

ernment departments, and provide support for nongovernmental organizations. But although commendable research is being produced, the case studies make it clear that this information is not well shared within or among universities themselves.

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***In the absence of university policies, the inclusion of HIV/AIDS in teaching programs depends mainly on individual or departmental initiatives.***

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#### *A Call for a Coordinated Strategy*

The report describes how universities have begun to take steps in the right direction, bringing together the multidisciplinary knowledge and expertise to respond to the epidemic, aided by the commitment of those few individuals who are already involved. Yet it emphasizes that a coordinated strategy is conspicuously absent. Kelly suggests that universities can learn much from how African industry has responded to the HIV/AIDS crisis and cites the South African industrial group, Anglo-American, as a possible model.

The report closes by outlining a two-pronged strategy for African universities to consider in shaping their own responses to HIV/AIDS—reflecting the inward-looking and outward-looking dimensions of the traditional university mandate and mission. The inward-looking dimension addresses the concern that a university must sustain itself as a functioning institution and keep itself in good working order. The outward-looking dimension relates to the university's core functions of teaching, research, and community service. Its discussion focuses on what is needed to produce quality graduates who have the skills and flexibility to understand and man-

age the HIV/AIDS crisis in their country.

#### *Conclusion*

In conclusion, Kelly outlines the fundamental principles that must support such a two-pronged strategy. They are: (1) get the facts about HIV/AIDS out into the open and break every form of silence, secrecy, and shame that enshrouds the disease; (2) recognize the extent to which HIV/AIDS has been feminized and exploits the subordinate status and subjugation of women and, in response, act urgently to promote greater gender equity, to overcome the social and other constraints to enhanced female participation, and to lead by word and example in transferring power and responsibility to women; (3) ensure that the entire university culture is enlightened by human rights principles, use deliberate and conscientious adherence to these principles to reduce vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and to help those infected or affected by the disease to live in dignity, and allow no form of stigma or discrimination to find a haven within the institution; (4) recognize that persons living with HIV/AIDS are among the most important actors in any program to contain and control the disease, and without in any way using or manipulating them, draw upon their expertise and insights and fully involve them in every aspect of its HIV/AIDS campaign; and (5) coordinate university plans and programs with those at the national level so as to ensure greater synergy, unity of direction, complementarity of activities, access to resources, and more efficient use of resources.

The case studies insist that for these strategies to be effective, committed leadership among the university's top management is the foremost requirement. HIV/AIDS is a matter of life and death, for individuals and for institutions. Implementing an institutionwide HIV/AIDS prevention program requires commitment, people, skills, materials, and funds. But most of all, it requires leadership with a sense of urgency. ■

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## The Philippines: Current Trends

### **Bienvenido F. Nebres, S.J.**

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Ten years ago a report characterized the Philippine system of higher education in a way that is still valid today. The college population was described as an unusually large one, larger than in most developed countries and comparable to that in the United States. Students were concentrated in a few programs: business and commerce, engineering, and teacher education. Few students were

enrolled in science and technology programs. About 85 percent of college students attended private schools. This might have represented a strength and large savings for the government, but it was made possible by low tuition, which in turn resulted in poor quality owing to low teacher salaries and poor facilities. Graduate education was concentrated in teacher education; there were few graduate programs in science and engineering. Moreover, the completion rate in graduate programs was very low.

The preuniversity preparation of Filipino students was inadequate. This was partly due to the inadequacies of resources at the elementary and secondary levels. Also, the typical college-bound student had only 10 years of preuniversity schooling, in contrast to the 12-year preparation in most countries.

To bring this overview of Philippine higher education up to date, it is necessary only to supply the current numbers and outline the major initiatives and interventions being made to strengthen the system.

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**Today, the college population in the Philippines is close to 2 million, representing about 35 percent of the college-age population.**

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Today, the college population in the Philippines is close to 2 million, representing about 35 percent of the college-age population. There are 1,357 higher education institutions, of which 1,147 are private and 210 are public. The expenditure per student at the most expensive schools is about \$1,500 a year. For the great majority of institutions, however, the expenditure amounts to between \$350 and \$500 a year. Clearly this translates into relatively low teacher salaries and inadequate facilities. On the other hand, it is quite impressive to see what institutions are able to achieve with such meager resources.

#### *The Philippine Commission on Educational Reform*

The latest initiative to address the problems facing the system was set forth in the April 2000 report of the Philippine Commission on Educational Reform. The report addresses these major concerns: the optimization and better allocation of scarce financial resources, improving the quality of higher education by better preuniversity preparation, a strong faculty development program, and developing an effective system of accreditation.

#### *Allocation of Public Resources*

At this time the government provides practically no financial support to private higher education. Private institutions depend mainly on student tuition and to a small degree on alumni donations. Since public resources go almost entirely to public institutions, the commission's first recommendation was to rationalize the use of these resources. Up to the 1970s, there were only about 20 public institutions. In the 1980s, 40 new ones were established, and in the 1990s 29 more were added. The public funds available for higher education, however, did not grow commensurately. It has been recommended that a moratorium be declared on the creation of new public higher educational institutions and to use this period to review the premises for the financing of public higher education. The goal would be to develop a system of financing compatible with quality and equity, as well as greater accountability and efficiency. A major study is now being undertaken on this better system of financing.

#### *Preuniversity Preparation*

The commission called for a prebaccalaureate year after high school for students intending to attend university. This prebaccalaureate year will be implemented for all students, with the provision that universities may allow some students to enter directly after high school, either because they have already had more than 10 years of schooling or because of proven aptitude.

The desirability of such a prebaccalaureate year has already been recognized by many universities. The University of the Philippines has a Learning Resource Center that provides assistance for freshmen to bridge the gap between high school preparation and the demands of the university. The Ateneo de Manila provides basic courses in English and mathematics for a significant percentage of entering freshmen whose preparation is inadequate.

This approach is recognized by many as most desirable. However, there are difficult political and logistical concerns to be overcome. For example, parents have to be convinced of the necessity of paying for an additional year in college. There is as yet no clear implementation plan.

#### *Faculty Development*

The Commission on Educational Reform estimates that of the approximately 80,000 teachers at the tertiary level, only a third have master's or doctoral degrees. The rest have only a bachelor's degree, with perhaps some graduate course work. The plan is to launch a massive faculty development program that would raise the number of teachers with a master's degrees to about 70 percent. This would involve providing financial support and opportunities for about 30,000 teachers to obtain their master's degrees over the next 5 years. A Working Group of the Commission on Higher Education is now at work on developing the system and obtaining the financing to carry out this ambitious project. We have the experience of the Engineering and Science Education Project, which in the 1990s implemented a large-scale graduate program (though small in comparison to this new initiative) in science and engineering. This earlier experience has given us reasonable confidence that the larger-scale program can be undertaken with success.

#### *Accreditation*

Finally, we are also working on creating a more effective accreditation system. Right now there are several accrediting agencies using different procedures and standards. Accreditation has also yet to achieve the importance and influence that it has in other countries. There are two major challenges: the first is how to institute common or com-

parable standards among the different accrediting agencies; the second is how to inform and win over the public so that they will choose accredited institutions and programs. ■

## Belize: A New University and a New Direction

### **Franklin D. Roberts**

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On August 1, 2000, the University of Belize was born. UB was the product of a merger, initiated by the Ministry of Education, of five institutions—University College of Belize, Belmopan Junior College, Belize School of Nursing, Belize School of Education, and Belize College of Agriculture. A similar, unsuccessful, merger of higher education institutions was tried over 15 years earlier, with the development of the Belize College of Arts, Sciences, and Technology. At that time, there was much interinstitutional squabbling about who would administer and exercise control over the institution, and when the conservative United Democratic Party (UDP) came back into power, the institution was branded leftist (some said communist) and disbanded. Under the UDP, the University College of Belize (UCB) was developed loosely as a national university—in addition to the other publicly supported higher education institutions: an agricultural college (under the Ministry of Agriculture), a nursing school (under the Ministry of Health), and several junior colleges and a teacher's college (under the Ministry of Education). The new minister of education who came to power when the People's United Party (PUP) government was elected in 1998 felt that a consolidation of resources was necessary.

A less-developed small nation, Belize is located in Central America, just south of Mexico's Yucatan peninsula and east of Guatemala, with a population of some 240,000, including 30,000 new immigrants from the rest of Central America. The country is racially diverse: the largest population group (about 40 percent) is *mestizos* (Spanish/Indian), a recent shift due to the new immigrants; followed by the Creoles (African/European), about 30 percent, and formerly the largest group; the Garifunas (African/Caribe Indian), about 10 percent, the Maya Indian, about 6 percent; and various other groups (Chinese, East Indians, white Mennonites), and others, who emigrated when Belize was still the British colony of British Honduras.

### *Higher Education Policy*

Belize's national higher education system (not including private institutions) has both suffered and benefited from benign neglect. Since 1990, the government has annually allotted \$1 million BZ (U.S.\$500,000) to higher education, with no increases and no stated goals for institutional development. In 1986, the UCB essentially became a branch campus of Ferris State University, in Michigan, but the country broke ties with that institution in 1990 after learning that Ferris did not have the authority to offer accredited programs in Belize. The UCB Act, which formed that institution, had a clause giving the minister of education power to "recommend" (read: direct) policies to the board of trustees, but after appeals by the faculty, this clause was rescinded. To the dismay of the academic community, the new University of Belize Act also has such a clause (clause 20), but the ministry has offered to proffer an amendment to nullify this clause. Aside from these actions, the government of Belize has largely allowed higher education to flourish or flounder on its own, which has permitted institutions a high degree of autonomy and to develop their arts and social sciences curriculum reasonably well. However, lack of financial support has caused teaching in the sciences and other fiscally intensive disciplines to suffer.

### *International Connections*

Apart from the disappointing coupling with Ferris State University, Belize has benefited from some of its international connections, and UB plans to continue to build on these. The administrative offices of the university are housed in the Regional Language Center building, built by the government of Taiwan. Since the bulk of UB programs will be offered in Belmopan, the capital city, three new buildings (two for classrooms and one to house a gymnasium) will be built there with hurricane relief funds from the Caribbean Development Bank (the buildings will act as shelters during the frequent hurricanes that hit the more heavily populated coastal regions). UB belongs to COBEC (Consortium of Belize Educational Cooperation) with 14 U.S. colleges and 4 others from Belize, which offers student and faculty exchanges and mutual research opportunities, among other things, to all members.

Since its independence from the United Kingdom in 1981, Belize has adopted a more U.S.-oriented higher education system, and most faculty pursuing advanced degrees go to U.S. institutions. UB is also a member of CSUCA (Consejo superior de universidades de Centro America), a 16-nation council of Central American tertiary education institutions (in fact, the president of UB is a recent past president of the council). CSUCA membership is good for Belize because the coun-