

Credit Transfer Programs

Credit transfer programs allow for the conferment of a degree by the accumulation of credits. Under this arrangement, students can accumulate credits locally that are then transferable to one of the foreign-linked universities for the completion of the degree program. Basically, a student intending to study overseas collects sufficient credits through a local private college and then applies for entry to a foreign university. The credit transfer program grants students greater flexibility to choose among a group of foreign universities or programs. The program has proven very popular among students who plan to go and study in the United States.

Foreign Branch Campuses

Besides these three groups of foreign-linked programs, other forms of international linkages are making a significant impact on the private higher education scene in Malaysia. One form is distance education programs. Many of the postgraduate programs, especially MBA programs offered by foreign universities, are delivered through the distance learning mode. Another form is the establishment of branch campuses by foreign universities on Malaysian soil. Today, there are four foreign branch campuses, and the first of these was Monash University Malaysia. Not all the international linkages are with Western countries. Higher education and training institutions from India, like the Manipal Medical University, have also set up private colleges in Malaysia through joint ventures with local partners.

In the twinning or split degree programs, the local institution is linked directly to one foreign institution or a consortium of universities that sets the curriculum, tests, and institutional standards of the program.

Conclusion

The emergence of international linkages in higher education is not unique to Malaysia. In fact, this case study on Malaysia shows the multiple forms of transnational education that are also found in other countries. In a rapidly globalizing education and human resource market, higher education and training are no longer confined within national boundaries. Through innovative and strategic partnerships, educational programs are offered offshore across national borders. With advanced infor-

mation communications technologies, distance learning programs are provided electronically as well as through face-to-face instruction. In this new borderless educational arena, students and academic staff move to and fro across nations.

Beyond Dead Reckoning: Research Priorities for Redirecting American Higher Education

By Patricia J. Gumpert and Colleagues

Patricia J. Gumpert is associate professor of education and director of the Stanford Institute for Higher Education Research at Stanford University and executive director of the National Center for Postsecondary Improvement. Address: 508 CERAS, School of Education, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305, USA. Website: <http://ncpi.stanford.edu>.

For 30 years, a staple of higher education policy in the United States has been promoting access, based on the rationale that higher education serves not only the individual student but also society as a whole, by producing an educated citizenry and a productive national workforce. Yet American higher education's very success at extending access and expanding knowledge, together with major societal changes in demographics, technology, the nature of work, and the demand for education—have resulted in a terrain that is both altered and uncharted. American colleges and universities, along with the public agencies that support and monitor their efforts, find themselves relying on a kind of dead reckoning to plot their future course.

Access to What?

Higher education in the United States continues to enjoy broad public support, and there is little examination of what students are gaining access to. Much of higher education's traditional language no longer describes actual conditions, notwithstanding its continued rhetorical appeal. Discrepancies between ideals and realities, between assumptions and data, render obsolete guidelines that were once effective. Research is needed, not only for more complete information, but also to help reorient higher education within this new landscape. New questions informed by current knowledge can yield a fresh assessment of higher education's purposes and

effectiveness, and the insights from that research can strengthen higher education's role in improving the lives of students and the vitality of society as a whole. We believe the set of research priorities and enquiries proposed here will advance both policy and practice to enhance learning for students of all backgrounds. We address two primary audiences: public officials directly responsible for public appropriations to higher education; and institutional leaders—including executives, trustees, and faculty—who decide how and for which purposes their institutions expend their resources.

In spite of 15 years of the assessment movement and increasingly vocal demands for improved student learning, fundamental practices of teaching remain largely unchanged.

Improving Educational Quality and Institutional Performance

In spite of 15 years of the assessment movement and increasingly vocal demands for improved student learning, fundamental practices of teaching remain largely unchanged. Colleges and universities struggle to exhibit the qualities of learning organizations, including the willingness and ability to define priorities, measure progress, create feedback loops, and apply what is learned to improve products and services.

Creating more effective learning organizations. Recent research has shown that organizations can improve their practices through developing a culture of evidence and reflecting upon their outcomes. What kinds of process improvements do exemplary departments or units make in response to assessment-based feedback? How and when do external accountability measures align with internal quality improvement processes?

Linking knowledge about learning to the practice of teaching. Higher education has never had well-developed processes for linking the purposes of teaching to pedagogical methods and evaluation techniques; advancements in communications and information technology have made the task of developing such processes even more complex. How can research findings on learning inform the design of educational processes and student assessment measures? What design principles and criteria generate the most effective approaches for applying technology to enhance learning? Which policies, incentives, and resources support institutions and faculty to develop better instruments and measures of student learning and to use them in their teaching? Which information technologies promote

learning efficiencies and under what circumstances? To what extent do external accountability mandates align with institutions' own internal quality processes, and what are the effects of misalignment?

The changing academic workforce. In the past decade, the profile of academic professionals has been completely transformed. The growing disposition is to view responsibilities once integral to the faculty role as discrete tasks taken up by separate personnel (e.g., content experts, course designers, assessment experts, advisers). Market environments have always rewarded prestige, and one effect of the prestige factor in research achievement has been to reduce a tenure-line faculty member's accountability in the areas of teaching and advising. Many of those who fulfill an institution's teaching responsibility now hold part-time, adjunct, and non-tenure-track term appointments. These trends are not confined to higher education but exemplify larger transformations in the American workforce and in the nature of work.

Which academic roles require full-time, tenure-line faculty, and which are suitable for non-tenure-line academic professionals? To what extent does disaggregating the faculty role make higher education institutions more accountable and cost-effective? Under what conditions are adjunct faculty—either because of or despite their engagement outside the academy—effective in promoting student learning and civic engagement?

Higher education has never had well-developed processes for linking the purposes of teaching to pedagogical methods and evaluation techniques

Balancing Market Forces with Higher Education's Public Purposes

The past three decades have seen policymakers increasingly allow markets to replace direct public investment as an instrument of achieving the public good. Moreover, increased reliance on revenue from tuition and fees, combined with a gradual movement from grants to loans in federal student financial assistance, have shifted much of the burden of financing higher education to students themselves. Without a fuller understanding of how market forces affect the decisions and culture of campus settings, colleges and universities risk becoming merely businesses, paying only symbolic homage to the social charter that distinguishes them from for-profit enterprises.

What happens to management culture, resource allocation, and traditional academic governance when markets increasingly influence institutional decision making? What is the impact of market forces on academically important fields that do not have a lucrative proximate market? Under what conditions do market forces work against an institution's commitment to building a diverse faculty or student body? What happens to legislative influence as state revenue constitutes a declining share of public institutions' revenues?

Further, given the current societal proclivity to regard higher education as a private good and students as consumers, research needs to examine the impact of students' exercising their prerogatives as shoppers. How does student consumer interest in courses and subjects affect the status of different academic units within institutions? To what extent has convenience become a primary determinant of student choice and, in turn, institutional success? What is the return on public investment in higher education when students increasingly define their own paths of study, largely apart from degree requirements?

What happens to management culture, resource allocation, and traditional academic governance when markets increasingly influence institutional decision making?

Drawing New Maps for a Changing Enterprise

Colleges and universities of all types are responding to dramatic changes in the students whom higher education serves, in students' own purposes and paths through higher education, and in the academic workforce. Yet the image of the academy that most public officials, parents, faculty, and administrators retain more closely resembles campuses at the time when they themselves were undergraduates. Even the terms of reference have come to mean different things to different people: What is meant by "core curriculum," "faculty," or "student" today? Organizationally, colleges and universities are forming new collaborative agreements—with for-profit and nonprofit organizations—without precedents to guide them. We need new maps, using new definitions and new kinds of data, to understand this changing terrain.

What types of instruction and delivery are serving which students with what results? What administrative moves support faculty to address differences between outdated conceptions of undergraduates and the students currently enrolled? Which policies constrain or promote persistence and degree completion among underrepresented students? Which investments in technology and distributed learning are paying dividends? Which interorganizational collaborations are successful and why?

What types of instruction and delivery are serving which students with what results?

Bearings for the Future

These research priorities were identified during a year-long agenda-setting initiative. Our charge was to identify the most pressing issues confronting U.S. higher education now and in the coming decade, propose specific lines of inquiry, and develop a persuasive rationale for investing in state-of-the-art knowledge to further higher education's improvement. We offer these ideas in the spirit of helping universities and colleges to retain their strength, fulfill the terms of their social charter, and recapture the legislative and public imagination that higher education is critically important to both the students it educates and the societies it serves.

The National Center for Postsecondary Improvement (NCPI) is a collaborative research venture between researchers at Stanford University, the University of Michigan, and the University of Pennsylvania. The findings and opinions expressed in this report do not reflect the position or policies of the funding agency, the U.S. Department of Education. For more information and the full text of this essay, please visit the NCPI website, at <http://ncpi.stanford.edu>.

Internet Resources

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