

Conclusion

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

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

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

Japan's "Top 30" Universities

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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energy studies, and international relations.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Stay tuned for further developments. ■

“Pseudo U” or “What’s in a Name”?

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

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

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