survey who had traveled abroad said they did so for vacation. Not surprisingly, the most popular duration of stay was two weeks or less. More than 60 percent of respondents who had traveled abroad went to Canada or Mexico; only 6 percent had traveled to any African country. Forty-two percent of the public said they could speak a language other than English, at least somewhat. This is down from 58 percent reported in a 1988 Gallup poll. Almost all, 98 percent, of the high school students said they had taken some foreign-language courses. Fifty-seven percent said they planned on taking a foreign language when they reach college or university.

### *Attitudes about International Experience*

Does the public, including students, consider international education important? Would they support international efforts on campuses? Do students want to participate in these activities? There appears to be strong interest and support for international education.

Almost 70 percent of the public strongly or somewhat agrees that international issues and events have a direct impact on people's lives. Over 90 percent of the public believes international knowledge and skills will be important for the careers of the youth in our society. The majority of students, 88 percent, believe international experiences will give them a competitive edge in the job market. Eighty-six percent of students said that knowledge of a foreign language would help them find a better job.

The public views higher education as an important provider of international knowledge and skills. More than 71

percent supported a foreign-language requirement, and over 77 percent supported requiring courses covering international topics. Seventy-four percent of students said it was important for colleges and universities to offer courses on international topics. Seventy-nine percent of students said foreign-language offerings were important. Eighty-five percent of students said they planned on participating in international courses or programs. Forty-eight said they wanted to take part in a study abroad program. Almost 80 percent of the public said that international programs are an important consideration when choosing a college or university.

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### *International Knowledge*

Past surveys have concluded that the public was uninterested and uninformed about the world outside the country's borders. To help discover the extent of their current knowledge, respondents in the public survey were asked a series of 15 questions about internationally related topics. Just over 3 percent of the public was able to answer all the questions correctly. Another 3 percent was not able to answer any of the questions. The results showed a correlation between general international knowledge and education. The average score for those with less than a high school diploma was slightly less than 5, out of a possible 15. For those with a high school diploma, this score rises to just under 7, and jumps to almost 10 for those with a college degree. There are relationships between general international knowledge and age and income, but these are less significant than educational level. In analyzing the variables together, only age adds to the explanatory power of education, but only slightly. Of the international experience variables examined, travel abroad showed the greatest positive impact on international knowledge.

### *Conclusions*

These two surveys show a public and student population with an abundance of international experience. The majority of respondents in both surveys had direct experience with another culture through their travels outside the United States. College-bound high school seniors appear to have even more international experience and skill than the average American. Students and the public do not, however, venture far from home, or go for extended periods of time. This suggests that their international experiences do not expose them to markedly diverse environments or immerse them to a significant depth within that envi-

**Special Focus: Latin America**

ronment. The degree of experience is impressive, however, especially among students, and colleges and universities should help incoming students build upon these experiences.

There was strong support among the respondents for all forms of international education at the college and university level. The public and students recognize the importance of international knowledge and skills. They see training in these areas as essential to success in the job market and in one's daily life. Consequently, there is strong support for U.S. colleges and universities to provide enhanced international knowledge, skills, and opportunities to students. Additionally, the overwhelming majority of respondents clearly felt international education was an important consideration in choosing a college or university. The findings from both studies indicate that institutions need to think comprehensively and creatively about their international education goals and strategies.

Unfortunately, universities and colleges have not been

able to respond adequately to the strong support from the public or students. Forty-eight percent of the students said they wanted to study abroad, and yet we know that it is likely that only 3 percent actually will by the time they graduate. Similarly, there is strong support for international knowledge and skills to be taught on campus, or even required, but knowledge about international topics is still disappointingly low overall; the average American could answer only half the questions. Institutions need to do better in responding to public and student interests. And they can. Education positively impacts international knowledge and skills. In addition, international experience, such as traveling abroad, increases international knowledge. Colleges and universities can help to increase the level of knowledge and skills needed in a more global environment by internationalizing more courses, increasing the depth and breadth of their international offerings, and by expanding access to international experiences—both on and off campus.

## The Political Nature of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México

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The Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) is Mexico's flagship higher education institution. Its centrality is the product of a strong historical tradition, the prestige of its academic faculty, the quality of teaching and research, and its large share of the country's graduate and undergraduate student enrollments. Throughout history, UNAM's centrality has also been the product of the significant political presence of this institution in the context of a strong authoritarian regime.

Historically, the overt political nature of the Universidad Nacional has long been evident in Mexico. In spite of this, university administrators, government members, and a number of higher education specialists have rejected the politicization of UNAM as a set of undesirable episodes that challenge the very nature of higher education institutions. With this rejection has come a failure to fully understand the dynamics of higher education in general, and the history of the UNAM in particular.

Official denials of everyday political processes and condemnations of openly expressed political conflicts occurring at UNAM, as well as the inability to comprehend the political nature of this institution, are grounded in two distinct traditions. Conceptually, most studies of higher edu-

cation share a disinclination toward and dismissal of political analyses of higher education institutions; this perspective has generally characterized the field of higher education worldwide.

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***Throughout history, UNAM's centrality has also been the product of the significant political presence of this institution in the context of a strong authoritarian regime.***

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In Mexico, the political issue was already addressed in the UNAM governance system established by Congress in the Organic Law of 1945. This governance system is grounded in an ideological construct that dominated the debate and decision-making processes that gave birth to this law in the mid-1940s: the separation between technical and political issues. It was argued that all members of the university had a commonality of purpose in the search for truth. Consequently, there was no place in the university for politics and the development of contested interests or views about the institution. It was assumed that gover-



nance was essentially a technical process. Issues that could become political, such as the appointment of university rectors or deans, should be handed to a select body of notable academics: the governing board. During the last 25 years, the alleged separation between politics and academe has been the main legitimization device for the political system at UNAM. Political competition for governing board membership and the positions of rector and dean has been restricted to members of distinct groups within a very closed and select university elite. In spite of the existence of limited faculty and student representation in academic bodies, these sectors have been excluded from decision-making processes within the university.

The existence of a relatively free and autonomous university environment within an authoritarian political regime explains to a large extent the history of confrontations between student movements and the government over democratization, educational policies, and other national political issues. Most notable among these were the student movements mobilized around university autonomy, in 1929, and democratic rights and civil liberties, in 1968 and 1971.

In addition to these “external” confrontations, the university has been involved in other types of political conflicts that we can label “internal”—in spite of the difficulties of making this distinction and the constant government intervention in university affairs. Given the absence of real participation by large segments of the academic and student body, the appointment of deans and rectors as well as decisions over evaluation procedures and tuition policies or faculty and student affairs have generated considerable open political confrontation within the university.

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***Rectors were forced to resign in conflicts over tuition and student evaluations.***

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Rectors were forced to resign in conflicts over tuition and student evaluations in 1945, 1946, and 1966. After the 1968 student massacre by the Mexican government, the 1970s and early 1980s were plagued with faculty and staff unionization struggles and strikes. Since 1986 the university has been involved in conflicts between students and the administration over tuition increases and restructuring policies. In the last 15 years, decisions by the Consejo Universitario, the university’s most important academic body, have lacked legitimacy and support among students and faculty and engendered four major student movements in 1987 and 1991, and in 1995 and 1999.

The explicit causes of these confrontations were attempts to increase tuition and restrict student access to the university. Underlying these conflicts, however, is the critical situation of the governance system at UNAM and its inability to make legitimate decisions and generate broad consensus concerning much-needed university reforms.

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***Established university governance structures mirror the authoritarian features of Mexico’s authoritarian political regime.***

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Established university governance structures mirror the authoritarian features of Mexico’s authoritarian political regime. Its main features are rigorous centralization, subordination of academic bodies to executive authorities, strict limits on legitimate political competition for alternative visions and projects for the university, and exclusion of members of the academic community from decision-making processes. Historically, a lack of legitimacy internally and heavy reliance on the administration in dealing with internal conflicts have weakened university autonomy.

This is the context in which UNAM’s 10-month-long student strike over tuition took place during 1999 and 2000. After such a painful and lengthy confrontation, it should be evident that the decision-making process within the Universidad Nacional is not a technical matter. Legitimate decision making implies a complex dynamic of university politics in which a broad range of interests and academic perspectives should be openly expressed and taken into consideration.

The most recent conflict brought the profound legitimacy crisis of the governance structure at UNAM out into the open. The consequences of this crisis include an extreme polarization within the university. This difficult state of affairs poses at least one unavoidable challenge: to reform governance at the National University. In the reorganization of the university, it is necessary to dismantle various myths about the *apolitical* nature of higher education and to reject the distinction made between technical and political issues in academe. Participation and legitimacy have to be based on the recognition of the diversity of views and perspectives about the present and future of the university. This amounts to a recognition of the political nature of higher education in general and of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, in particular.

# The National Autonomous University of Mexico: A Continuing Struggle

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Once the University Council of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) approved a tuition increase on March 15, 1999, the institution's course changed radically. Many members of the university community and other national political actors warned of the enormous risks that the project posed, but the authorities went ahead with the initiative. The project called for increasing the amount that students have paid since 1948, from less than 2 cents annually to U.S.\$68 at the high school level and U.S.\$120 for undergraduates. In the past, every time a rector decided to increase tuition at UNAM, students organized to protest the reform. It happened once again.

On April 20, 1999 one of the largest strikes in the history of student movements began. For nine months, all teaching activities were suspended in a university with an enrollment of 269,516 students. Research activities continued for the most part in the scientific research centers and to some extent in several of the social research centers. The students had six demands: the elimination of the tuition increase; the creation of a university congress to work on reforming the university; the cancellation of the external evaluation of students, abrogating the 1997 reforms related to the admissions process; the elimination of any sanctions against the strikers; and the recovery of time lost from the academic calendar during the strike. The list was composed of the specific demands of the different groups participating in the movement. In the end, the complexity of this list was one of the main obstacles to resolving the conflict.

The movement was organized into the General Strike Council (CGH). The CGH occupied all the UNAM schools that offer instruction and related activities. At the start, the movement had strong student support in many schools, even in those with a tradition of political apathy, but it gradually lost the participation and support of the university community. The public image of the movement was negatively affected when, in June, the rector decided to make tuition payments voluntary but the CGH decided to continue the strike until all six of their demands were met. Unfortunately, all attempts at negotiation between the activists and the authorities failed. Two months later, the rector, who had declared at the beginning of the conflict that he "was ready to face a long strike," was forced to resign. The former secretary of public health was elected as the new rector in November.

The new functionary tried to negotiate with the strikers—the authorities and the strikers held some unsuccessful public discussions in December, and finally the rector called for a referendum on a university reform initiative as a way to resolve the conflict. Some 180,000 members of the university community voted—49 percent of the total population of students, faculty, personnel, and administrative staff from all of the UNAM campuses around the country. Of these, 89 percent voted to end the strike, and the 87 percent supported the initiative presented by the rector. The CGH conducted its own referendum, opening participation to the general public. Prior to the end of the strike many violent incidents occurred between the strikers and the Mexico City Police Department. Every public demonstration held by the CGH provoked conflicts for the city authorities. The strike ended on February 10, 2001, when the military police entered the university to remove the strikers and 1,200 students were arrested. The jailed students were gradually released, although some leaders still face prosecution.

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***On April 20, 1999 one of the largest strikes in the history of student movements began.***

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In the literature on student movements, there are few studies on the effects student movements have on universities. Most of the research is focused on the causes that provoke the protests or on a description of the movements. It is important to talk about some of the consequences of the UNAM movement for the institution. The negative results for the institution went beyond the economic losses. The decision to employ the military police to end the strike divided the university community and the country in general because the principle of university autonomy had been violated again, almost 30 years after the last time the military entered the university to resolve a labor conflict at UNAM.

The national and international context is a key element to understanding this conflict, but the characteristics of the student participants themselves also played an enormous role. The majority came from lower social class backgrounds. For many, this movement constituted

their first political experience. These students considered themselves a generation without a future and in many ways as saviors of the Mexican left. The CGH pretended to be democratic, but was in practice just the opposite. The council created a very bureaucratic structure with intolerant and violent tendencies, particularly at the end of the conflict when support for the strike had dwindled. Moreover, the movement opposed the traditional idea of academia itself. The enemy was defined as anyone who disagreed with the CGH.

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***The protest was one of the first student movements in the struggle against economic globalization and its impact on education.***

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The fact that, at that time, Mexico was living through one of the most important presidential elections in its history (for the first time in 75 years, the ruling party lost) complicated the panorama of the UNAM conflict and increased the polarization of the different groups, inside and outside the university, and the relationships between UNAM and the government. In particular, it created tensions between the strikers and the Mexico City government, which was aligned with the leftist political party and whose presidential candidate was weakened by the strike. There were also ongoing charges about the involvement of political parties and guerrillas in the movement with the intent of creating turmoil during the national elections.

In the view of some analysts, the protest by the CGH was one of the first student movements in the struggle against economic globalization and its impact on education, at least in the Latin American region. The students argued that some of the policies proposed by UNAM authorities came from recommendations dictated by international agencies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to Third World countries. It seems that the antiglobalization movement is revitalizing student activism at least in some Latin American countries. Venezuela, Ecuador, Argentina, and Mexico are examples of that phenomenon.

UNAM is currently facing one of the most problematic moments in its history. After the strike ended, the university lost considerable prestige in public opinion. The institution became more politicized than ever. Some students dropped out, and others have transferred to different higher education institutions. The university community is absolutely divided along the lines that the various factions took during the conflict. The rector insists that the university will have its reform congress, but the community is not showing any enthusiasm for the idea. This new

reform process, starting with setting up the commission that will organize the congress, is struggling in a climate of apathy, distrust, and fatigue with respect to university politics. The congress is following in the footsteps of an earlier UNAM congress organized in 1990 for the purpose of discussing and working on issues such as governance, financing, and academic transformation. That congress, which was the outgrowth of another important student movement at the institution, also had very little lasting impact on the institution.

While the student movement did provide an impetus toward university reform, it is not clear if this process will move in the direction set by the student activists, or in the opposite one. Currently, the CGH seems to have lost the ability to influence events, mainly because the council is now made up of a number of small groups that seek to boycott every reform proposal put forward by the authorities. One of the main challenges for UNAM authorities will be to mobilize the community's interest in UNAM's reform. Another very important task will be to resolve some of the major conflicts at UNAM, given that it is the most important public university in the country. Like other public higher education institutions worldwide, UNAM has an obligation to respond to the needs of a changing society and the challenges of the global context.

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## Faculdade Pitagoras: A New Phoenix Is Born

### **Claudio de Moura Castro**

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Close to three-fourths of Brazilian higher education is private. This private sector is composed of sedimentary layers with different cultures and backgrounds. The oldest layers comprise mostly religious institutions and tend to be conservative. Newer ones include a share of for-profit institutions run by businessmen who see the money in education and little else. But there is a third and newer category that is also profit-driven but more professional in management and based on the belief that investing in quality pays better than offering shoddy education.

Some of the latter institutions started as cramming courses for elite universities. Cramming courses work in a very competitive market, have clear and public performance indicators (how many students pass the university entrance exams), and therefore have to offer better teaching and pricing than their competitors. The most successful courses grew and eventually their creators became competent in the art of running multicampus programs. The best of them

migrated to K–12 education and, sooner or later, to higher education.

The 35-year-old Pitagoras School is counted among the most successful of this breed, both as a cramming course and as K–12 school—enrolling 23,000 students. Twenty years ago it began operating overseas and presently has five schools in Japan, catering to Japanese Brazilians who work there. It also operates a franchise-styled operation, with 260 associated schools. But for a number of reasons, Pitagoras delayed its transition to higher education.

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***The executives of Apollo Group—the parent corporation of the University of Phoenix—were interested in moving to Brazil as part of a policy to go international.***

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Three years ago, Pitagoras asked the author of this article to prepare a project to help usher it into higher education. After the broad outlines of the project were ready, it was discovered that the executives of Apollo Group—the parent corporation of the University of Phoenix—were interested in moving to Brazil as part of a policy to go international through its new partner company, Apollo International.

As it turns out, both Pitagoras and Apollo have much in common: a professional management, a willingness to innovate, effective practices of quality control, and a familiarity with operating multicampus programs. In addition, the organizational cultures are similar. As a result of these affinities, Faculdade Pitagoras was created, a joint venture of the Pitagoras Group and Apollo International, each holding half of the equity. The staff is all Brazilian, the capital mixed, and the *faculdade* can freely borrow techniques, know-how, and practices from both parent institutions. But the model is quite different from that of the University of Phoenix.

Phoenix caters to midcareer adults who typically have an associate degree and want to continue their education. They find that the large public institutions they could afford do not match their requirements, being far too theoretical, not relevant for job needs, and too bureaucratic and impersonal. The most innovative features of Phoenix are the reduction in lecture and contact time, small classes, group work, practitioners as teachers, practical courses, and targeting state-of-the-art business practices. Students take one (five-to-six week) course at a time.

Pitagoras targets a higher-status, much younger clientele (even though many of the students are already employed, which is typical in Brazil). While, it cannot yet compete with the costly and tuition-free public universities that attract the top candidates, Pitagoras does compete

for the next best crop of students. Therefore, it enters a fiercely competitive market, both in terms of quality and tuition levels. Yet, it follows the tradition of both parent institutions in not aiming to be a small boutique but rather a scalable model, designed for growth. The plans for the next several years include 50 campuses and possibly operations in other Latin American countries. It offers, at present, four-year business degrees, and classes already started last August.

The concept of the program runs against the grain of Brazilian educational traditions. In terms of content, Pitagoras parts company with the French model of professionally oriented programs, universally adopted in Brazil. In fact, it borrows heavily from the American tradition of liberal arts, with a broad range of courses in the first two years, including physical sciences and liberal arts (reading the classics is taken seriously). The program also puts much emphasis on the development of basic skills (reading, writing, speaking, foreign languages, computer literacy, and applied math). Thus, in contrast to the Latin American tradition, professional training is less intense and comes later, only in the final two years. This is also the first course in which the Ministry of Education permitted students to postpone the choice of a “major” for two years.

However, Pitagoras parts company with American liberal arts schools in many respects. The first two years offer no elective courses to the students—at least for the time being. This saves costs and allows a very ambitious scheme to integrate different subjects in a matrix formula. For instance, mathematics uses economics examples and students use spreadsheets for all practical work. English and Spanish are woven into the other courses, which must contain readings in those languages.

More importantly, American liberal arts schools depend heavily on the high level of initiative and competence of individual teachers—a reasonable practice for a country that does not have a shortage of Ph.Ds. In Brazil, being in Belo Horizonte and Curitiba—the two cities where it has started operations—Pitagoras has had no problem finding high-caliber teachers. However, once the program goes to smaller and less-advanced areas, the supply shrinks dramatically. To deal with this uneven quality of teachers, it borrows again from both parent institutions in adopting what is sometimes called structured or highly scripted learning. In practical terms, there is a detailed description of learning sequences, reminiscent of what is found in the materials of the Open University. There are touches of mastery learning with fully spelled out procedures, content, and outcomes, session by session. There is central planning of each course and eminent Brazilian scholars are invited to design the broad outlines of the courses and choose the readings. The complex details of planning are filled in subsequently by staff trained in such techniques.

In addition to attending classes, students are frequently expected to log-on to a “virtual classroom,” styled after web-

based courses—both for its intrinsic value and to force students to use computers every day.

The classroom design borrows from Phoenix, but had to be adapted to Brazilian legislation, which requires 20 hours a week of contact with teachers. Four courses are taken simultaneously. During the week there is a single lecture per course, offered in classes with 100 students. This is followed by discussion sessions with 25 students. The class is then broken down into groups of five, which receive practical tasks and projects to work on. Evening students use class time to read the materials, since many do not have additional free time. Fridays are spent on evaluation and assessment of the week's work.

Teachers are selected for their willingness to accept the new model and receive two weeks of training in content and methods. Although the centrally planned syllabus and detailed delivery strategies might have scared teachers away, this has not happened. They like not having to spend time planning classes and delivering the same lecture over and over. Instead, they spend ample time in discussions with students and then develop—based on suggestions and guidelines—interesting applications, examples, and projects for the groups to work on (the best ideas are beginning to be collected and put on the teachers' homepage).

The first crop of students is in. Their reactions to the innovative classroom have been very positive. As a new institution, the image of Pitagoras has served as the single most important factor in attracting good students in Belo Horizonte.

There are challenges ahead. Will good students enroll in localities where Pitagoras is not known? How will Pitagoras fare in such a competitive market (40 percent of applications to new higher education programs are in business administration—indicative of the popularity of that field). Will students accept having to read the "great books" and take courses on physics in their first two years, while students at other schools are struggling with cash flows and breakeven points? So far, students understand the rationale for general education, but if the academic level of the clientele falls, this may not be the case. The delivery methods are designed to compensate for teachers who are less than ideal. But the acid test has not been passed, given the high quality of present teachers.

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***The acid test has not been passed, given the high quality of present teachers.***

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Faculdades Pitagoras chose a model that requires very heavy upfront investments in courseware. To break even, it needs to go to scale, replicating several times the relatively small individual campuses. Only time will tell whether the model can withstand replication in environments that are very different from Belo Horizonte. ■

## Argentine Higher Education in Transition

**Marcela Mollis**

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A transition is now taking place within higher education in Argentina. As part of that process, the National Commission for the Improvement of Higher Education has been given the task of diagnosing the condition of the system and proposing reforms. The final report will be submitted to the Senate to assist it in the potential revisions of the 1995 higher education law. From my point of view as a commission member, the present debate over higher education and its reform seems marked by a very shortsighted perspective and driven by an overwhelming notion of "financial and economic crisis." When the commission's work is concluded, Argentina's historical tradition of public higher education is expected to undergo significant changes.

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***Higher education in Argentina is moving away from the idea of the university as a social institution toward the idea of higher education as an "industry."***

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*Social Institution or Industry?*

Higher education in Argentina is moving away from the idea of the university as a social institution toward the idea of higher education as an "industry." Those who support the idea of higher education as a social institution believe that public universities must preserve a broader range of social functions—among them, the cultivation of citizenship, the preservation of the country's cultural heritage(s), and the formation of individual character and critical habits of mind. This perspective seems to have been inspired by the modernizing and democratic thinking of the leaders of Argentine public universities at the beginning of the 20th century. In 1916, one of the most influential rectors of the University of Buenos Aires, Eufemio Uballes, made a declaration in favor of state funding of the university while protecting the civil rights of poor Argentine citizens with respect to mandatory free public schooling. He proclaimed the need for state financial investment at the top of the system as much as at the bottom. Uballes considered that reading and writing were basic skills useful for the working class. However, he believed that the development of a na-

tional culture required a large group of citizens dedicated to the arts, science, and poetry.

The defenders of the idea of public universities as social institutions are now debating the defenders of the idea of universities as an industry, dedicated to efficiency over the democratic principles that guided the public policy of free tuition at all public universities. In their recent article in this newsletter, Martin González Rozada and Alicia Menéndez argue that the equity and efficiency of the system can be improved by charging tuition fees. To complement this policy, selective scholarships and student loans should be made more widely available to attract the most talented students from poor families. This diagnosis is probably right, although the argument does not take into account the social realities behind the socioeconomic profile of beneficiaries of the university system.

Children from poor families tend to drop out of school before completing their mandatory basic education. In 1998, only 2 out of every 10 students completed the secondary level of education, and 64 percent of the Argentine population between 25 and 34 had not completed the secondary level. At the top of the educational pyramid, 31.5 percent of the 18-to-24 year-old age cohort was enrolled in higher education institutions, with a 15 percent completion rate. While the poorer classes drop out at the earliest stages of the education system, the middle classes (with a professional background) have a 60 percent likelihood of completing a university education, according to a recent study by Susana Torrado. However, research has also shown that the economic recession is having a negative effect on the future expectations of the professional middle class with regard to university diplomas.

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***The transition taking place within higher education in Argentina is economically driven not only by the global dominance of the market but also in response to the “third sector of the economy”—the service sector.***

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#### *University for the Service Sector*

In accordance with demands of the International Monetary Fund, the Argentine Parliament recently passed a law called *Cero Public Deficit*, which imposed a 30 percent cut in national public expenditures applied mainly to education, health, and social welfare sectors.

How is it possible for an undeveloped country, economically and politically dependent on international credit agencies and culturally devastated by the policies of struc-

tural adjustment, to implement the model of higher education as an industry? What kind of industry embodies the particular nature of the Argentine economy, and therefore, what kind of higher education would be appropriate? In the capitalism of the South, the idea of the university as an industry translates into the “university for the service sector.” The transition taking place within higher education in Argentina is economically driven not only by the global dominance of the market but also in response to the “third sector of the economy”—the service sector—which is the sole dynamic sector in a recessive labor market in an unindustrialized capitalist economy.

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***In the last 10 years Argentina become the country with the lowest investment in higher education.***

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One indication of the connection between changes in higher education and the service sector of the economy is the fact that in the last 10 years Argentina become the country with the lowest investment in higher education (0.95 percent of DGP), according to a survey of Western OECD countries. Another indication is the rising university enrollments in fields such as administration and business management, social communications (mass media-oriented), economics, computer sciences, and so on.

The largest portion of university students (85 percent) still chooses to attend public universities, which continue to confer a level of prestige that employers still take into account and that influences parental decision and student choice. Between 1994 and 1999 most of the institutions that have absorbed the new enrollments have been the private tertiary institutions, which have proliferated at a rate of expansion far outstripping the development of the public university system. It is interesting to note that while the number of private institutions has increased 68 percent since 1994, private university enrollments have remained relatively stable. Under the guise of meeting local market needs, the expansion of the system through diversification is predominantly a process of privatization that consists of the setting up of the new colleges and vocational institutions by the private sector. These new private institutions at the (nonuniversity level) are made up of the increasing number of vocational institutes in such areas as hotel management, the culinary arts, tourist management, marketing, flight attendant training, and so on.

The “marketization” of Argentine higher education is reflected in the establishment of these new institutions. While this new type of institution is certainly having an impact on the system, the “market” in terms of student choice remains skewed toward the public universities.

*Conclusion*

The market-driven reform is based on the idea that the market will compensate for the withdrawal of public funds from the public education system. However, early results of these policies do not auger well for the institutional development of our universities. One of the most visible consequences of these market-driven policies is the proletarianization of researchers and faculty members as a result of periodic salary cuts and the universities' disin-

vestment in research programs. A related development is the fact that 60 percent of all university students are already employed (the majority with full-time jobs of 40 hours per week). This is evidence of a new type of middle-class student at the most advanced level of higher education.

The issues raised in this article are discussed more fully in the recent book by Marcela Mollis, *La Universidad Argentina en Tránsito* (2001). ■

## Japan's "Top 30" Universities

**William Currie, S.J.**

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Private universities in Japan, already under considerable pressure in recent years because of the continuing economic slump and the rapid decline in the eighteen-year-old population, are now facing a new headache. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology announced in June of this year that it is revising its method of allotting financial aid to private universities.

Up until now the criteria have been rather straightforward and objective. Private universities that maintained a good ratio of teachers to students, a proper proportion of library books and classroom space per student, and so on were given more generous assistance than institutions that admitted numbers of students beyond the quotas they could properly handle.

Now the ministry is saying that it wants to concentrate on raising the level of Japan's "Top 30" universities so that they can compete with the best universities around the world. These "Top 30" will include national universities (now financed mainly by the national government); public universities (financed mostly by the local governments that established them); and private universities, which are effectively self-supporting—financed mainly by student tuition fees and donations (which, incidentally, are far more limited than in the United States).

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***The ministry wants to raise the level of Japan's "Top 30" universities to compete with the best universities around the world.***

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Up until now, government subsidies to private universities have been granted for current expenses necessary for research, thus helping to keep student tuition fees from climbing too high. The national government also provides private institutions of higher education with grants for the purchase of educational and research equipment.

According to the new plan, the priorities will be shifted so that the assistance to private universities will be reduced by 10 percent across the board. From now on, private universities must compete with public and national universities to receive government aid for graduate programs worthy to be ranked in the "Top 30."

University presidents will be required to submit to the ministry proposals for financial assistance to particular graduate programs, and these will be evaluated by "third-party expert examiners" appointed by the ministry. This change in policy is understandably a cause for great concern among private university administrators. Up until now national and public universities have in general had much larger budgets at their disposal than private institutions and have built up distinguished faculties and excellent research facilities, particularly in science and engineering. Scientific research has flourished but often at the expense of undergraduate education.

Private university administrators are even more concerned when they consider the areas of study that the ministry is focusing on and the criteria for evaluating which universities belong in the "Top 30." At the top of the list of key areas published by the ministry in June are the life sciences, including bio-science, biology, medical engineering, agriculture, and pharmacy. Next comes medicine, which includes dentistry, nursing, and public health. Third on the list are mathematics and physics, followed by chemistry, and earth science. In fifth place we find communications and electrical engineering, followed by mechanical engineering, systems engineering, and metallurgy. Civil engineering and architecture come next. And then, finally, in the eighth slot we see the first reference to the humanities—with literature, history, philosophy, psychology, education, theater, linguistics, and the fine arts all lumped together in one category. In ninth place we find the social sciences: law, political science, economics, business, sociology, and public planning. The very last category is a mixture of disciplines: environmental studies, social welfare,

## Response and Reaction

energy studies, and international relations.

What are the “objective criteria” that the ministry will use to determine who belongs to the “Top 30”? Among the examples they give are the following: the number of research articles published in refereed journals, the number of times faculty members’ articles are quoted by other scholars, the number of papers read at international conferences, the number of presentations by graduate students at academic conferences, and the number of patents approved and those pending. Still in the realm of the quantitative, evaluators will judge universities by the number of Nobel Prize winners on the faculty, recipients of honors from the Japan Academy of Science, Ph.D.s on the faculty, and faculty with experience in studying overseas.

Another criterion will be the number of research grants faculty members have received, both from the government and from private sources. Solid connections with business will also be considered important, especially in joint research projects. Universities will also be judged by the professional performance of graduates on completion of their graduate studies, the number of graduate degrees conferred, and so on. And the final set of criteria concerns the overall administration of the university: how much leadership does the president exercise? how much importance is placed on faculty development? how is the university evaluated from outside? how good is the library? the computer facilities? are class evaluations by the students being carried out?

The heavy emphasis on science, engineering, and medicine as key areas, and the criteria for evaluation play to the strengths of the national and public universities. So much so, that soon after the ministry published this plan, a prominent weekly magazine (the *Asahi Weekly*) made its own prediction of who would be listed in the “Top 30,” and only one private university (Keio) made the grade. Prestigious Waseda University was the only other private university to place even in the “Top 40,” according to the *Asahi* ranking.

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**What are the “objective criteria” that the ministry will use to determine who belongs to the “Top 30”?**

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Three years ago, the University Council, made up of educators, businesspeople, bureaucrats, and so on issued an excellent document on the reform of higher education in Japan. Among other things, the report stressed the importance of undergraduate education and of the liberal arts to provide a broad perspective before specializing in one particular area. It particularly encouraged each university to emphasize its own uniqueness and individuality, which was very reassuring to private universities. Now the Edu-

cation ministry seems to be moving in a different direction. The emphasis is on competition and particularly on the graduate level in science and engineering research.

At the moment there are 649 four-year universities in Japan: 99 national, 72 public, and 478 private. This year 30 percent of the private universities failed to reach their quota of incoming freshmen. With these latest developments in Japanese higher education, how many private universities will be forced to close their doors or else merge with other institutions during the next few years?

Stay tuned for further developments. ■

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## “Pseudo U” or “What’s in a Name”?

**Daniel C. Levy**

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In the lead article in *International Higher Education*, fall 2001, Philip Altbach makes an important and provocative attack on “The Rise of the Pseudouniversities.” His “pseudouniversities” are for-profit postsecondary institutions specializing in high-demand fields. Altbach articulates arguments often made about these institutions and raises several interesting points. Unlike more zealous critics, he neither advocates closing pseudouniversities nor denies their value. But, he declares “it is time to call a halt” to allowing these institutions to label themselves as universities. Only a rash response would attempt a blanket defense of pseudouniversities or a full refutation of Altbach’s case. Given the surge of pseudouniversities, however, it is worthwhile to engage in debate about how to depict them most accurately. What follows raises doubts about the case for denying the U. in Pseudo U.

Much of this debate depends on comparisons to other forms of higher education. Altbach calls pseudouniversities “an entirely new model.” Although it is appropriate to identify how pseudouniversities differ from classical universities, and to make a strong case for certain classical forms, we cannot assume that what has “been at the heart of the university” is what should remain there. Who decides what financial, governance, or curriculum changes are permissible without surrendering the university nomenclature?

More importantly, to what *present* reality do we contrast Pseudo U.? The bulk of public and nonprofit private institutions routinely and legally called universities cannot all be considered high-quality research universities. By the faculty or research or other standards of Altbach’s true university, woefully few institutions in the developing world merit the name. Rectors of Latin America’s national uni-



versities commonly decry the use of “university” by most public and private institutions other than their own, though even most of their institutions are Altbach-like universities in only certain respects. Nor is it just an issue of academic quality. If universities must have academic freedom, then Peking University drops off a list that also could not include any universities of the former Soviet Union. Indeed, the same fall issue of *International Higher Education* describes the following public university realities: ethical erosion in South Korea, declining public support and increased consultancy dependence in Australia, academic and other collapse at the University of El Salvador, and the neglect of knowledge contexts in African universities. Who may cast what stones about the U. in Pseudo U?

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**Who may cast what stones about the U. in Pseudo U?**

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*What is a “Real University”?*

Higher education is notoriously ablaze with definitional ambiguities. If we clamp down on what is a “real” university, need we likewise figure out where to clamp down on what is “real” higher or tertiary education or “real” research or training or “real” master’s or doctoral levels or “real” private or public institutions? There is a case for enhanced clarity on any of these scores, but the case is hardly a clear-cut one. Altbach notes exactly that when he poses the question “is there a problem?” This is a complex question. Whom must we protect from what? Recent empirical work in the United States strongly indicates that students and faculty at for-profits do not feel deceived but instead are quite satisfied. It is hard to imagine that many enter the University of Phoenix anticipating a classical university education—or that employers hire them anticipating that they have gotten a University of California–like education. We need much more research to determine the situation regarding students and for-profits elsewhere in the world. Meanwhile, we know that public university students in many countries feel deceived regarding their education and its value.

Altbach legitimately raises the issue of protecting “the traditional universities and their critically central functions.” It is often tricky, however, to distinguish between protecting such functions and simply protecting embedded institutional interests. Legislation to restrict the use of terms like university is often driven by political interests as much as any educational reason. Also, although Altbach aptly admonishes traditional universities not to surrender public missions to surging commercialism and managerialism, it would be a stretch to imagine that such commercialism is

provoked mostly by the success of for-profit pseudouniversities. We might just as well hope that the latter give some latitude for the public universities to hold more than otherwise to noncommercial functions.

*Government Interests in the “University”*

Whatever efforts we make toward clearer labeling and distinctions within our academic work, we should be wary about the political labeling process. Initial surveying by the Educational Commission of the States indicates that most U.S. states do not have separate regulations for for-profit and nonprofit higher education institutions. More generally, compared to other countries, the United States (trusting relatively nonintrusive private accreditation agencies) has been historically less consumed by the idea of officially proclaiming what is what, including what is a university, and this posture has been favorable for competition and innovation. On the other hand, where countries like Brazil have legislated the prerequisites to be a university, they have contributed to the rise of what we might call pseudo-faculties, pseudo-research, pseudo-master’s, and pseudo-full-time academic staff.

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***It is often tricky, however, to distinguish between protecting such functions and simply protecting embedded institutional interests.***

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Pseudo U. does not deserve a free pass from regulation just because it does not live off public money, and it certainly should not get a free pass from the kind of scrutiny Altbach introduces. Needed now is ongoing research and debate, especially focused on the reality of Pseudo U. within the reality of the higher education overall. Meanwhile, let us remember that Shakespeare invoked the rose not to attack sloppy terminology but to uphold the pre-eminence of reality over labels.

**Erratum**

In Damtew Teferra’s article *The Knowledge Context of African Universities* (IHE 25, page 24 first column) under the subsection “Importing Knowledge” SAREC should have been identified as the Swedish Agency for Research and Cooperation with Developing Countries.

## Departments

**Center-Related Publications**

Philip G. Altbach's *Comparative Higher Education: Knowledge, the University, and Development* has been published in Spanish and Chinese translations. The Spanish edition, published by the Universidad de Palermo's UNESCO Chair in the History and Future of the University is available from the Universidad de Palermo, Mario Bravo 1050, C1175ABT Buenos Aires, Argentina. The Chinese edition is published by the Peoples Education Press in Beijing, China.

**Borderless Higher Education**

Two recent journal issues focus on borderless and transnational higher education. "Transnational Educational Provisions: Enabling Access or Generating Exclusion" is a theme issue of *Higher Education in Europe* (vol. 25, no. 3, 2000). Articles dealing with on-line learning, issues of quality on the web, supranational organizations and transnational education, and others are included. "The Frontiers of Borderless Education" is a theme issue of *Minerva's* (vol. 39, no. 1, 2001). This issue deals with such topics as higher education as a business, private competition, intellectual property rights and borderless higher education, markets, and others.

**New Publications**

Birstein, Vadim J. *The Perversion of Knowledge: The True Story of Soviet Science*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 2001. 491 pp. \$32.50 (cloth). ISBN 0-8133-3907-3. Address: Westview Press, 5500 Central Ave., Boulder, CO 80301, USA.

This detailed analysis of the development of scientific research in the Soviet Union focuses on how scientific research was controlled by the Communist Party, the military structures, and the intelligence services, and the implications that this had for the development and orientation of research and of the Academy of Sciences.

Boud, David, Ruth Cohen, and Jane Sampson, eds. *Peer Learning in Higher Education: Learning from and with Each Other*. London: Kogan Page, 2001. 184 pp. £19.99 (paper). ISBN 0-7494-3612-3. Address: Kogan Page Publishers, 120 Pentonville Rd., London, UK.

A practical guide to peer teaching and learning, this book focuses on the role that peer teaching can play in higher education, course development using peer teaching, and issues relating to the use of this technique.

Brewer, Dominic J., Susan M. Gates, and Charles A. Goldman. *In Pursuit of Prestige: Strategy and Competition in U.S. Higher Education*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 2002. 175 pp. \$29.95 (cloth). ISBN 0-7658-0056-X. Address: Transaction Publishers, 35 Berrue Circle, Piscataway, NJ 08854, USA. The pursuit of prestige is a common element in the behavior of academic institutions worldwide. League tables and rankings are common. This study looks at 26 diverse colleges and universities in the United States from the perspective of how they function in the higher education industry and seek to maximize their prestige and develop a market position in the system.

Caplow, Theodore, and Reece J. McGee. *The Academic Marketplace*. Piscataway, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2001. 263 pp. \$27.95 (paper). ISBN 0-7658-06096. Address: Transaction Publishers, 35 Berrue Circle, Piscataway, NJ 08854, USA. This volume is a classic in the research literature on higher education and has been published in Transaction's valuable "classics" series. Originally published in 1958, this is one of the first studies of the academic job market and the nature of academic careers in the United States. Among the topics discussed are the evaluation of academic performance, recruitment to academic positions, departmental choices, and related issues. The authors have provided a new introduction to this edition.

Forest, James J. F. *I Prefer to Teach: An International Comparison of Faculty Preference for Teaching Over Research*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2002. 289 pp. \$80 (Cloth). ISBN 041593057-X. Address: RoutledgeFalmer Publishers, 29 W. 35th St. New York, NY 10001, USA.

Based on the Carnegie international study of the academic profession, this study discusses the professoriate's attitudes in 15 countries with regard to teaching. Such topics as assessment and instruction, the international dimensions of higher education, reasons for preference for teaching, and others are discussed.

Gillespie, Kay Herr, ed. *A Guide to Faculty Development: Practical Advice, Examples, and Resources*. Bolton, Mass.: Anker Publishing, 2002. 290 pp. \$39.95 (Cloth). ISBN 1-882982-45-2. Address: Anker Publishing POB 249, Bolton, MA 01740, USA.

Sponsored by the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education, this volume focuses on

the practical aspects of faculty development, mainly the improvement of teaching, in higher education. Among the topics considered are building an instructional development program, improving the evaluation of teaching, small group instructional diagnosis, the use of technology, and others. This book focuses on U.S. higher education.

Lattuca, Lisa R. *Creating Interdisciplinarity: Interdisciplinary Research and Teaching among College and University Faculty*. Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt University Press, 2001. 296 pp. \$49.95 (cloth), \$24.95 (paper). ISBN 0-8265-1383-2. Address: Vanderbilt University Press, VU Station B 351813, Nashville, TN 37235, USA.

Interdisciplinarity, in both research and teaching, is a buzzword in higher education. This volume carefully defines interdisciplinarity and reports on a study of 38 scholars in several disciplines who are engaged in interdisciplinary work, mainly in the research area. The study provides useful information concerning the nature and value of interdisciplinary work, and suggests way of stimulating it.

Lieberman Deborah, ed. *To Improve the Academy: Resources for Faculty, Instructional, and Organizational Development*. Bolton, Mass.: Anker Publishing, 2002. 309 pp. \$34.95 (paper). ISBN 1-882982-46-0. Address: Anker Publishing POB 249, Bolton, MA 01740, USA.

This annual publication, now in its 20th year, is sponsored by the Professional and Organizational Network in Higher Education, and focuses on resources for improving higher education, especially in the area of teaching and learning. This volume focuses mainly on strategies for improving teaching.

Lovitts, Barbara E. *Leaving the Ivory Tower: The Causes and Consequences of Departure from Doctoral Study*. Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001. 336 pp. \$75 (cloth), \$29.95 (paper). ISBN 0-7425-0941-9. Address: Rowman & Littlefield, 4720 Boston Way, Lanham, MD 20706, USA.

Noncompletion of doctoral study is a persistent problem in most countries. This study, based on analysis of 816 doctoral students in the United States, discusses the elements that contribute to successful (and unsuccessful) doctoral study, including the absence of community, lack of information, quality of advising, and others. The study locates the root cause of attrition in the so-

cial structure and cultural organization of graduate study.

Mallon, William T. *Tenure on Trial: Case Studies of Change in Faculty Employment Policies*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2001. 226 pp. \$80 (cloth). ISBN 0-415-93219-X. Address: Routledge Falmer Publishers, 29 W. 35th St., New York NY 10001, USA.

A series of case studies of American academic institutions that have instituted personnel policies for faculty different than the standard tenure arrangements, this book analyzes how these alternatives work. The main focus is on contract-based systems of academic employment. While the studies reflect American realities, the broader issues are relevant to other countries.

Maurrasse, David. *How Colleges and Universities Form Partnerships with Their Communities*. New York: Routledge, 2001. 214 pp. \$19.95 (paper). ISBN 0-415-92622-X. Address: Routledge Publishers, 29 W. 35th St., New York, NY 10001, USA.

University-community partnerships are a key part of higher education planning at the present time. This volume argues for the importance of community involvement by academic institutions and provides guidelines, in the U.S. context, for forming effective partnerships. Case studies from several key universities are provided.

Rhodes, Frank H. T. *The Creation of the Future: The Role of the American University*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001. 265 pp. \$29.95 (cloth). ISBN:0-8014-3937-X. Address: Cornell University Press, 512 E. State St., Ithaca, NY 14850, USA.

A series of essays by the former president of Cornell University, this book discusses such topics as the role of graduate education, the historical development of higher education, the undergraduate curriculum, the challenges facing research universities, and others.

Rowley, Daniel James and Herbert Sherman. *From Strategy to Change: Implementing the Plan in Higher Education*. San Francisco, Calif.: Jossey-Bass, 2001. 350 pp. \$35 (cloth). ISBN 0-7879-5431-4. Address: Jossey Bass Publishers, 989 Market St., San Francisco, CA 94103, USA.

Focusing on how strategic plans in higher education can be implemented, this volume analyzes the process in the context of U.S. higher education. The book is aimed at senior managers and planning officers in academic institutions and provides practical advice as well as general principles of plan implementation. Some U.S.-based case studies are provided. This book will be of some relevance to other countries.

Yamane, David. *Student Movements for Multiculturalism*. Baltimore, Md.: Johns

Hopkins University Press, 2001. 193 pp. \$36.50 (cloth). ISBN 0-8018-6588-3. Address: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2715 N. Charles St., Baltimore MD 21218, USA.

Multicultural courses and programs have become widespread in U.S. higher education. This study analyzes how two universities, the University of California at Berkeley and the University of Wisconsin at Madison, instituted multicultural programs. The focus is on the role of student movements in pressing for these changes. A detailed analysis is provided concerning the process of academic change.

Zemsky, Robert, Susan Shaman, and Daniel B. Shapiro. *Higher Education as a Competitive Enterprise: When Markets Matter*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001. 107 pp. (paper). Published as No. 111 of *New Directions for Institutional Research*. ISBN 0-7879-5795-X. Address: Jossey Bass Publishers, 989 Market St., San Francisco, CA 94103, USA.

This study looks at the American academic system from the perspective of the growth of competitiveness and the development of a "market orientation" in higher education generally. The study looks at increasing segmentation in the U.S. academic system, patterns of enrollment, price competition among academic institutions, and similar topics. While this study is concerned exclusively with the United States, its implications are relevant elsewhere. ■

## News of the Center and the Program in Higher Education

Work on our Africa higher education reference volume has been completed. This major volume will be published during 2002 by Indiana University Press. Copies will be made available to scholars and libraries in Africa without cost. The Ford Foundation has supported this project.

We are also close to completing a volume on the changing academic workplace in developing and middle-income countries. This book, which will be published by Palgrave Publishers, stems from a research project funded by the Ford Foundation.

During October 2001, the Center hosted Dr. Francisco Lopez Segrera as a visiting fellow. Dr. Lopez Segrera has been the director of the UNESCO Center for Higher Education for Latin America and the Carib-

bean in Caracas, Venezuela. Center director Philip G. Altbach has been appointed a visiting scholar at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po).

### Internet Resources

Sign up to receive updates regarding *International Higher Education* by sending an e-mail message to IHEonline-subscribe@yahoo.com.

Visit our website for downloadable back issues of *International Higher Education* and other publications and resources at <<http://www.bc.edu/cihe/>>

There is still time to apply for master's or doctoral study in higher education at Boston College. For further information, please contact Prof. Karen Arnold, coordinator of the Higher Education Program. Her e-mail is <Arnoldkc@bc.edu>.

The Center's work is supported by the Ford Foundation, which permits us to provide *International Higher Education* to readers worldwide without cost. Additional funding is provided by Boston College through the J. Donald Monan, S.J. Chair in Higher Education. The work of the Center could not be accomplished without the commitment of our staff. Jef Davis serves as assistant editor of

*IHE* and works with our website as well as other activities. Damtew Teferra continues to coordinate the African higher education project. Recently, Teferra attended conferences in Kenya and South Africa relating to African higher education. Alma Maldonado is coordinating our new private higher education initiative and assists with Center activities. Roberta Bassett is the managing editor of the *Review of Higher Education* and assists with other CIHE-related activities. Hasan Ez-Zaim has provided translation assistance and other help with the Africa higher education project. Francesca Purcell provides editorial assistance. Salina Kopellas, our secretary, makes our office run. ■

## An Initiative in International Higher Education

### Introduction

The Boston College Center for International Higher Education provides a unique service to colleges and universities worldwide. While it has as its primary aim providing information and publications to colleges and universities related to the Jesuit tradition, it also has a broader mission to be a focal point for discussion and thoughtful analysis of higher education. The Center provides information and analysis for those involved in managing the higher education enterprise internationally through publications, conferences, and the maintenance of a database of individuals and institutions. The Center is especially concerned with creating dialogue and cooperation among academic institutions in the industrialized nations and those in the developing countries of the Third World.

The Boston College Center for International Higher Education works in a series of concentric circles. At the core of the enterprise is the Jesuit community of postsecondary institutions—with special emphasis on the issues that affect institutions in developing countries. The next ring of the circle is made up of academic institutions in the Catholic tradition. Finally, other academic institutions as well as governmental agencies concerned with higher education may participate in the activities of the Center. All of the Center's publications are available to a wide audience.

### Programs and Resources

The Boston College Center for International Higher Education has as its purpose the stimulation of an international consciousness among Jesuit and other institutions concerning issues of higher education and the provision of documentation and analysis relating to higher education development. The following activities form the core of the Center's activities during its initial period of development:

- newsletter,
- publication series,
- study opportunities,
- conferences,
- bibliographical and document service, and
- networking and information technology.

### The Program in Higher Education

The Program in Higher Education offers masters and doctoral degree study in the field of higher education. The Program has been preparing professionals in higher education for three decades, and features a rigorous social science-based approach to the study of higher education. The Administrative Fellows initiative provides financial assistance as well as work experience in a variety of administrative settings. Specializations in higher education administration, student affairs, international higher education, and others are offered. The Higher Education Program works closely with the Center for International Higher Education. Additional information about the program in Higher Education is available from Dr. Karen Arnold, Coordinator, Program in Higher Education, Campion Hall, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467. Fax: (617) 552-8422 e-mail: Arnoldkc@bc.edu. More information about the program—including course descriptions and degree requirements—can be found online at the program's WWW site:

[http://infoeagle.bc.edu/bc\\_org/avp/soe/hea/HEA.html](http://infoeagle.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/soe/hea/HEA.html)

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