Here the need is paramount for strong ties to the job market in matters like curriculum development, choice of professors, and evaluation of outcomes. Rapid responsiveness is crucial and should not be hampered by governance and rules more appropriate to other functions. It is also important that technical education not be simply poor-quality professional education. In general, this form of higher education needs to be accorded greater respect and serve as one of the two main types of growing mass higher education.

Rapid responsiveness is crucial and should not be hampered by governance and rules more appropriate to other functions.

General Higher Education

The other major type of mass higher education is general higher education. Outside the United States, this is often the least recognized function even where it exists de facto. It is usually set up as professional education, but students wind up working in jobs other than those directly in the studied subject matter. Thus, the education is "quasi-professional" and appears to be a failure. It also looks like failure where it lays claim to academic leadership.

Yet general higher education by design instead of by default needs to be pursued and valued. It is probably the form through which most students in large higher education systems can develop analytical skills in reading, writing, and thinking that will be useful in a variety of possible jobs—and in broader roles for citizens. Where employment does not correspond to rigid plans of study, curriculum and pedagogy should be redesigned. It is for general higher education that accreditation systems may be most suitable. General higher education offers possibilities for distance education and other alternatives to traditional higher education.

Conclusion

Although the typology presented here is of course tentative and subject to improvement, it appears promising on two fronts. One is its assistance in identifying and explaining the actual and potential differentiation in higher education. The other is its contribution to the debate over policy—from finance, to governance, to quality controls—by promoting an appreciation of the differences appropriate to different forms of higher education. Neither conceptually nor in terms of policy does one size fit all.

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Association of African Universities Charts Goals for 21st Century

Beth Elise Whitaker

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The Association of African Universities (AAU) held its 10th general conference in Nairobi, Kenya, February 5–9, 2001. There were more than 250 participants, including vice chancellors, rectors, and senior academics from 163 member universities and representatives of donor agencies and nongovernmental organizations. The international higher education community was also represented, with participants from associations in the United States, Canada, France, the Netherlands, and Germany. The conference was designed to determine general AAU policies and adopt core priorities for the next four years. Areas of focus included leadership and management, quality of training and research, information and communications technology, and women in African tertiary institutions.

The central theme that emerged from the conference was that African higher education institutions must become more responsive to local development needs. They have fulfilled their postindependence role of training a cadre of civil servants and are now expected to prepare students to participate in a changing global economy. In his keynote address, Professor Ahmadou Lamine Ndiaye, former rector of the Université Gaston Berger in Senegal, argued that higher education's mission of community service is too often forgotten and that universities have a moral obligation to help ameliorate society's problems. Their particular role in national development, according to Ndiaye, should be the application of research findings—especially in science and technology—to immediate problems on the ground.

The central theme that emerged from the conference was that African higher education institutions must become more responsive to local development needs.

An important aspect of making university education more relevant is the formation of partnerships with private colleges and universities, businesses, and civil society organizations. By tailoring curricula and training programs

to local market needs, African higher education institutions can develop new funding streams and respond directly to the unemployment problem. Dr. Mokhtar Annaki of the Ministry of Higher Education in Morocco described a range of efforts in his country to reform the higher education system along these lines. Ultimately, though, as outgoing AAU president Professor Andrew Siwela argued, the mission of universities is to produce job creators, not job seekers. This requires an approach to higher education that fosters critical thinking and creativity in order to prepare students for the diverse range of challenges and opportunities ahead.

Beyond the goal of making higher education more relevant, the conference highlighted a number of other current issues. First, there was a general consensus that African universities must enhance their information and communications technology (ICT) in order to participate effectively in the global information age. ICT should be used as a tool in higher education management—to track students, faculty, budgets, etc.—and in the classroom, to facilitate teaching and learning. More importantly, perhaps, ICT allows African academics to participate actively in global research networks. According to Professor Jairam Reddy, former vice chancellor of the University of Durban-Westville in South Africa, 84 percent of journal articles and 97 percent of patents currently come from industrialized countries. By making use of the Internet to conduct research, publish articles, and exchange ideas, African faculty will be better able to apply up-to-date approaches and findings toward local development challenges.

Professor G. Olalere Ajayi of Nigeria's Obafemi Awolowo University provided an overview of ICT capacity in African universities. He challenged participants to prioritize ICT development at their institutions and to make significant progress before the next AAU general meeting in 2005. The conference highlighted the stark variation among African universities in the ICT area. While some institutions are very well networked and have a strong Internet presence, others do not even know where to begin or how much it will cost to get on-line.

However, the development of ICT is not simply a technocratic issue; it has social and political implications as well. Dr. John Kyazze of Uganda Martyrs University suggested the need for academic programs in science and technology policy studies to evaluate and shape the policy environment. Professor N'Dri Thérèse Assie-Lumumba from Cornell University raised important questions about the agents and beneficiaries of ICT, arguing that gender and global structural inequalities are being reinforced in the current context. University ICT policies must address these inequalities to avoid deepening the digital divide.

A second area of focus was the role of women in African universities. Professor Ruth Meena of the University of Dar es Salaam gave a thorough presentation about the obstacles to women's participation in higher education. In addition to sociocultural factors, reasons for low female enrollment figures (particularly in technology-related fields) include gender-biased materials, authoritarian teaching methods, and the limited relevance of educational content. African governments have made international commitments to address the gender disparity in education, but these are not reflected in practice. Meena proposed several interventions, including affirmative action to improve access and performance, curricula reviews, gender sensitization programs, and training courses in participatory pedagogy. She stressed the need for African universities to craft and implement gender-inclusive policies. Lessons can be drawn from the University of Dar es Salaam, the University of Natal, and Makerere University, which have done their best to mainstream gender considerations into their strategic plans and policies.

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Reaction within the predominantly male audience was mixed. Several delegates argued that gender disparities and sexual harassment were not problems at their institutions, citing as proof increased female enrollment and data on female faculty. Others seemed amused by the attention to this topic. But as Professor Pennina Mlama, executive director of the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), argued, "We don't do ourselves any service by pretending this problem doesn't exist. If even one student is harassed, we need to do something about it." FAWE had requested more time from AAU to discuss these issues, but was limited to one session. The organization distributed a number of papers it had commissioned on collecting gender-sensitive data, developing inclusive policies, and documenting sexual harassment in African universities. These reports and the subsequent working group discussions allowed participants to identify additional ideas and examples to address gender disparities in higher education.

The third issue was perhaps more noteworthy for the muted attention it received rather than its prominence. Although HIV/AIDS is having a significant impact on universities across the continent, the topic was not addressed until the fourth day; even then, it was mentioned only in passing during discussions about sexual harassment. Conference materials prepared in advance, including AAU's core program of activities for 2001–2004, made no mention of the HIV/AIDS crisis. Many donor representatives, on the other hand, wanted to focus specifically on African higher education in the context of HIV/AIDS. The Association for the Development of Education in Africa's Working

Group on Higher Education (WGHE) had commissioned a report on the situation that included case studies of seven institutions in six African countries. In the end, an addendum was distributed in Nairobi that proposed the development of projects on major emerging issues, including HIV/AIDS; the topic was also placed on the agenda for the final day.

The challenge now lies in making the link between ideas and implementation.

During this discussion, Professor Michael Kelly from the University of Zambia presented the results of the WGHE study on the response of African universities to HIV/AIDS. An overriding theme was the lack of good information on the nature of the disease and how it is affecting campus activities. There is widespread denial about the problem, although universities witness its effects every day in the form of student and faculty absences, rising health care costs, and funeral expenses for staff members. With the exception of those in South Africa, few African universities have developed policies to address the HIV/AIDS problem on their campuses, nor have they even begun to examine the implications of the crisis for society at large. Universities must begin now, Kelly argued, to prepare teachers, health care workers, civil servants, and even bereavement counselors to address the needs of an AIDS-affected society. Interestingly, the WGHE research itself made the seven case study institutions realize the need to assess the situation on their campuses and develop comprehensive approaches.

In the end, conference delegates signed a declaration calling on African universities to develop ICT capacity to enhance teaching, research, and administration; strengthen linkages with the productive sector to increase the relevance of their work; participate more actively in the search for solutions to conflict, poverty, and disease; implement policies to address social and gender imbalances; and pursue interinstitutional cooperation. Delegates also approved AAU's core program of activities for the 2001–2004 period, reflecting many of the same lofty goals.

The challenge now lies in making the link between ideas and implementation. With the exception of the discussion on gender, few of the presentations offered specific strategies and approaches for meeting these targets. The activities outlined in the core program focus primarily on conducting studies and organizing meetings. African universities also face resource shortages that can thwart even the best intentions. In this context, the most useful role for AAU and its international partners may be to compile accounts of best practices and lessons learned in these various focus areas and make them widely available to the African higher education community. ■

East African Universities Will Gain Journal Access in New On-line Project

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