

INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION

THE BOSTON COLLEGE CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION

NUMBER 56 SUMMER 2009

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Higher Education in Innovation and Economic Development: Changing Paradigms

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The past several decades saw a significant change in the way policymakers regard higher education. Today, many countries have explicit metrics about university engagement with the economy; some, such as England and Scotland, have established special government funding streams based on such metrics. The notion of desirable engagement is becoming broader, to include a broad range of roles for regional economic development through education, research, as well as culture-related activities. An awareness has also increased that different universities play different roles, depending on their capabilities and industrial contexts.

LICENSING

Obviously, not all universities can expect sizable licensing revenues or to break even. In the United States, universities that generate surpluses usually hold significant research capacity, with a critical mass of professionals in Technology Transfer Offices and a large portfolio of patents. Licensing incomes are also notoriously uneven—with a small number of “blockbuster” patents earning the bulk of revenues. In the United States, the number of new entrants in licensing activities is no longer large. The net royalties rose from US\$1,000 million in 2000 to nearly US\$1,600 million in 2005, though the US patents granted rose from 1,550 in 1995 to 3,450 in 2003 and thereafter declined to 2,944 in 2005.

Elsewhere, the statistics provide a buoyant image, though concerns have emerged about costs that are generally not reflected in these numbers. The Europeans reported annual increases in the number of patents granted (24%) and license incomes (12%) between 2004 and 2007. In Japan, the number of patents owned by universities increased by 80 percent from 2,313 to 4,225, with licensing revenues increasing by over 40 percent between 2003 and 2007. Chinese universities have been active in patenting since 1985, when China joined the World Trade Organization; nearly 40 percent of domestic applications came from public-research institutions and universities in 2005, two-thirds of which from universities.

UNIVERSITY SPIN-OFFS

The creation of spin-offs has also expanded in many Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries. In the United States, the number of spin-offs stood at 555 in 2007, up from 454 in 2000, with a cumu-

lative total of 3,388 companies. In Europe, one survey reported that the number of start-ups increased by 10 percent annually between 2004 and 2007 and that European universities are more efficient in generating spin-offs per dollar invested in research compared with US universities. In Japan, the total number of university start-ups reached 1,773, tripling in 6 years. However, the number of companies does not reflect their commercial success, and attention is shifting to their performance (e.g., in generating jobs).

Chinese universities have been creating enterprises since the late 1980s. Some of them have been spectacularly successful, with 40 university enterprises listed in stock markets. These companies appear somewhat different from the classic spin-offs, in that they are managed directly by universities and are more often based on adaptation of existing technologies rather than scientific discoveries. Some argue that the main university contribution has been to bring together talented people into the high-tech industry, in the industrial context of limited technological capacity.

Industry-funded research. The share of industry-funded academic research in OECD countries rose from 3 percent around 1980 to 6 percent in the 2000s. However, such an indicator does not work universally, as some countries such as Korea and China showed high proportions of industry funding, because of limited government funding of university research. Developing countries with a limited industrial base also produce limited industry-funded research.

Today, many countries have explicit metrics about university engagement with the economy.

Consulting. As a common activity, consulting is undertaken by many academics worldwide, though usually not visibly so, given that academics carry out most of such activities privately. This work's overall value has been more broadly acknowledged; in one survey, 32 percent of R&D managers rated consulting as significant for industrial R&D, as compared with 21 percent for contract research and 18 percent for patents and 10 percent for licenses. In another survey of Massachusetts Institute of Technology professors, consulting was perceived as the most vital channel of knowledge transfer; patents and licenses were deemed one of the least important channels. In the United Kingdom, the consultancy volume has more than doubled in real terms over the last six years (though this includes effects of institutionalizing contracts rather than pure increases); today, its size is significant at 37 percent of contract-research incomes.

THE ROLE OF RESPONSIVE EDUCATION

Highly skilled graduates are being recognized as key inputs for successful industrial development. In India and China, large numbers of graduates in science and engineering were critical to meet the growing industrial demand. In Ireland and Finland, professional institutions were created as an alternative to conventional university education, which was viewed as unresponsive to industrial needs. The development of the software industry was greatly facilitated by an early establishment of computer science as a new discipline in American universities; indeed, the American universities created and legitimated computer science as a new field, an ability unparalleled by European or Japanese universities.

COOPERATIVE EDUCATION/STUDENT PROJECTS

An emerging literature describes roles that students can play through their work-study programs. For instance, the co-op education program in the University of Waterloo serves three critically important functions: the program helps identify appropriate graduates for recruitment; students help firms acquire new skills and knowledge from the universities; and students help “circulate” knowledge across local firms and the university. The impact is not limited to developed countries; in Bolivia, a majority of academic staff rated student internship as one of the most relevant contributions to industry.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

Today, many programs, from isolated courses on entrepreneurship to comprehensive practical programs, support the development of entrepreneurs. One Web-based review of 66 universities in sub-Saharan Africa found that over 80 percent offered some course in entrepreneurship, while four universities had specialized entrepreneurship centers. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, an international group of researchers who have been conducting an annual survey of entrepreneurship since 1999, introduced entrepreneurship training as a special topic in 2008. The findings generally involved positive relationships between entrepreneurship training and entrepreneurial attitude, aspirations, and activities. However, a wide variation was found in the proportion of 18-to-64-year-olds who received voluntary entrepreneurship training at colleges and universities—from 1 percent in Turkey or 4 percent in Korea, 13 percent in Chile, 16 percent in Finland, to 20 percent in Columbia.

EXECUTIVE EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Executive education constitutes a critical activity in many business schools in North America (and increasingly elsewhere), and many universities also offer short-term, often tailored education programs for working adults. However, this part, rather like consultancy, represents another category of activity usually not monitored. In the United Kingdom, university incomes from this type of contracted activities significantly produced 62 percent of contract research incomes.

CULTURE-RELATED DEVELOPMENTS

Universities can play a less direct but still effective economic role, by setting the social, cultural, and intellectual tone of a locality, as highlighted by a recent OECD review. Universities in the Northeast of England worked actively to create a cultural quarter in Newcastle city center. The University of Pennsylvania embraced community development as part of its strategic mission. It is today engaged in a wide array of community development initiatives ranging from economic development plans in collaboration with local communities, extensive support to local schools, and a variety of “service” programs including student projects and volunteering.

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CONCLUSION

If different institutions are to play varied sets of roles, how should such roles be determined? External stakeholders are ill-positioned to define them. Internal stakeholders alone are often too complacent to define their roles. Further topics concern how institutions are developing their boundary spanning functions and how these in turn are helping them define their roles. ■

Measuring Learning in Higher Education in a Globalization Era

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Higher education is coming under increasing scrutiny, spurred by growing enrollments and rising college costs. In particular, stakeholders are increasingly asking whether students are learning and whether institutions are providing a quality of service that justifies their cost. Although little agreement to date has been reached on how to assess learning or even on the utility of imposing a single standardized measure

of learning across higher education institutions, the need for developing some standard of assessment is apparent.

These concerns have recently led to the launch of a pilot project by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The OECD has moved forward with an ambitious feasibility study called the Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes (AHELO). The AHELO study seeks to test “the science of assessment” as well as the practicality of implementation, to consider various methods of measurement and their validity in an international context (www.oecd.org/edu/ahelo). To contribute to the conversation about assessment of learning in higher education, we describe two of the most common approaches currently used in the United States.

CONTEMPORARY US MODELS

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is a widely used assessment of student learning and personal development in tertiary education (<http://www.nsse.iub.edu>). NSSE is built on the premise that what students do in higher education is crucial for their learning and personal development. Consequently, it focuses on measuring students' engagement in college, including participation in activities inside and outside of the classroom, experiences in courses, and interactions with faculty. With respect to learning, students are asked to rate (on a 4-point scale from “very much” to “very little”) how much the experiences at their institution have contributed to their development of different skills such as “thinking critically and analytically” and “writing clearly and effectively.” Schools use this survey to get an indication of how student experiences can be improved upon to optimize learning.

To contribute to the conversation about assessment of learning in higher education, we describe two of the most common approaches currently used in the United States.

One of the key critiques of NSSE has been that the assessment of learning is based on students' self reports. Can students accurately identify or define learning or critical thinking skills? Moreover, are students able to objectively report their gains in learning, and in particular how likely are self-reports to inflate the gains in acquired skills? On the other hand, because NSSE is based on students' responses to multiple-choice questions, it is relatively simple and cheap to administer, leading to widespread use and large sample sizes. Student self-reports can be a valuable and relevant, although not necessarily a definitive, source of data on students' educational experiences at a particular institution. Data from NSSE have been explored by George Kuh and others to provide useful insights on institutional practices so as to improve student learning and personal development.

In contrast to NSSE, the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) attempts to measure learning directly and does so through open-ended prompts (www.cae.org/cla). CLA has three components: make an argument (in which students need to support or reject a position on some issue), critique an argument (in which students are asked to evaluate the validity of an argument made by someone else), and a performance task (in which students are asked to use different materials such as memos, articles, news clips, etc., to respond to an open-ended question regarding a hypothetical but realistic situation). Through these approaches, the CLA aims to measure broad skills such as critical thinking, analytical reasoning, problem solving, and writing communication.

The CLA is seen as an exemplary model of what is called a value-added assessment—an assessment strategy that focuses on institutions rather than students and aims to provide a summative evaluation of the school's contribution to student learning. The CLA attempts to accomplish this in two ways: 1) by measuring how well an institution's students perform relative to similarly situated students at other institutions (i.e., those with similar admissions test scores); and 2) by assessing the improvement of students' skills over time at a given institution (usually by comparing the level of skills and knowledge of students when they enter higher education and right before they graduate).

The CLA is currently based on a voluntary sample of schools and students. As a consequence, student participation is not consistent across institutions, which raises questions about students' motivation and effort in taking and performing well on this instrument. Critics of the CLA have also worried that schools using this tool will put too much emphasis on training their students to outperform other schools on the assessment while neglecting important skills that might not be measured by the CLA. Proponents of the CLA have noted that incorporating the types of questions used on the CLA in the classroom should strengthen skills that universities claim are important to their missions, such as critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and writing. Advocates of the CLA do not suggest that this instrument should be imposed on institutions or that it can measure the entire university learning experience. Rather, it is an assessment that should be used with other indicators like the NSSE.

For the past two and a half years, Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa, with the support of the Council for Aid to Education, have been conducting a study using the CLA as well as supplementary data collected from student surveys, college transcripts, and secondary sources of institutional data to generate a Determinants of College Learning longitudinal dataset. The study, so far, has yielded a set of intriguing findings on individual and institutional factors associated with learning in higher education. In order to learn more about the findings, an initial report can be accessed at: http://programs.ssrc.org/ki/pathwaystocollege/CLA_Report.pdf.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Current challenges surrounding the measurement of learning in higher education are not novel. Throughout the history of education, educators and other stakeholders have often labored to develop a set of common outcomes that can be measured and evaluated. Given the challenges of this endeavor, commensuration—or the process of finding a common metric to measure characteristics that normally have different units—would undoubtedly be a necessity. Doing so offers a standardized way to compare values that might initially seem incomparable.

On the issue of commensurability, however, sociologists Wendy Espeland and Mitchell Stevens have highlighted the influence of such efforts on changing behaviors, molding expectations, and altering the very values of things. In education, regardless of what experts might know to be true about the inherent limitations of assessment indicators, quantification influences the behavior of students, parents, schools, administrations, and governments. This is evident in school rankings and high-stakes testing (i.e., testing situations that have important consequences for students, such as admission to colleges, or for schools, such as funding). Although the dangers of misuse are there, Espeland and Stevens remind us that it is a necessary part of life. Hopefully, the recent studies that have ventured to find a valid and reliable measure of student learning will be used to inform the search for proof that our institutions of higher learning are fulfilling their role of shaping a promising future. ■

Indian Higher Education: Time for a Serious Rethink

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Barely 11 percent of the relevant age group were enrolled in higher education in India in 2007. The Indian state has been so underinvested in education as a whole since independence in 1947, that higher education was bound to arrive at this juncture. During the 11th-plan period (2007–2012) the objective is to increase that enrollment rate to 15 percent. The government of India has raised allocations for higher and technical education to five times the allocation made during the preceding five-year plan period. However, major constraints remain toward the achievement of this otherwise laudable objective.

NARROW PYRAMID

The first problem involves the narrowness of the education pyramid in India. Primary school enrollment has only been universalized earlier this decade, and enrollment at the upper-primary level itself is not yet universal. Worse still, school education quality is so low and learning outcomes so poor, that dropout rates at the end of the primary cycle remain significant, and by the end of the upper-primary cycle the dropout rates are 52 percent. Not surprisingly, secondary enrollment rates (grades 9–10) are only 57 percent, and higher secondary (grades 11–12) only 23 percent. With such a narrow pyramid, the possibility of rapidly expanding enrollment at higher education levels seems difficult.

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These problems of a narrow education pyramid have risen from historical neglect of public education in government budgets. In India's federal constitution, education was for many decades a state subject, and although since the mid-1970s it became a subject on which the central as well as the state governments can legislate, 85 percent of total education expenditure is still accounted for by state governments. Most universities are controlled by state governments, although there are a small but growing number of central universities.

A HIGHLY SEGMENTED SYSTEM

Nevertheless, education as a whole and school education for the masses were neglected for 40 years (until about 1990), which has created a highly segmented higher education system. Students who come to the higher education system from the high-quality, relatively expensive, private English-medium schools join the elite higher education institutions of the country—the globally known Indian Institutes of Technology, the Indian Institutes of Management, and good medical schools. The remainder of the higher education system, especially the degree colleges linked to universities, consist merely of degree-awarding bodies with little monitoring of quality of education by the overseeing universities.

LOW-COST RECOVERY

Quality is also affected by the fact that most of these degree colleges and universities recover less than 20 percent of their per student costs from fees levied on students. After 1990, with governments turning their attention seriously to elementary education, public funding for higher education tended to stagnate. Thus, an already highly skewed higher education system—with elite institutions at one end of the spectrum and low-quality, degree-awarding mass colleges on the other—became even more inefficient as a provider of skilled manpower.

er to a growing economy. A small number of the colleges are very good (e.g., Elphinstone College, Mumbai, St. Stephen's College, Delhi, Madras Christian College, Chennai, Presidency College, Kolkatta, to name a few). However, the narrow skill base has resulted in salaries for skilled staff growing sharply in the last decade or more—increasing rural vs. urban income inequalities and intraurban income inequalities as well.

The mass of students in higher education have always been provided with relatively low-cost public education. This system appears in complete contrast to a high-achieving economy like South Korea, which has ensured from the 1950s onwards that most of its students in higher education attended private universities. This trend continues to be the case today (while children in primary schools have always attended well-funded government schools). Private higher education has expanded in India rapidly in response to growing incomes and the demand

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derived from that increase. This growth is particularly true for the southern states of India, especially in the fields of medicine and engineering. This region has thus served as a magnet for students from the north who have failed to get admission into publicly funded institutions in the northern states. Private provision has, of course, increased in the northern states, as well, in recent years—thus absorbing the demand from the upper-middle classes in the north. Nevertheless, as yet, private provision nowhere meets the levels that are needed.

THE DISCONNECT BETWEEN RESEARCH AND TEACHING

As another major structural problem, a near-bifurcation nearly exists within the higher education system between teaching and research. A lot of research in the sciences, in fact, is not located in the universities. In 1996/97, nearly three-fourths of the central government's R&D expenditure went to the department of Defence Research and Development, the Department of Space, and the Department of Atomic Energy (and included 9.3% for the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research). Similarly, in the social sciences, research has remained concentrated in the research institutions funded by the Indian Council of Social Science Research, which funds in each state at least one research institution largely focused on the research requirements in that state or its neighbors. These research institutions all function quite independent of the university system. Universities have ended up becoming undergraduate teaching institutions, especially those that have a large number of degree colleges linked to them. The heavy teaching load provides little time or energy or even funding for research. This

bifurcation between research and teaching results in a disconnect between teaching and research, quite unlike what prevails in most OECD countries. Not surprisingly, no real world-class universities are in place.

One outcome specified that the upper-middle classes have been deserting the Indian university system, sending their children abroad for undergraduate education—a phenomenon that did not exist on a large scale until the early 1990s. Until then, most Indian students going abroad would do so only to pursue a master's degree or a doctorate. This desertion by the upper-middle classes has further taken the pressure off the public higher education system to provide quality education.

THE 11TH FIVE-YEAR PLAN (2007–2012)

The central government has indeed responded in the 11th five-year plan by increasing central allocations for higher and technical education fivefold compared to the 10th plan. Seven new Indian Institutes of Technology, six new Indian Institutes of Management, and 30 new central universities have been provided for. The pace of expansion in the new few years may well turn out to be frenetic. The most serious problem that this sudden expansion will entail is finding faculty of appropriate quality in the public higher education system. Therefore, an initiative to be seriously considered involves giving greater financial autonomy to universities, to enable them to mobilize resources from sources other than the government—partly to attract Indian academics teaching abroad back to India. Salaries have risen sharply recently, thanks to the Sixth Pay Commission's recommendations to make returning home attractive for non-resident Indians. However, the requisite autonomy of universities is also needed to encourage them to attract faculty back to India. ■

India: The Inevitable Consequences of the Open Door in Higher Education

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The new Indian minister of human resource development, Kapil Sibal, has promised to open India's doors to foreign universities and to promote private investment in higher education. Past policy has been skeptical of foreign involvement in Indian education. As India is about to embark in a new higher

education direction, it is worth examining the likely consequences of the open door, based on the experience of other countries.

If Mr. Sibal assumes that foreign involvement will assist India to rapidly improve its lagging higher education system, he is quite wrong. With few exceptions, foreign higher education providers worldwide are engaged in making a quick profit by establishing programs that attract high student demand and are inexpensive to start and operate. Worldwide, many of the foreign transplants are in information technology, business

Most foreign providers are not top universities but are rather institutions at the middle or bottom of the hierarchy in their home countries.

studies, and related fields. Most foreign providers are not top universities but are rather institutions at the middle or bottom of the hierarchy in their home countries. Some have financial or enrollment problems at home and want to solve them with offshore ventures. And some are “bottom-feeders” who will provide a substandard educational product in India. A truly open door permits pests as well as welcome guests to enter. International experience shows that the “market” is slow to detect low quality—and there seems to be a clientele for poor quality in any case.

A few top universities will be interested in India for a combination of reasons—to earn money and also to introduce long-term relations, in the country, with the best Indian institutions—and to provide a base for recruiting outstanding Indian students and faculty.

IMPROVEMENT THROUGH FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT?

Some have argued that India's admittedly moribund higher education system will receive a needed dose of reform and upgrade from foreign transplants. This is a quite unlikely diagnosis. Thoughtful Indians know what is wrong with the system, and numerous high-level inquiries, including some recently from the Knowledge Commission, have provided road maps for reform. Further, many Indians have experience in the best overseas universities and know how they work. Improvement will inevitably come from the inside and not from a few foreign institutions operating in India. Further, the foreign programs will not be focused on reforming Indian higher education but rather on successfully competing with local colleges and universities. Nor will the foreigners bring the full panoply of a complex and highly expensive university to India. Rather, they will bring specific programs and facilities that will be profitable in India. Only when the host country pays the full cost, such as in the Gulf countries, do foreign universities establish full facilities and expensive programs such as the Cornell University Medical School in Qatar.

PROBLEMS OF SUSTAINABILITY

If Minister Sibal believes that he will easily get well-functioning, top-quality foreign universities to set up shop in India quickly, he is mistaken. It is likely that some of the for-profit providers, such as Laureate and Apollo, will be most interested. These institutions, which have operated successfully in many countries, are not seen as prestigious institutions. University transplants frequently have experienced significant logistical problems. A challenge involves convincing professors and staff from the home campus to teach abroad. Indeed, this ordeal often acts as the Achille's heel of foreign providers, for in almost every case, they end up hiring local staff to teach. It may be sufficient for Indians to study in an ostensibly foreign institution in India taught by local professors; the students may end up with a foreign degree but not with much of an international experience. Just as important, if the foreign institution cannot earn a quick profit, they might well pull up stakes and leave or, alternatively, reduce costs by lowering the quality.

INTERNATIONAL EXAMPLES

India might study other countries' experience with foreign branch campuses and international collaborations. A few that have opened their doors wide with little regulation found that most foreign institutions entering the market were substandard. This represents Israel's experience. Lack of opportunity for access at home led the government to open the country to foreign providers. Most of the foreign institutions performed poorly and were marginal in their home countries. The door was soon closed again. The losers, of course, were the students who paid high prices for bad quality.

Some have argued that India's admittedly moribund higher education system will receive a needed dose of reform and upgrade from foreign transplants. This is a quite unlikely diagnosis.

Most countries with a relatively positive experience involving foreign providers created a clear regulatory framework to control who can enter the market and the terms and conditions of operation. China, for example, requires foreign institutions to connect with a Chinese institutional partner and to receive government approval. Yet, some of the Chinese provincial and local authorities who approve foreign collaborations have made mistakes.

While Minister Sibal claims that other countries do not maintain strong regulators such as the University Grants Commission or the All India Council of Technical Education,

this point of view seems not to be the case. Many countries have been run by strong regulatory regimes that have worked well. Singapore, with a largely successful history of foreign collaboration, stringently regulates foreign providers and has been willing to end programs, such as one with the Johns Hopkins University in the United States, which the Singaporeans felt was not living up to its promises. Ministries of education or their equivalents in South Korea, Japan, and some other Asian countries carefully regulate who can enter the local market and monitor performance.

Quality assurance has been a central concern, and few countries have solved that problem. Few countries can effectively monitor standards of their own universities, and foreign institutions do create additional challenges. American branch campuses are monitored by the US accreditors, which have found it difficult to fulfill this task. India's quality-assurance agencies do not function particularly effectively. Monitoring and evaluating numerous foreign transplants may be beyond the capability of the system.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Minister Sibal is right that India cannot forever keep its academic doors closed. India, after all, constitutes an increasingly central part of a globalized world. However, simply to throw the doors open would be a serious mistake. India, like other developing countries, needs a clear and transparent policy and regulatory framework. What comprises the rationale for participating in global higher education? What institutions—and investments—from abroad are appropriate for India? What are the criteria for selecting, monitoring, and evaluating foreign institutions? Without answers to these questions—and the policy framework to go along with the answers—opening doors will create long-term problems for India's academic system. ■

How Greed Ruins Academia

PERVEZ HOODBHOY

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Spend more money and get better universities—this piece of conventional wisdom appears uncontested. Yet, it is not always true. Indeed, Pakistan's experiment provides a counterexample where an enormous cash infusion has served to aggravate problems rather than improve teaching and research quality. This experience in Pakistan may serve as lessons for other developing countries.

Under the Higher Education Commission's grand plans for a massive change, a tidal wave of money hit Pakistan's public universities during General Pervez Musharraf's years, 1999–2008. The budget for university education rose by an astonishing factor of 12 during this period. Although difficult financial times finally stemmed the flood last year, the impact on the university system was profound—some good and a lot bad.

On the positive side, Internet connectivity in universities expanded, distance education was pursued through a new virtual university, a digital library came into operation, some foreign faculty were hired, and students were sent abroad for PhD programs (albeit largely to second-rate institutions). The number of universities doubled, then tripled. The number of PhD students registered at various universities exploded. Huge financial incentives were announced for publishing papers and for supervising PhD students. Salaries skyrocketed.

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THE GREED FACTOR

Naked greed is now destroying the moral fibre of Pakistan's academia. Professors across the country are clamoring to lift even minimal requirements that could assure quality education. This tactic is happening in two critical ways. First, to benefit from threefold increases in salaries for tenure-track positions, professors are speedily removing all barriers for their promotions. Second, they want to be able to take on more PhD students, whether these students have the requisite academic capacity or not. Having more students translates into proportionately more money in each professor's pocket.

Nowhere are these attempts more evident than at Quaid-e-Azam University, Pakistan's flagship public university. Barely two miles from the presidency and the prime minister's secretariat, it was once an island of excellence in a shallow sea of mediocrity. Most other universities started lower, and their decay has gone further and faster than at Quaid-e-Azam. Some are recognizable as universities in name only.

Quaid-e-Azam University's departments of physics and economics were especially well known 35 years ago, which is when I joined the university. The faculty was small and not many PhD degrees were awarded in those days. Money was scarce, but standards were fairly good and approached those at a reasonable US university. But as time passed, less care was taken in appointing new faculty members. Politics began to dominate over merit, and quality slipped—a slow decline is now

turning into a rapid collapse.

Last month, at a formal meeting, the professors at my university voted to make life still easier for themselves. The Academic Council, the key decision-making body of the university, decided that henceforth no applicant for a university teaching position, whether at the associate professor or professor level, could be required to give an open seminar or lecture as a part of the selection process. Open lectures were deemed by the council as illegal, unjust, and a ploy for victimizing teachers.

This is mind-boggling. Public presentations allow an applicant's subject competence and ability to communicate to be assessed by the academic community. (For the record, the author of this article insisted that requiring open lectures from candidates is standard practice in every decent university in the world. This perspective prompted angry demands for his dismissal as chairman of his department.)

ELIMINATING INTERNATIONAL TESTING

A second major decision also dealt a stunning blow to the future of Quaid-e-Azam University, and Pakistan's other universities as well. The council voted 25–12 that the PhD candidates did not have to conform to international standards. It decided to overturn its earlier acceptance of the Higher Education Commission's requirement that the international Graduate Record Examination (GRE) subject tests must be passed by a candidate prior to the award of a PhD degree. Some professors gleefully noted that the commission had been mortally weakened by the new government's removal of its chairman, Dr. Atta-ur-Rahman, and argued that advantage needed to be taken of this happy fact.

Quaid-e-Azam University's decision to eliminate international testing has resonated well throughout other universities in Pakistan.

Eventually responding to my emphatic public criticism that substandard PhD degrees were being awarded by Pakistani universities, in 2006 the authorities declared that PhD candidates must “pass” the GRE subject test, administered by the Education Testing Service located in Princeton, United States.

Initially, the Higher Education Commission stonewalled the meaning of “pass,” but two years later this label came to mean achieving a score in the 40th percentile or better, in the subject test. This level was rather low but had drawn howls of protest from students and their supervisors. The GRE test is known as fairly elementary and pitched at the bachelor's level (i.e., 16-years of education). It has, however, proved to be too difficult for many Pakistani PhD students even at the *end* of their studies. In spite of several tries, most cannot meet the 40th percentile passing mark.

Quaid-e-Azam University's decision to eliminate international testing has resonated well throughout other universities in Pakistan. Each professor gets paid a few hundred thousand rupees (a few thousand dollars) per PhD produced, with a current maximum of 10 students per supervisor at the university. Lifting the GRE requirement removes a threat to the additional income of their supervisors. To keep up appearances, from now on a token internal test will be used instead. It is hard to imagine that any student will be allowed to fail.

This horrible mess comes from a misguided policy that emphasized numbers over all else.

While the decision of the professors to do away with international testing has been greeted with relief by many PhD students at Quaid-e-Azam University, better students face a foreboding sense of an endless downward slide.

Although many students recognize international tests as difficult, they also understand them as a real measure of what they have learned. All students, whether they do well or otherwise, say they learned a great deal of subject matter in preparing for this challenge and felt more educated. Although students in all other departments at Quaid-e-Azam have reportedly failed, some students in my department have done reasonably well. Over the last year, a total of 9 students in the physics department have cleared the 40th percentile requirement. Three students, whom the department subsequently honored, secured over 75th percentile. One cannot deny, however, that most PhD students, perhaps because of their poor schooling, simply do not meet good PhD standards.

A SAD ENDING

This horrible mess comes from a misguided policy that emphasized numbers over all else. A propaganda blitz by the former Higher Education Commission chairman had convinced overseas institutions and prestigious publications—such as the World Bank and Nature—that a revolution in Pakistan's higher education was in progress. These outsiders were led down the garden path but perhaps did not want to look too closely.

However, now that the money is gone, construction of university buildings has been frozen, leaving them half-completed. Fantastically, expensive research equipment litters the country, much of which is unused. Academic standards are plummeting. Seven years of furious spending has little to show for it.

The bottom line: how you spend matters much more than how much you spend. Let this be a lesson to those who think that it only takes money to make universities good. ■

Public Funding of Latin American Universities: New Ideas

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Most Latin American governments transfer funds to public universities based on the amounts these institutions had received the preceding year; or, they increase the level of support according to the evolution of the macroeconomic indicators. Between 80 percent and 90 percent of these public university budgets are devoted to financing current and retired faculty members, strongly reducing the resources for other operating costs and capital expenditures. Since governments do not usually employ internally objective criteria to distribute the funds, this mechanism is usually called “negotiated funding.”

Although negotiated funding is the common procedure to transfer funds from governments to public universities, since the 1990s new mechanisms—mirror images of the existing allocation procedures in many industrialized countries—have been introduced in Latin America. The public-policy rationale to apply these mechanisms has addressed both to improve organizational efficiency by increasing the role of economic incentives and to strengthen accountability in the distribution of resources in public universities. At the end of the day, the goal concerns encouraging autonomous public universities to promote organizational change in the direction of public-policy design.

FORMULA FUNDING AND SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Governments in some countries—like Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, and Venezuela—allocate a small proportion of the total budget (about 5% or less) to public universities through formula funding or programs meeting specific goals.

Formula funding is based on input (e.g., the number of full-time students, faculty, staff, infrastructure in undergraduate and graduate courses, and fields) and performance indicators (e.g., faculty with postgraduate degrees, student dropout, and the quality of postgraduate programs).

Regarding special programs, a government agency invites universities to bid for funds for explicit activities, or the government sets the conditions and any university meeting the requirements will have access to these funds. In both cases, the government acts as a funding body without administering the resources, but it ensures that the institutions comply with the agreements. Public funds should generally be supplemented

by counterparts from the beneficiary institutions. Many examples exist of these programs in Latin America (e.g., in Argentina, the Fund for the Improvement of Quality in Universities and the Incentive Program for Research-Teachers; in Brazil, the Program for Restructuring and Expansion of Federal Universities; in Chile, the Program for the Quality and Equity Improvement of Higher Education; in Mexico, the Fund for the Modernization of Higher Education and the Program for Encouraging Teaching Excellence).

The practice of financial agencies inviting universities and faculty to tender for funds to carry out research activities has also gained ground in the last decade. Research-funding agencies created instruments to promote research activities in the public and private sectors. Unlike what had happened in the allocation of public funds to improve teaching activities—usually reserved for public universities (with the exception of Chile)—private universities can participate in the tender for research funds. The national research agencies also specify national priorities to make R&D activities more relevant to human and economic development. Under these tender arrangements, the governments normally retain the right to monitor how funds are used. Some countries—like Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico—have launched a number of programs promoting private sector R&D activities, as well.

Most Latin American governments transfer funds to public universities based on the amounts these institutions had received the preceding year.

THE GOVERNMENT-UNIVERSITY INTERFACE

In 2005, Argentina's Ministry of Education launched a new *modus operandi* to allocate public funds to national universities: the contract-program policy. The purpose is to allocate funds to improve teaching quality, based on an institutional or strategic plan defined by each university. This plan is expected to address the main weaknesses detected during the external assessment that was coordinated by the National Committee for University Assessment and Accrediting (CONEAU). The two most important antecedents, the French and the Catalan cases, serve as the bases of a pilot experience for medium-term (three-year) contracts at three public universities.

With the objective to align the university's institutional missions with national and regional priorities, Chile has also launched “performance contracts” as a pilot experience within the general program called “MECESUP 2.” The allocation of funds to some public universities as pilot cases, via these three-year contracts, is subject to accountability mechanisms to assure the fulfillment of objectives reflected in performance

indicators.

Within the same logic, the Argentine Ministry of Education also created a program to align the government's and public universities' objectives to improve the quality, efficiency, and relevance of those programs in regulated professions (such as medicine, engineering, pharmacy, and so on). For example, the Program for the Improvement of Teaching Engineering Programs follows the same pattern as the contract program, but in this case the three-year contract is signed with a school (*Facultad*) within a university and is based on its strategic plan and the results of the accreditation process CONEAU carried out. The program requires that the institutions report their performance in meeting the agreement's goals every year. The final accountability will be judged when these schools are to be accredited by CONEAU once more, and they can demonstrate that they have tackled their weaknesses by implementing a strategic quality-improvement plan.

The contract-program experience, both at the institutional and school levels, is still fairly new in Latin American higher education. It is a promising strategy to promote change in autonomous universities, taking into account the results of assessment and accrediting procedures, and making the funds available based on their having fulfilled the contractual terms (objectives, expected main results, and indicators).

The practice of financial agencies inviting universities and faculty to tender for funds to carry out research activities has also gained ground in the last decade.

PROBLEMS

Although several Latin American countries introduced new mechanisms to finance the higher education system in the last two decades, the proportion of funds allocated through these mechanisms is still very low. Moreover, to be effective they should deal with some obstacles in their design and implementation. From our point of view, these obstacles have to do with both organizational and technical factors.

Regarding organizational factors, the mechanisms do not always consider the complexity of autonomous public universities. One point, overlooked in the process of mechanism design, is that many relevant decisions—especially those affecting the quality of teaching and research—rest on the faculty and not on the university governance. However, the mechanisms are designed to provide signals and incentives to the university executive and collegial governments—and not to the faculty. Unless this approach is taken into account when designing policies and incentive mechanisms, it will not be possible to align the faculty's behavior with the institutional objectives. At most Latin American public universities, no explicit faculty management policy exists to align faculty objec-

tives with those of the university organization.

Finally, the trend toward linking the results of assessment and accrediting procedures, on the one side, and the financing of higher education through three-year contracts between the government and a particular university or school, on the other, looks like a promising strategy to promote change at autonomous universities. However, the lessons from the European cases suggest that the success of this mechanism depends on whether: (1) the governments fulfill the commitments in terms of the amount and schedule to deliver the funds, (2) the amount of resources allocated through contracts is large enough to carry innovative and enduring organizational changes, and (3) governments develop institutional capacity to follow up the contracts. Unfortunately, none of these conditions are easy to meet in Latin American countries. Macroeconomic instability affects the ability of government to deliver funds; the quantities of funds are usually small because the bulk of the resources targets faculty and administrative staff remunerations. Finally, public bureaucracies, overall, are not trained or strong enough to enforce the contracts. ■

Student Quotas in Brazil: The Policy Debate

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The Brazilian Congress is discussing a bill requiring federal higher education institutions to introduce a 50 percent quota for poor, nonwhite applicants who are public-school graduates. The bill addresses that these students lack the opportunity to attend the best secondary schools, which are mostly private, and are in disadvantage regarding the entrance examinations of the best public universities in the country. This bill does not represent the first project for social inclusion in higher education in Brazil. For some years, private higher education institutions can obtain a tax relief if they admit a certain number of students who pay no tuition or pay half the tuition rate. Many public universities have also created their own affirmative programs.

In 2009, there are about 5.8 million students in higher education in Brazil, 75 percent in private institutions. These student numbers form about 13 percent of the 18–24 age group—the net enrollment rate—(data provided by the National Household Survey of 2007). One of the main reasons for the low net enrollment is that 40 percent of the people in that age bracket have not completed secondary education. The quality of secondary schools, particularly in the public sector, is very low, and many applicants cannot pass the entrance examinations for the programs of their choice. About half the students

in higher education are older and study in the evening.

Public higher education is free, and most of the best and more prestigious programs and institutions are public. The cost per student in federal higher education institutions equals around US\$10,000 a year, by far the highest in Latin America. Most graduate education and research take place in a number of (but not only) public universities. Competition to enter the prestigious careers of medicine, dentistry, engineering, and law in these institutions can be fierce, with dozens of applicants per place, selected through written examinations. Expensive private secondary schools and cramming preuniversity courses prepare the students who can pay for these exams. Thus, only students from richer, better-educated families can likely get the necessary training and eventually enter these

The Brazilian Congress is discussing a bill requiring federal higher education institutions to introduce a 50 percent quota for poor, nonwhite applicants who are public-school graduates.

careers. For students from other social backgrounds, the alternative options are the less-competitive careers in public universities—teaching, social work, nursing, and others—or the private sector, which provides evening, nondemanding programs in administration, pedagogy, and other “soft” fields with affordable tuition fees.

ARGUMENTS FOR QUOTAS

This situation, however, is under change, with strong pressures and incentives from governments and social movements for public universities to expand and admit more students and a new trend for the creation of elite private institutions, particularly in fields such as economics, business administration, and law. Today, 35 percent of the students in public institutions have family incomes under about US\$300, compared with 25 percent in private institutions and 47 percent for the population as a whole. The national minimum wage (about US\$200 per month) is established each year by the federal government and is mandatory for all labor contracts. Most secondary school students in Brazil (83%) attend public institutions. In higher education, however, 60 percent of the students come from private schools. These figures show that many students who would benefit from this bill are already in higher education, and many more are likely to be admitted as the system expands.

The most controversial aspect of the bill, however, is the racial component, because it is entangled with a prolonged and sometimes bitter debate about racial identity and prejudice in Brazil. The Brazilian statistical office has traditionally asked persons to classify themselves in terms of their color (white, black, yellow, and *pardo*—meaning to have dark skin, between

white and black), with the “yellow” category being now divided into indigenous and Oriental. In the 2007 household survey, 49.4 percent considered themselves white, 42.3 percent *pardos*, 7.4 percent black, 0.5 percent yellow, and 0.3 percent of indigenous origin.

Given the high historical levels of miscegenation in the country, the boundaries between these categories are very fuzzy, and many whites would probably be classified as black in countries with more well-defined ethnic boundaries, such as the United States or South Africa. In spite of that, statistical analyses show consistently that *pardos* and blacks are economically more impaired than whites, and that blacks are worse off than *pardos* in terms of educational attainment. Social and racial prejudice in Brazil, however, is combined with high levels of intermarriage and conviviality between persons of various racial appearances. Education and the quality of jobs, and not race differences, explain the main social and economic differences in the country.

Supporters of race-based affirmative action in Brazil tend to lump the *pardo* and black categories in one group, which would include about half of the Brazilian population. As access to education has increased, the proportion of whites and nonwhites in basic and secondary education in Brazil is now similar to that in the population as a whole. In higher education, the proportion of nonwhites has grown from 22 percent in 2001 to 32 percent in 2007. In public institutions, the proportion is 38 percent and 30 percent in the private sector.

The various quota bills under discussion require that 50

Competition to enter the prestigious careers of medicine, dentistry, engineering, and law in these institutions can be fierce, with dozens of applicants per place, selected through written examinations.

percent of places in programs at public higher education institutions should be filled in by underprivileged students. None of the suggested policies, however, take into account most of these students' inadequate academic requirements to complete the more demanding programs. If this legislation were enacted, it is likely that a large number of students would drop out, or public institutions may lower their standards, increasing the exodus of the richer and better-educated students to the private sector.

The quota bill would bring to public institutions a few hundred thousand students from a lower social background, displacing others who may likely also stand at the bottom of the entrance examination rankings. Social inequities within the higher education system would not change much, but high-quality programs and institutions can be affected by the forced admission of students unable to keep up with their standards.

ONGOING PROBLEMS

To make higher education in Brazil more equitable requires improving the quality and reach of secondary education, which would depend, in turn, on improving the equally precarious system of basic education. In the meantime, the controversies surrounding the quota bill have led to the neglect of the main issues concerning higher education in Brazil. Creating an effective differentiated system would provide alternatives for students with dissimilar backgrounds and needs. The system must protect high-quality programs from pressures to lower standards. Funding will be required for deserving students who need financial support, while tuition should be charged from those who can pay at public universities. A range of policies are necessary for public and private institutions to improve their quality and to use more effectively the public resources they receive. ■

International Organizations for University Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean

DANIEL A. LÓPEZ AND DANIEL C. LÓPEZ

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In Latin America and the Caribbean, despite current conditions favoring university internationalization, coverage and development of organizations promoting international university cooperation remain limited. These issues involve effects of globalization, protocols, political and economic agreements, as well as the opportunity to improve academic quality through cooperation. These factors have not yet been reflected in terms of the consolidation of these institutions or their effects on university development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

CHARACTERISTICS AND FUNCTIONS

Over 30 international organizations now function in Latin America and the Caribbean. They are defined as "groups of universities," whose missions include "cooperation among their members" and improving "academic development through integrated action." Fifty percent of the actually active organizations were created less than 30 years ago; in the past years, the numbers have increased. Nearly all of the organizations are based on 20 to 50 affiliated universities, and only a fraction have integrated over 100 members.

The total number of institutions affiliated with interuniver-

sity organizations promoting international cooperation remains as yet low; and a considerable percentage of the affiliated are passive members. Moreover, many of these organizations are inactive, mainly due to financial and organizational problems.

Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Argentina, Chile, and Mexico possess the highest number of organizational affiliations. On the other hand, in more than a dozen small Caribbean countries no university entities are registered as members of international-cooperation organizations. The situation in the Caribbean evidently involves the relative development of the university system in each country.

PROBLEMS AND TRENDS

International-cooperation agencies in Latin America and the Caribbean cope with several management and financial problems that limit their impact on university development. The increase in these types of organizations has not included differentiation of objectives, resulting in a large degree of overlapping and redundancy among them.

These agencies have encountered major management problems. The limited commitment of their members to materialize agreements relates to the practice that most universities do not plan international activities globally, except for student exchange programs. Even when a university creates a special unit for international affairs, the internal links with the rest of the institution are lax, resulting in limited academic involvement. Consequently, it becomes difficult to identify suitable mediators within each member to develop activities programmed by the international organizations. Relationships between a university and the international organization are personalized and restricted to officers, while the information flow toward academic levels remains deficient. Member-university representation is mostly formal within the international agency management structure, with limited authority and empowerment.

International-cooperation agencies in Latin America and the Caribbean cope with several management and financial problems that limit their impact on university development.

Within the international organizations, responsibilities are commonly delegated to only a few persons in executive and technical positions, which reveals the low level of proficiency and activity planning, as well as a lack of a performance-based organizational culture. Thus, many conferences and meetings—the main activities undertaken by international university organizations—do not advance concrete academic products.

The Higher Education market in Latin America and the Caribbean appears to operate predominantly by competing

rather than cooperating and seeks to attain immediate benefits from the relationship. Profits from occasional opportunities are favored over well-planned projects. In the Latin American context, obstacles to the functioning of international organizations are caused by the diverse education laws and regulations in each state and even within a country. The lack of protagonists among local actors affects the decision-making process over education and cultural policies for central bureaucratic offices.

A number of financial difficulties affecting international organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean have been cited in official documents, seminars, and publications. Financial budgets based principally on variable incomes originated mainly from specific projects and programs. Fixed incomes generated by membership quotas are limited and less predictable. A high competition exists for funds available from international agencies. International support tends to prioritize African and eastern European countries. Only restricted funding is available for international organizations and the member universities. The short-term benefits, principally monetary, are perceived as a basis for links between member universities and the operating organization.

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CONCLUSION

To solve these difficulties and consolidate and improve levels of performance, Latin American and Caribbean international university organizations have adopted measures. The policy would call for working on projects, to take advantage of the increasing offer of specific grants. The organizations would function as networks. Each one would try to adopt clearly defined institutional profiles, courses of action, and advantages. Internal mechanisms need to be generated to compete for economic resources. The management group will require professionalization. Aspects such as graduate studies, research education, distance education, and information technology represent programs of high institutional profile. Bilateral, rather than multilateral relations, are preferred as a result of organizational difficulties of combining several partners in cooperation programs. Bilateral relations also facilitate specific and concrete short-run agreements.

The internationalization of Latin American and Caribbean universities as well as other aspects of their institutions are still limited. The conflicts must be solved to enable these institutions to take advantage of the increasing value of international affairs, as a result of globalization and the development of information and communications technologies. ■

Polish Semielite Private Higher Education Institutions

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IHE devotes a column in each issue to a contribution from PROPHE, the Program for Research on Private Higher Education, headquartered at the University of Albany. See <http://www.albany.edu/>.

As with most of the eastern European region, private higher education rapidly developed in Poland after the collapse of communism in 1989. Indeed, Poland quickly grew to have the largest private share in the region, some 34 percent of total enrollments. By 2007/08 the enrollment spread across some 324 private institutions, in comparison to 131 public institutions.

An overview of the private sector is possible through the categories invoked in the global private higher education literature: religious, elite/semielite, and demand absorbing/nonelite.

Only few Polish private higher education institutions are run religiously by the Roman Catholic Church and individual churches. The Catholic University of Lublin, established in 1918, is the only institution listed as private that existed under the communist regime. Elite private higher education is quite rare outside the United States, as seen in the *Times Higher Education*/QS ranking and Shanghai Jiao Tong global rankings. Although no Polish university archives these rankings, a few Polish public universities qualify as elite, such as Jagiellonian University and Warsaw University. In contrast, even the best private universities lie below these leaders. As in most countries, in Poland the large majority of private institutions are markedly nonelite. They absorb much of the demand for higher education that could not be accommodated by the public sector, from the communist era, even as that sector has since grown. Private demand absorbers are common, especially in the developing world. “Semielite” institutions lie somewhere between elite and nonelite institutions in the hierarchy of higher education and, compared to the private sector overall, hold much more than average status and selectivity.

POLISH SEMIELITE INSTITUTIONS

Semielite institutions have their own status and characteristics—substantially different from characteristics found in most institutions in the private sector. While data on the exact number are not available, perhaps about 50 to a maximum 100 semielite institutions exist, including examples like the Kozminski University, WSB-National-Louis University, and the Polish-Japanese Institute of Information Technology. Like

semielite institutions elsewhere, such as Polish institutions compete with good second-tier public institutions to become the “first second choices” for prospective students who prefer but cannot obtain the top public places. Some semielite institutions aspire to compete with the best public institutions and thus enhance their academic legitimacy. This competition is most credible in niches, epitomized by the master of business administration (MBA). The methods to create leading schools include specializing in niche areas. Some semielite institutions want to become comprehensive colleges and thus expand the curriculum and introduce PhD programs.

In Poland, as in eastern Europe overall, the private higher education sector suffers challenges of legitimacy based on the lack of tradition, social standing, and established support. The sector is stigmatized by the perception that private institutions are not academically committed. Consequently, semielite institutions not only need to be seen as socially accepted but also that they offer high-quality programs. This process is achieved through improving various types of legitimacy at different levels, which helps distinguish semielite institutions from demand-absorbing ones.

Semielite institutions have their own status and characteristics—substantially different from characteristics found in most institutions in the private sector.

Most semielite institutions are well recognized and occupy the leading positions in rankings of private institutions published by Poland's newspapers. The institutions also try to present themselves as internationally oriented organizations. Polish semielite institutions resemble such institutions in other countries in being usually Western and US oriented. They publicize their links with US colleges as, for example, Kozminski University with the State University of New York at New Paltz. In general, they are entrepreneurial and market oriented with successful job-oriented programs. As other private institutions, semielite institutions are nonprofit organizations that generate their incomes by charging tuition fees. They do not receive any government subsidy, but their students may be eligible to receive governmental support. Semielite institutions' tuition fees are high.

ACADEMIC LEGITIMACY

To obtain an acceptable academic legitimacy, all Polish semielite institutions undertake various approaches to respond to criticisms that private institutions lack such quality. As mentioned, a small group of semielite institutions labor to create formidable PhD programs and hire leading professors.

For the bulk of semielite institutions a common legitimacy-

seeking strategy is application for accreditation to one of the nongovernmental accreditation commissions (government accreditation is mandatory for all public and private institutions). The process of obtaining accreditation increases institutional prestige considerably.

Another common strategy constitutes building partnerships with foreign institutions and creating opportunities to establish joint degrees and exchange programs. The institutions often offer joint-degree programs and provide foreign modes of education.

Another strategy consists of establishing the right to confer graduate degrees. Institutions offering graduate education may achieve high status as PhD programs imply an engagement in research. Semielite institutions in Poland do not have

Another common strategy constitutes building partnerships with foreign institutions and creating opportunities to establish joint degrees and exchange programs.

well-developed basic research projects, though some develop applied research. This can help to attract a selective student body. In fact, quite unlike most private institutions, Poland's semielite institutions have students from high social-class backgrounds who are capable of paying ample private tuitions.

The semielite institutions place priority on good practical teaching or training supported by good full-time faculty. A number of them even foster activities to improve their academic staff. Several semielite institutions in Warsaw show a much more favorable student/faculty ratio than other private institutions, and some boast an above-average number of prestigious academics. ■

Iran's Giant Semiprivate University

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In 1983, the new Islamic regime in Iran permitted the founding of a nongovernmental, nonprofit university, called the Islamic Azad University. Azad was the first nongovernmental university to be created after the Iranian revolution of 1979.

Although the university began with only a handful of students and a small location, it has now become one of the largest universities in Iran. It took several years for Azad's degrees and programs to gain the approval of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, and as a result, Azad did not establish itself as a respected higher education institution in Iran until the late 1980s. Conventionally, only those Iranian institutions approved by the Ministry of Higher Education possess higher status and prestige. Consequently, Azad now is enjoying a higher prestige than during the early years of its inception. Now enrolling a record 1.3 million students, Azad is educating approximately 50 percent of the total student population in Iran.

THE CREATION OF AZAD

Azad literally means “free” in Persian. However, in the case of Azad, it also means “open access,” and the university promotes itself as the alternative to the ultracompetitive national universities. While this spotlight might imply absence of criteria for admission, Azad does in fact use an entrance exam. However, to gain entrance to Iran's public universities, students must pass a more rigorous and difficult exam. Thus, Azad attracted large numbers of applicants, including those who were denied access to the public universities because of low scores.

Azad University was supported by the former Iranian government administration, and the idea was initiated by the former president, Hashemi Rafsanjani himself. Such a university was established to alleviate the ever-increasing demand for higher education among high school graduates denied access to public universities due to the limited number of seats and stringent entrance examinations. Maintained not by government support but by the tuition and fees it collects from its students, Azad must charge high fees and cast its nets widely enough to obtain students who might otherwise apply to public universities. Students willingly pay the high tuition because a university degree in Iran disproportionately improves social and professional status and mobility. (The public universities, in contrast, levy no fees on their students.)

AZAD'S ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Yet, in spite of the fact that Azad is not government subsidized, it is still not considered a “private” institution. Instead, it is considered semiprivate, since its degree programs are overseen by the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology. In Iran, no institution of higher education is permitted to function independent of the ministry's rules and regulations. Consequently, Azad's curriculum is similar to that of public universities, and the scope of academic freedom compares to that allowed at public universities. Azad's instructors may supplement the prescribed curriculum by using outside instructional materials. Azad has both part-time and full-time faculty, with 15,000 full-time faculty at its branches.

The administrative structure of Azad University also differs

from public universities. The university is run by several councils, the highest and most important one being the supreme council. The supreme council is the main decision maker concerning university policies and is responsible for the appointment of president and approval of the budget.

Importantly, Azad is a multicampus university with over 300 physical branches inside Iran and another five campuses outside Iran in the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, Lebanon, Tanzania, and Armenia. The students who attend branches outside Iran are both Persian and foreign nationals; however, since the language of instruction is Persian, the applicants must demonstrate mastery of language as a prerequisite for admission. In general, the mission of campuses outside Iran was to promote the Persian language and culture. The multiple branches within Iran were established to make higher education accessible in rural areas remote from the traditional centers of higher education in Iran. In this way, students from the provinces are able to avoid dormitory expenses, by living at home.

Although the creation of Islamic Azad University was a positive step to accommodate the needs of the higher education seekers in Iran, its creation may have further contributed to the “diploma disease” or “chase for diploma” phenomenon in Iran.

In addition, Azad was instrumental to economic development in Iran, as it created a multitude of new jobs in a variety of fields: Azad not only employed scholars and administrators to teach and run the university at its many branches but also required skilled and unskilled laborers to build and service its facilities. These newly created jobs and Azad's more lenient admissions policies have mobilized populations around the country, leading to a wave of migration that reversed the trend of the 1960s and 1970s, when moving from the provinces to the major cities was the way to facilitate improved educational and employment opportunities. Now, potential Azad employees and students are leaving the cities to work and study at Azad branches around the country.

RESULTS OF AZAD'S CREATION

Although the creation of Islamic Azad University was a positive step to accommodate the needs of the higher education seekers in Iran, its creation may have further contributed to the “diploma disease” or “chase for diploma” phenomenon in Iran. Iranian high school graduates seek higher education, as parents dream that their children will gain elevated status as professionals, especially in the field of medicine or engineering.

While the establishment of such a university further democratized university admissions by offering a more relaxed

entrance examination than the public universities require, Azad's fees are an obstacle for many Iranians. The creation of Azad University has alleviated the pressure on public universities to supply a growing youth population with higher degrees (there are currently three million university students in Iran), but since the economy has been characterized by a high unemployment rate (11%) graduates of Azad cannot be guaranteed to have a better chance of finding employment than graduates from public universities (1 out of 10 unemployed holds a university degree).

Moreover, Azad focuses purely on meeting the growing need for university degrees and does not provide its graduates with professional career counseling (higher education institutes in Iran lack career-planning services). Therefore, many students after graduation may not possess a clear idea of what they can do with their university degrees. As the brain drain persists in Iran, perhaps many of Azad's graduates leave the country to pursue advanced degrees or work abroad. ■

Seeking Autonomy: French Universities Against the Jacobins

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Since the Imperial University of Napoleon, founded in 1808, only four higher education laws have been passed in France: in 1896, an unsuccessful attempt to introduce the Humboldtian model in France; in 1968, the Faure act, after the student demonstrations of May 1968; in 1984, the Savary act aimed at amending the Faure act; and finally the new Pécresse act, also called LRU (Loi relative aux Libertés et Responsabilités des Universités). All these acts have at least two points in common. First, they all aimed at transforming the governance of French universities rather than the whole higher education system. Second, they all provided universities with autonomy—a main issue often at stake in the discussions preceding the adoption of these acts.

The diagnosis of French universities suffering from lack of autonomy was central in the debates at the end of the 19th century. The same diagnosis was again essential in most of the reflections led by a group of French academics some years before the events of May 1968, during the second colloquium of Caen in 1966. In the act voted six months after May 1968,

Edgar Faure allocated administrative, budgetary, and pedagogical autonomy to the newly (re)created French universities. Autonomy was again reaffirmed in the Savary act of 1984. Nevertheless autonomy remained on the agenda, in 2007, when Nicolas Sarkozy was elected.

FAVORABLE INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS

When looking at the reasons why the previous acts had failed, one could anticipate a more efficient result from the LRU: many of the previous obstacles seemed to be erased. In the book I wrote on the “long march” of French universities, I explained the failure of the 1896, 1968, and 1984 acts in making universities autonomous by the fact that they all focused on universities and not on the French “university configuration” as a whole. Thus, these acts sought to change university governance but not the management of the academic profession or the comanagement relationships the ministry had developed since Napoleon, with a centrally organized academic profession. The disciplines and their vertical and centralized structure remained the main interlocutors of the ministry while universities were marginal partners. In 2007, three factors raised the belief that this could change.

The four-year contracts introduced by the end of the 1980s between the ministry and each university had weakened the corporatist comanagement between the disciplines and the state and fostered the recognition of universities by the ministry administration. It also pushed university presidents to have an active role in the preparation of their institution's four-year strategic plan. As a whole, by the beginning of 2000, French universities had become much less anomic and ungoverned than they were 20 years earlier.

Not only providing administrative and budgetary autonomy, the LRU also contained the germs for universities to become more autonomous in the management of their human resources, therefore transforming the management of the academic profession. In terms of positions, the payroll up to now managed by the ministry was to be included in the operating budgets, thus allowing each university to decide on the reallocation of posts or the nature of a post (junior or senior, for instance). In terms of staff, some of the already existing possibilities (such as the allocation of bonuses or decisions on some promotions) were extended and new dispositions included in the act, such as the possibility to renegotiate the teaching, research, and service duties of academics.

One year before the LRU, another act (Loi de programme pour la recherche) was aimed at transforming the French research system so as to put universities at its center, by reducing the prerogatives of the national research institutions (such as the CNRS, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique). On the one hand, a research council (the Agence Nationale de la Recherche) was created to manage grants run by the ministry and the national research institutions. On the other, the evaluation of the research units of the latter, was transferred to a newly created evaluation agency, the AERES (Agence

d'Evaluation de la Recherche et de l'Enseignement Supérieur). During the same period, the two candidates to the French presidency promised to increase considerably the budgets for universities and research and to transform universities into major actors of the French higher education system.

In these favorable institutional settings, the LRU was passed four months after Nicolas Sarkozy's election. By January 2009, 20 universities implemented the new act and became responsible for all their budgets, including salaries. All other universities were to do the same within the five subsequent years.

THE JACOBINS REGAINED INFLUENCE

While many people assumed the turn toward more institutional autonomy had been obtained, a combination of factors allowed a revolutionary Jacobin front to coagulate against these reforms. Within a few months, the context described above changed dramatically. Four events in particular provoked demonstrations and contestation that forced the French minister to accept some backtrackings. First, during the fall of 2008 a decree was prepared to transform the rules regulating the French academic corps since 1984, to empower French universities and their presidents in the management of the academic staff, but this provoked fears. The decree, for instance, introduced the possibility to reduce teaching duties for academics involved in research activities but did not say a word about academics strongly involved in teaching. Yet, French universities

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are open to all baccalaureat holders and thus have to face strong pedagogical issues. Second, the ministry launched a reform of the training of secondary school teachers, which was immediately severely contested by academics involved in these training programs and by the students attending them.

A student-academic coalition against the reforms thus became possible and started to be active. Third, about the same moment, in the allocation of the 2009 university budgets, a new budgetary process was introduced that led to cuts in some universities, while the ministry claimed for months that the French higher education and research budgets have never been so high. Furthermore, cuts in the number of positions were implemented to participate in the general policy aimed at reducing the number of civil-servant positions. While the cuts in higher education were far from respecting the rule of "one post left for two retirements," which applies to the French state administration, this policy change was nevertheless cruelly

resented by the universities and university presidents who feared it would be the drop that breaks the camel's back. But, fourth, the drop came from elsewhere: on January 22, 2009, President Sarkozy provided a discourse in which he fustigated the French research production and used rather derogatory terms. This pronouncement brought onto the streets all those who were against the decree and/or the reform of high school teachers' training, and/or the cuts, and/or the LRU, and/or the reform of the research system, and /or Sarkozy.

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At that very moment, a bizarre coalition took place between the left-wing unions of academics and the right-wing law professors who all fought against the decree that would have allowed the universities to manage their academic staffs. Both groups pleaded for giving the CNU—the central national body involved in the management of academic careers since the 19th century (but which had less and less power since 1992)—the responsibility, every four years, to assess the research, teaching, and service activities of the 63,000 academics—*maîtres de conférences* and professors. The latest version of the decree adopted in late April restrains the scope of decision for universities in the management of their staff.

The concrete implementation of the decree as well as the capacity of university presidents in informally expanding their formal prerogatives will of course be decisive for French universities to become more autonomous, if further restrictions are not obtained by the still ongoing contestations. ■

The Impact of the UK Research Assessment Exercise

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The results of the latest, and probably the last, Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) in the United Kingdom were announced in December 2008, and the financial outcomes for universities were confirmed in March 2009. Each of the previous RAEs (1986, 1989, 1992, 1996, 2001) have cited winners

and losers. This year, in addition to the usual concerns about the ranking of individual disciplines, the controversy has intensified over the translation of the RAE results into financial allocations.

A RESTRUCTURING DEVICE

It is important to recognize that in the United Kingdom the RAE is not, as national research assessments are in some other countries, an exercise associated with quality assurance carrying reputational consequences only. It is a resource allocation device that determines the institutional recurrent grant contribution to the dual funding system for research—the “R” element in the block grant (about 20% of the whole) and funding awarded by the research councils for individual research projects. The RAE was introduced in 1985/86, following a Cabinet Office review of funding for research and development across all government departments. This assessment program quickly became, however, a key restructuring device within the university system, identifying (and rewarding, financially) universities successful in research and penalizing less successful ones. With the results incorporated into league tables, the RAE conveyed reputational advantage (“the research intensive university”) as well as benefits over time in research concentration. The 1992 RAE coincided with the legislation abolishing the binary line between universities and polytechnics and served to confirm a systemic hierarchy with the post-1992 universities ranked below any of the pre-1992 institutions.

THE RAE METHODOLOGY

Behind the broad principles of research funding, intense controversies have risen about the methodology of measuring research excellence. From the beginning, the RAE has ranked disciplines, not institutions. The institutional rankings and the financial allocations have been derived from the aggregation of subject rankings. The rankings have been undertaken by peer-group subject panels based on institutional submissions. These submissions, discipline by discipline, include research outputs (mostly not more than four publications per individual academic and listed so that the panel can consult them), a description of the research environment (research grants, number of research postgraduates, etc.), and indicators of esteem.

The particular details and the weightings have varied from RAE to RAE. In the early RAEs the presumption was that universities would submit almost 100 percent of their academic staff in the expectation of attracting higher financial allocations. However, as successive resource allocation models delivered less for lower scores, universities have reduced their lists to high-performing staff only. This emphasizes the extent to which “game playing” has developed. Thus, in 2008 Manchester University achieved sixth place in the multifaculty university ranking list by submitting only 75 percent of its eligible staff when most of its peers in the top 10 submitted around 90 percent. The RAE has been constantly criticized for

encouraging head hunting (“poaching”) of research stars to win RAE inclusion (with the inevitable inflationary impact on academic rank and salary), although statistically based inquiry has suggested that gossip may have greatly exaggerated the actual transfers.

The RAE has become not just a piece of restructuring machinery but also a major cultural phenomenon of the UK higher education system. Academics' publication rates may be planned around RAE cycles. Staff are recruited for their RAE potential. Institutional prestige is tied to RAE success, and highly ranked departments are magnets for research students. Membership of RAE panels represent an individual reputational ranking, while exclusion from an RAE submission in a research-active institution form an academic death warrant or, at least, a condemnation to a high teaching load. The publication of the RAE results can represent a defining point in the career of a vice-chancellor, pro-vice-chancellor (for research), or head of department.

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THE 2008 RAE

An element of predictability had invaded the RAE by 2007/08, which is why the results of its 2008 assessments have provoked surprise and much debate. Instead of the previous seven-point scale, the 2008 RAE adopted a five-point ranking: 4 star (world ranking), 3 star (internationally excellent but falls short of the highest standards of excellence), 2 star (recognized internationally), 1 star (recognized nationally), and unclassified. For the first time international scholars were invited, 50 in all, to join the assessment panels. Pertaining to the ranking, instead of summative ratings for each university, individual “quality profiles” of each discipline were to be identified and ranked. A “world-class” department would, theoretically, need everyone ranked 4 star—whereas in 2001 a 5-star department (then the highest grade) needed 50 percent of its staff rated as at “international standard”—but a generally non-research-active department with one or two 4-star performers would receive credit for their ranking.

In this way, pockets of excellence were recognized in a much more dispersed set of institutions than in previous RAEs. Due to the aggregated ratings, although the top 10 institutions—Cambridge, London School of Economics, Oxford, Imperial College, University College London, Manchester, Warwick, York, Essex, and Edinburgh (in that order)—did not differ markedly from previous RAEs, the table turned more

fluid with some universities moving up many places (Queen Mary University, London from 46th to 11th, Nottingham from 35th to 24th) and some others fell equally sharply. The pockets of excellence spread widely across the system, and three post-1992 universities (Hertfordshire, Brighton, and De Montfort) were for the first time ranked above some pre-1992 institutions.

These results raised serious funding issues. The government had always liked that the RAE methodology chimed with its policy of investment in and concentration of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) research to support national economic ambitions. This policy also helped maintain the United Kingdom's position in worldwide citation tables. For institutions concerned about the resource base, however, the major issues have revolved around the gradient of the reward structures for the different rankings and the size of the “pots of gold” allocated to each discipline. The greater dispersal of former pockets of excellence—the majority in non-STEM subjects—produced in a fixed budget a theoretical redistribution of funding away from the major centers of research concentration and drove a coach and horses through the gov-

Pockets of excellence were recognized in a much more dispersed set of institutions than in previous RAEs.

ernment's policy. Rumors of large cuts in high-ranked institutions abounded. To accommodate the difficulty, the size of the fixed sum had to be expanded, and a switch of funding into the STEM “pots of gold” had to be undertaken. Thus, in England, whereas in 2001 90 percent of the R funding was shared among 38 universities, the figure will be 48 in 2008—25 institutions receiving research funding for the first time. There have been significant winners and losers: in spite of their ranking, Imperial College has lost 5 percent of its R money and London School of Economics 13 percent (because of the switch of funding to STEM subjects); Nottingham, on the other hand, which is strong in STEM subjects, gained 23 percent.

THE FUTURE OF THE RAE

A compromise may have been achieved. The advocates of concentration can point to 75 percent of the funds going to 26 institutions only, with Cambridge, Oxford, Imperial College, and University College London receiving more than 25 percent. However, the post-1992 universities in particular and many individuals in unfashionable institutions can claim to be vindicated in the exposure of a much greater spread of research talent than was apparent in the past. Nevertheless, the 2008 RAE has created aspirations that will be hard to meet. Another danger is that the new Research Excellence Framework, which is planned to succeed the RAE and will be

much more metrics based, will be more heavily steered by government and less likely to reward excellence wherever it is found. ■

Vietnam's Strategy on Higher Education: The Hardware Needs Software

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Virtuous and talented men are state sustaining elements: The strength and the prosperity of a state depend on its vitality, and a state becomes weaker as such vitality fails. That is why all the Saint Emperors and clear-sighted Kings did not fail in seeing to the formation of men of talent and the employment of literati to develop this vitality.
—Nien Hieu Dai Bao, 1442

If Vietnam is to achieve the lofty goals of the prophetic words quoted above and inscribed on a plaque hanging inside Hanoi's Temple of Literature, the first university in Vietnam and for centuries the principal center of learning, it is imperative that Vietnam establishes a high-quality, sustainable system of higher education if it desires to continue on its development path.

THE NEW STRATEGY

The recently released Draft Strategy for Education Development for 2009–2020 has set a number of goals for the Vietnamese education system. One of the main targets calls for the construction of four international standard universities, over the next decade, and to ensure that by 2020 at least two of these universities become among the 200 top universities in the world. These universities, estimated to cost US\$400 million to build and staff, will be interdisciplinary, providing high-quality education in both Vietnamese and English.

Another goal outlined in the draft is to have 450 university students per 10,000 people by 2020. This would be a dramatic increase from the current ratio of 180 per 10,000 persons and would require not only a tripling of the number of colleges and universities but a fourfold increase in the number of students.

Vast improvements must occur in the primary and secondary educational sectors to create a pipeline of students into higher education. The quality of higher education must be addressed and significantly improved to meet the objective of

having 5 percent of undergraduates obtain the knowledge equal to that of students graduating with honors from the leading universities in countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

THE NEED FOR CHANGE

The poor quality of Vietnam's educational sector is well known. The Ministry of Education and Training, while denying the opinion that Vietnam's educational reform is at a standstill, readily acknowledges the need for major change. Thus, devoting significant resources to building international standard universities can be perceived as a radical move designed to shake up the system.

THE TOP-DOWN APPROACH

The policy of building one or more international standard universities to reform the educational system depicts a trickle-down theory. This approach involves providing tax cuts or other benefits to the higher-income groups and business with the expectation that the benefits will eventually flow to the broader population.

It could be interpreted that building an international standard university with high-quality faculty, facilities, and students would serve as a testing ground for higher education reform throughout Vietnam. The successful lessons learned from this model will provide the impetus for other universities to emulate, and the benefits will trickle down to all levels of the educational system.

One of the keystones of the international standard university model is the ability of these institutions to act on an autonomous basis free from the constraints of the Ministry of Education and Training. As Vladimir Briller recently noted, "Vietnam is under a curriculum based on teaching, not on learning. That means the Ministry of Education and Training prescribes what you teach and not what students learn and will be able to do. This is a major crisis." Thus, autonomy would include freedom from regulations that govern curriculum, faculty hiring and advancement, and student enrollment.

THE BOTTOM-UP APPROACH

The bottom-up or grassroots approach to economic development includes consolidating the higher education system through mergers of smaller and midsized colleges, reforming university governance and finances, and promoting quality through an innovations program that give the incentive to universities themselves to promote internal reform. To date, however, such an approach has not yet proved successful, primarily attributable to inadequacies in educational management and a system of entrenched bureaucracy.

THE REAL PROBLEM MAY BE THE SOFTWARE

Vietnam has already created nearly 100 universities in the past

three years. While the building of more universities tackles the problem of expanding the "hardware," the real debate on the future of Vietnam's education system should focus on the severe shortage of "software" or qualified human resources.

In Vietnam, where two-thirds of the population is under the age of 30, universities are struggling to cope with a growing demand. Despite the fact that education has expanded, the number of lecturers has not seen any considerable change. Given the low salaries of instructors, averaging only US\$150 per month, many people have moved to more lucrative careers—putting severe strains on universities and impeding the enticement of new entrants into the field.

The Vietnamese government reports approximately 1.6 million students and over 53,000 lecturers, or one lecturer for every 28 students. However, to enroll close to 4.5 million students by 2020 and keep the student to lecturer ratio constant, 220,000 more lecturers—an average of 12,000 more lecturers every year—must be employed.

The current shortage requires faculty to teach more hours. At one of the major universities in Hanoi, for example, the

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average teaching hours of lecturers are reported to be 162 percent higher than the required hours under the current regulations. Some institutions have resorted to staffing a majority of their courses with full-time lecturers from other schools, hired on a part-time basis or employing faculty with only a bachelor's degree.

The shortage of faculty is especially severe at the advanced level. Data indicate slightly over 10 percent of faculty hold a doctoral degree, although the term may be misleading. Many Vietnamese doctorate holders, particularly if educated domestically, are actually educated only to the bachelor's level on the international scale.

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

The Vietnamese government has embarked on an ambitious plan to enable individuals to pursue advanced degree programs both in Vietnam and abroad, although the target to train 20,000 PhDs over the next decade may not be realistic. The educational authorities appear to be counting on outside aid and educational partnerships to assist in this undertaking. A number of countries, including the United States, Switzerland, Finland, Belgium, France, and Japan, are currently providing support for such endeavors. Yet since funding is a scarce resource for all parties, cost-effective programs are advisable, and only time will tell if the current methods of training are

economically beneficial.

There is no doubt that “virtuous and talented men” are state sustaining elements. However, if Vietnam is to take a great leap forward in developing its educational system it must choose the proper strategy of hardware and software development to produce graduates with the skills and qualifications needed to survive in the new market-oriented environment. ■

The United Arab Emirates and the Branch Campus Gold Rush

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The fairly new higher education system in the United Arab Emirates is experiencing accelerated growth. The country opened its first university in 1976, established its Ministry of Higher Education in 1992, and began full-time licensing and accrediting of higher education in 2000. Many foreign institutions have opened branch campuses. This expansion’s frenetic pace has presented both opportunity and peril for the nation and its students.

EXISTING BRANCHES

Branch campuses have opened throughout this tiny nation from the high-profile city of Dubai to the little-known enclave, of Ras Al Khaimah. However, the government of Dubai, with its market-driven approach, has certainly been at the forefront of the branch-campus movement in the United Arab Emirates. It has done this through the establishment of two education free zones, which often provide facilities, offer subsidies, and bypass the federal higher education accreditation system. Of the two free zones, Knowledge Village has been in operation since 2003, while its successor, International Academic City, was established in 2007. International universities such as the University of Wollongong, University of Exeter, St. Petersburg State University of Engineering & Economics, and, most prominently, Michigan State University, have all been attracted to what has been called a branch campus gold rush. Not to be outdone, the Emirate of Ras Al Khaimah has an education free zone that includes the University of Bolton, the University of Pune, and, for a little while longer, George Mason University. Branch campus supporters claim that the large number of institutions in Dubai and Ras Al Khaimah are beginning to

create a culture of academia and that some are transitioning to a more comprehensive model, including research. Nevertheless, it is within these two emirates, with their limited government support and market-driven approaches, that cracks are beginning to appear in the branch campus façade.

As a newer approach to internationalization, the government of Abu Dhabi has also begun to actively pursue high-profile institutional partnerships. In contrast to other emirates, Abu Dhabi has generally funded the branches and presided in a far more measured and exclusive manner. Regarded as the richest city in the world, it is assumed to possess the financial power to fund branch campuses. The two major partnerships at this time are with New York University and the Paris-Sorbonne University. The government recently gifted New York University US\$50 million as a commitment to launching a branch campus in the capital. The Paris-Sorbonne branch campus is also government financed and will have a prestigious landmark facility built. The latest candidates for branch campuses include the University of Oxford and the American women’s liberal arts college, Bryn Mawr. Not all Abu Dhabi branch campus overtures have been successful, however. Even with full financial support, Yale dropped plans in 2008 to open an arts institute because of a dispute concerning the degrees being offered. Whether the more measured approach taken by Abu Dhabi will fare any better than the market-driven model employed by Ras Al Khaimah and Dubai remains to be seen. Though Abu Dhabi’s funding seems sound, it too may become stretched in these times of global economic uncertainty and reduced petrochemical revenue.

CLOSURES

As the first high-profile casualty of this branch campus gold rush, the University of Southern Queensland closed its doors in 2005, after just one year. With the recent announcement of George Mason’s closing after only three years, a shadow has been cast over the entire branch-campus industry in the United Arab Emirates. At last count more than 55 universities were operating in a country with a population of only 4.5 million. Furthermore, a scan of programs on offer indicates that far too many institutions are now looking to the American-style MBA as their way into an already overcrowded marketplace—for example, the University of Pune. One begins to question the motives of many of these institutions—if they have the development of the country at heart, especially when closures and abandonments occur. More often than not, the allure of financial gain for the home campus seems to be a major driving force for establishing any branches.

Continually, the mantra of branch campuses in the United Arab Emirates describes them as committed to the country, meeting the diverse needs of the student population, and understanding what it takes to succeed in the region. These claims have generally been followed up by overinflated predictions for the size of the initial student intake, the potential for subsequent growth, and the language proficiency of regional

students. George Mason, for example, was predicting nearly 200 students at launch but had less than 40. Paris-Sorbonne's growth has similarly been modest, with only 235 students in the bachelor's degree program after three years and the offering of a master's program to a single student.

Once a branch campus is opened, the next phase consists of denials that the low numbers of students registered and the extremely high percentage of new registrants in language-training programs are negative or unexpected. The numbers, if publicized, are actually championed as evidence that standards are being upheld and the institution is steadfast in its commitment to slow and steady growth of benefit to the students and the region. Both Michigan State and the Paris-Sorbonne have recently made these claims. Given that so many other institutions have opened branch campuses, competition for students has increased sharply and there are never as many as originally anticipated. The financial realities at a branch campus begins to erode the initial exuberance that led to its ill-fated conception. Pledges had been made that the branch campus, while not driven by profit, would certainly not drain resources from the home campus.

Branch campus supporters claim that the large number of institutions in Dubai and Ras Al Khaimah are beginning to create a culture of academia and that some are transitioning to a more comprehensive model, including research.

Pressures mount to increase enrollments because tuition-paying students are the foundation on which the branch campus is built. A foreign partner who was subsidizing a branch campus might begin to pressure the university to attempt such an increase as losses continue to mount. However, the university needs to maintain its entrance requirements to remain credible and accredited in the eyes of the skeptical faculty and the regional accrediting body back home. Eventually the weight of the expanding debt and poor enrollment levels destines the branch campus to the pages of the history books.

The home institution's administration argues that issues beyond its control such as a dispute with an unruly partner or even the global financial crisis made closure unavoidable. The University of Southern Queensland and George Mason put forth these respective arguments. It was not that they did not exercise their due diligence, were blinded by the bright lights of Dubai, or feared missing the branch-campus gold rush. Theirs was a noble attempt couched in the belief that they were offering an olive branch to the people of the region, only to have a force majeure halt the program's progress. They are truly sorry that an opportunity for students to receive an accredited foreign degree, while never leaving the region, has been removed a few years and thousands of dollars later.

CONCLUSION

The rapid growth of higher education in the United Arab Emirates has brought about an explosion in the branch-campus phenomena. Like other gold rushes, the hurried expansion of branch campuses will lead to a few successes and a number of failures. Though George Mason is by far the most-high-profile casualty in the current system, it was not the first and will not be the last. Failures cause reverberations throughout the region. Skeptics revel, students suffer, and the United Arab Emirates is worse off than when it opened its doors. ■

Turkmenistan: Fixing Decades of Damage

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For 18 years, until the death of its dictator Saparmurad Niyazov on December 21, 2006, Turkmenistan had been one of the most isolated countries in the world. Yet, in 2008, an audit of the natural gas reserves in Turkmenistan indicated the amount available as substantially larger than most observers had anticipated and could put Turkmenistan among the top five sources of natural gas in the world. With businesses and consumers around the globe clamoring for energy, such reserves give Turkmenistan substantial political and economic clout, but only if the gas is sold abroad. However, doing so, perhaps more than is broadly understood in Turkmenistan, would involve major changes throughout the society. The new president, Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov, confronts many challenges and choices in deciding if and how to restructure that society. One critical field is higher education.

THE NIYAZOV YEARS: DECIMATION

During the Niyazov years, the educational system in Turkmenistan was decimated. As David Lewis, the former director of the International Crisis Group's Project in Central Asia has written, "Turkmenistan is one of the few states in which a deliberate policy of reducing education has been used to produce a politically compliant and educationally backward population."

Niyazov cut the number of years of elementary and secondary school from 10 to 9, thus ensuring that no locally educated students were prepared for higher education outside of Turkmenistan. Given that students had to spend hours memo-

rizing the *Ruhnama*, Niyazov's eccentric vision of the Turkmen past and Turkmen virtues, and that they were regularly taken out of school for weeks and even months at a time to help with the cotton harvest, less than 9 years formed the actual time spent on academic subjects. University studies were reduced from 5 to 2 years, followed by 2 years of practical work required before the degree was awarded. Recognition of degrees earned abroad was rescinded, meaning that holders of such degrees could not work in their fields in Turkmenistan. The Academy of Sciences and other research institutes, the sites of graduate education, were closed. Thus, the only people available to become university faculty had attained just 11 years of education, much of which was dogmatism.

In addition, Niyazov interfered directly with university governance. At times, he himself would name rectors and vice rectors and set enrollment numbers for universities. Under this regime, the number of seats available was reduced to less than half the number during Soviet times—one reason that admission and degrees themselves reportedly are for sale. Turkmen was required as the language of instruction in most schools and universities, even for citizens who were ethnic Russians or Uzbeks.

These actions have not only undermined education during Niyazov's presidency but will also do so into the future. People who attended school during his era are ill-prepared to teach the next generation the skills needed for international integration in the 21st century.

REFORMS NOW UNDER WAY, BUT . . .

Given this destruction of the education system, as well as other forms of repression, observers of Turkmenistan watched with both trepidation and hope when Niyazov died in 2006. His successor, Berdymukhammedov, promised reforms, and although some have taken place, substantially more is needed, particularly in the areas of faculty development and access to information.

The reforms of the last two years include returning elementary and secondary education to 10 years and higher education to 5 (i.e., the Soviet model for higher education). The two-year work requirement for receiving a higher education diploma has been eliminated. (The extent to which this requirement has permeated the consciousness of the younger generation, however, was evident in the questions posed to a Harriman Institute delegation during a March 2009 visit; students regularly asked if work experience is one of the requirements for admission to Columbia University.) The number of first-year places has been increased by 825 nationwide, but the demand for university admission exceeds capacity by a factor of five; by the Ministry of Education's own estimates, 20,000 applicants competed for 4,000 openings last year.

LACK OF RESOURCES AND FACULTY

However, adding back years of education and additional first-

year places makes the problem of adequate teaching materials and knowledgeable instructors even more acute, especially outside the capital. Additionally, universities have announced new specialties, in fields ranging from international law to Chinese, although the resources and professors to teach these fields barely exist, especially since most students speak only Turkmen. Given a lack of knowledge of the world outside or an abundance of political caution, current faculty are unable to prepare students for international interactions. For example, a political scientist from Barnard and a law professor from Columbia explained to an auditorium of students and professors the global ranking systems that various organizations employ to evaluate business opportunities and the international legal agreements that Turkmenistan must join to sell its gas.

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In response, an elderly professor rose and implied that while the ideas presented were interesting, in Turkmenistan they did not apply, because international businesses would have guarantees from the president and nothing else was needed.

Additionally, although Berdymukhammedov signed a decree on June 12, 2007, restoring the Academy of Science, the extent to which it is functioning is debatable. Without it and other research institutes, no higher education beyond the newly resurrected five-year diploma exists, and, thus, no graduate training for future faculty is available. The current president also has directed the minister of education to draft a resolution recommending how diplomas earned abroad might be validated in Turkmenistan. Restrictions on education abroad have been loosened somewhat, and thousands of students reportedly are seeking higher education in Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and elsewhere. However, due to the prior 9-year elementary and secondary system, those seeking higher education outside of Turkmenistan almost invariably must start at the preuniversity level.

SUBSTANTIAL PROBLEMS REMAIN

Although the tentative steps Berdymukhammedov has taken to reform higher education may move in the right direction, they are not sufficient to provide the country with graduates who can interact on a world stage. Progress will require much more extensive reform—including substantial attention to faculty development, graduate education, and academic freedom issues. ■

New Publications

Blum, Susan D. *My Word! Plagiarism and College Culture*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009. 240 pp. \$24.95 (hb). ISBN 978-0-8014-4763-1. Web site: www.cornellpress.cornell.edu.

Based on interviews with 234 undergraduate students at a selective American university, the book focuses on how students define plagiarism in particular and academic work generally. The author found that decisions of plagiarism are not clear and that students, in the age of the Internet and faced with the pressures of academic life, are unclear about its meaning. Plagiarism is defined in cultural terms and not as a unbending single concept.

Chachage, Chachage Seithy L., ed. *Academic Freedom and the Social Responsibilities of Academics in Tanzania*. Dakar, Senegal: Council for Development of Social Science Research in Africa, 2008. 94 pp. (pb). ISBN 978-2-86978-243-3. Web site: www.african-bookscollective.com.

A collection of essays on the broad theme of academic freedom in the African context, this book discusses such issues as the social responsibilities of academic staff, the impact of privatization and marketization on higher education, the university as the site of research, and others. There is a special focus on Tanzania.

Cross, John G., and Edie N. Goldenberg. *Off-Track Profs: Nontenured Teachers in Higher Education*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009. 192 pp. \$30 (hb). ISBN 978-0-262-01291-1. Web site: www.mitpress.mit.edu.

More than half of new appointments to academic positions in the United States are not on the "tenure track." They are contract appointments, part-time teachers, adjuncts, lecturers, and others. This volume provides case studies of a small number of US research universities and points out that, at these institutions, traditional appointments are being protected. The authors are quite critical of current national trends, arguing that how academic appointments are made is quite important.

Dale, Roger, and Susan Robinson, eds. *Globalization and Europeanization in Higher Education*. Oxford, UK: Symposium Books, 2009. 264 pp. \$56 (pb). ISBN 978-1-873927-90-8. Web site: www.symposium-books.co.uk.

The essays in this book, analyzing Europe in

the context of globalization, examine such themes as public-private partnerships, competitiveness in higher education in a European framework, language and education, the role of intellectuals, and others.

Geiger, Roger L., ed. *Curriculum, Accreditation, and Coming of Age in Higher Education*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2009. 166 pp. (pb). ISBN 978-1-4128-1031-9. Web site: www.transactionpub.com.

The 27th in the annual publication series on the history of higher education, this volume is exclusively focused on historical analysis, and is limited to the United States. Among the themes discussed are linking secondary and higher education, student writing in the American South prior to the Civil War, and others.

Hanson, Mark. *Economic Development, Education and Transnational Corporations*. New York: Routledge, 2008. 157 pp. (hb). ISBN 978-0-415-77116-0. Web site: www.routledge.com.

A discussion of the role of knowledge transfer in national development and specifically the role of education in this process, this book looks specifically at Mexico and South Korea as case studies.

Heller, Donald E., and Madeleine B. d'Ambrosio, eds. *Generational Shockwaves and the Implications for Higher Education*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2008. 191 pp. (hb). ISBN 978-1-84844-049-4. Web site: www.e-elgar.com.

In the United States, the change of generations between the "Baby Boomers"—the large generation born following World War II—to younger population groups is creating many alterations for American society. This book examines the generational shift as it affects higher education, focusing on new student attitudes, the massive retirements of faculty from the "boom" generation, and the impact of younger faculty.

Knight, Jane, ed. *Financing Access and Equity in Higher Education*. Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense, 2009. 235 pp. \$49 (pb). ISBN 978-90-8790-766-2. Web site: www.sensepublishers.com.

An international perspective on how financial issues affect access and equity in higher education, this book approaches the topic from a variety of perspectives. Among the topics discussed are privatization in Kenya, Southeast Asia, Poland, and Korea; institu-

tional aid in England; social inclusion policies in Brazil; and expanding postsecondary access in Oman.

Lipson, Charles. *Succeeding as an International Student in the United States and Canada*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008. 375 pp. \$17 (pb). ISBN 978-0-226-48479-2. Web site: www.press.uchicago.edu.

Written as a guide for international students to life in American and Canadian universities, this book provides information and insights on academic life generally. It discusses the culture of universities, campus life, and such practical issues as renting apartments and dealing with societal issues.

McKelvey, Maureen, and Magnus Holman, eds. *Learning to Compete in European Universities: From Social Institutions to Knowledge Business*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2009. 273 pp. \$160 (hb). ISBN 978-1-84844-001-2. Web site: www.e-elgar.com

This book provides an analysis of how European universities are becoming more attuned to competition and entrepreneurialism. Among the themes discussed are university strategies for joining the elite ranks, structural change and competition, technology transfer issues, universities and multinational corporations, and institutional transformations needed to create knowledge businesses.

McMahon, Walter W. *Higher Learning, Greater Good: The Private and Social Benefits of Higher Education*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009. 415 pp. \$45 (hb). ISBN 978-0-8018-9053-6. Web site: www.press.jhu.edu.

A clearly written argument by a prominent economist of education argues that higher education contributes to both private and social benefits and thus deserves consistent and enhanced financial support by society. Using data from the United States and other OECD countries, the argument is supported by considerable analysis. The author argues that a human capital perspective is needed in making decisions concerning the support of higher education worldwide and that this perspective strongly supports investment.

Pan, Su-Yan. *University Autonomy, the State, and Social Change in China*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009. 264 pp. (hb). ISBN 978-962-209-936-4. Web site: www.hkupress.org.

Using the case of Tsinghua University, one of China's top institutions, the author examines the complex relationships between the university and the state in China. Tsinghua, as "China's MIT," is a key university—the story of how the university has over time sought to maintain its autonomy in a changing context illustrates important points about both academic development and the broader role of the university in China and in developing countries generally.

Paradeise, Catherine, Emanuela Reale, Ivar Bleikie, and Ewan Ferlie, eds. *University Governance: Western European Comparative Perspectives*. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer, 2009. 322 pp. ff103.74 (hb). ISBN 978-1-4020-8637-3. Web site: www.springer.com.

This volume includes analyses of the structure, governance, and management of Western European universities from the perspective of the changes introduced through "steering" mechanisms imposed by governments. Case studies from France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom are included. Contrasts among the countries are highlighted.

Raby, Rosalind Latiner, and Edward J. Valeau, eds. *Community College Models: Globalization and Higher Education Reform*. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer, 2009. 629 pp. Euro 229 (hb). ISBN 978-1-4020-9476-7. Web site: www.springer.com.

A compilation of 33 chapters broadly about community colleges in numerous countries and regions, this book discusses both national cases and themes. Some of the chapters focus on the US idea of community colleges—two-year nonbaccalaureate institutions generally offering vocational qualifications. The overall focus is how the communi-

ty college idea is spreading worldwide. Among the countries discussed are Taiwan, Iran, India, Zimbabwe, Vietnam, and many others.

Richardson, Richard, Jr., and Mario Martinez. *Policy and Performance in American Higher Education: An Examination of Cases Across State Systems*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009. 264 pp. (hb). ISBN 978-0-8018-9161-8. Web site: www.press.jhu.edu.

Examining five US states, this volume analyzes the ways in which state higher education policies are implemented. The case studies show that policy implementation is often problematical and delayed. Issues such as budgeting arrangements, information provision, communications, and other factors are discussed.

Smart, John C., ed. *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research, Vol. 23*. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer, 2008. 390 pp. \$179 (hb). ISBN 978-1-4020-6958-1. Web site: www.springer.com.

The 23rd volume of the annual handbooks of higher education research, this series remains one of the most useful compilations of current research in the field. Largely focused on American research, this book, as the volumes preceding it, includes an eclectic mix of topics. The chapters provide overviews of research and analysis. Among the themes featured are economic models and policy analysis in higher education, a European perspective on rankings and classifications, women faculty in science and engineering, financial aid and student dropouts, and American Indian higher education.

Stephens, David, ed. *Higher Education and International Capacity Building: Twenty-Five Years of Higher Education Links*. Oxford, UK:

Symposium Books, 2009. 240 pp. £28 (pb). ISBN 978-1-873927-22-9. Web site: www.symposium-books.co.uk.

The focus of this volume is on the role of international development cooperation in several fields and countries. Among the topics discussed are enhancing educational research, improving health, gender issues, peace studies, and others. Case studies from China, Africa, and other countries are included.

Sun, Jeffrey C., and Benjamin Baez. *Intellectual Property in the Information Age: Knowledge as Commodity and Its Legal Implications for Higher Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009. 151 pp. (pb). ISBN 978-0-4704-7900-1. Web site: www.josseybass.com.

Although this volume is focused on the American context, it will be of interest elsewhere since the themes of intellectual property are similar. The main concern is on copyright and patents. They are defined, and the higher education context is discussed.

Tight, Malcolm, Ka Ho Mok, Jeroen Huisman, and Christopher C. Morpheu, eds. *The Routledge International Handbook of Higher Education*. 525 pp. \$200 (hb) ISBN 978-0-415-43264-1. Web site: www.routledge.com.

This theme-based volume features 36 essays on key topics in higher education, rather than providing geographical coverage. Among the broad themes featured are teaching and learning, course design, the student experience, quality, system policy, institutional management, academic work, and knowledge.

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News of the Center

Center staff members Philip G. Altbach, Liz Reisberg, and Laura E. Rumbley completed work on *Trends in Global Higher Education: Tracking an Academic Revolution—A Report Prepared for the UNESCO 2009 World Conference on Higher Education*. Assistance was provided by Center graduate assistants Iván F. Pacheco and Kara Godwin. This report is the key document for UNESCO's world conference. The Center will publish a book version as well. Altbach, Reisberg, and Rumbley will present insights from the report at the UNESCO world conference.

Philip Altbach will deliver the keynote address at a conference on international higher education in Bangkok, Thailand, in July. He spoke at the launch of Jamil Salmi's new book, *The Challenge of Establishing World-Class Universities*, at the World Bank in May. Liz Reisberg led several workshops for the Consejo Nacional de Educación in Lima, Peru, in May, on developing effective systems for quality assurance in higher education.

Anna Glass, who has been a staff member at the Salzburg seminars in Austria and a higher education consultant, will be joining the Center in September as a graduate assistant. She will pursue her doctoral degree at Boston College.

Philip Altbach is contributing an occasional column on higher education issues to *Jiefeng Daily*, a major Chinese newspaper

that is based in Shanghai. His paper comparing Chinese and Indian higher education will appear in an OCED book on higher education futures.

The CIHE Podcast Initiative (<http://www.bc.edu/cihe/podcast>) has posted two new installments. One features an interview with Dewayne Matthews of the Lumina Foundation, a US-based organization focused on access and equity in American education. The conversation with Dr. Matthews explores the question of how US postsecondary access and attainment can be understood in a global context and what the United States could learn from other countries about expanding access and improving tertiary completion rates. The second new podcast now available on our site is with Karen MacGregor, editor of *University World News*, about the work of this periodical as an online news source devoted to covering higher education issues and developments across the globe.

In April, the International Network Higher Education in Africa, on our Web site, published a new editorial by Damtew Teferra, entitled "African Higher Education in the Era of Bailouts and Stimulus Packages-Good Intentions, Vanishing Resources, and Persistent Gaps" http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/soe/cihe/inhea/editorial/Editorial03_Teferra.htm.

The Journal of International Higher Education (Guoji Gaodeng Jiaoyu), an online journal (<http://gse.sjtu.edu.cn/kxyj/xskw.htm>) with the aim of playing the role of bridge between Chinese and international higher education communities, was launched by Graduate School of Education of Shanghai Jiao Tong University in November, 2008. It will have up to 10 issues each year, four of which will be translated from the *International Higher Education* published by the Center for International Higher Education of Boston College, and the rest will focus on selected topics of both Chinese and international interests, such as world-class universities, university ranking, graduate education, and migration of academic talents. The issues focusing on selected topics will be translated into English and published online at <http://gse.sjtu.edu.cn/en/>.

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The Center promotes dialogue and cooperation among academic institutions throughout the world. We believe that the future depends on effective collaboration and the creation of an international community focused on the improvement of higher education in the public interest.

CIHE WEB SITE

The different sections of the Center Web site support the work of scholars and professionals in international higher education, with links to key resources in the field. All issues of *International Higher Education* are available online, with a searchable archive. In addition, the International Higher Education Clearinghouse (IHEC) is a source of articles,

reports, trends, databases, online newsletters, announcements of upcoming international conferences, links to professional associations, and resources on developments in the Bologna Process and the GATS. The Higher Education Corruption Monitor provides information from sources around the world, including a selection of news articles, a bibliography, and links to other agencies. The International Network for Higher Education in Africa (INHEA), is an information clearinghouse on research, development, and advocacy activities related to postsecondary education in Africa.

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Our work is supported by the Ford Foundation and the Lynch School of Education at Boston College. We are indebted to these funders for core sponsorship.

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ISSN: 1084-0613

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