

media. And it is under greater pressure to provide both the access and the certification that are essential for success.

Furthermore, as higher education has “marketized,” it adopted more and more commercial values, including a greater predilection for corruption, and a greater distance from traditional academic values.

A related phenomenon is the massification of higher education. Many newer mass higher education providers, not only universities but also commercial enterprises offering postsecondary qualifications, also have only marginal connections to core academic values.

The deterioration of the idea of higher education as a “common good” has created unprecedented pressures on academe. Around the world, the state has withdrawn support from higher education. Even the most prestigious universities have had to be more concerned with the “bottom line.” Commercial considerations loom ever larger in academic affairs. Few institutions know how to ensure adequate income in this new environment, and some have been lured into engaging in corrupt practices.

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Professors and administrators, faced with deteriorating salaries and working conditions, in some cases are taking part in corruption. A growing number of part-time and poorly trained regular faculty are especially prone to corruption. They lack an understanding of the meaning of the traditional university as well as the means to support themselves with their academic salaries.

New providers of higher education, including business enterprises and some for-profit academic institutions, have little understanding of academic values. They are in the higher education business exclusively to earn money. As traditional universities with inadequate management skills partner with these new providers, there is a clash of cultures and possible corruption.

The Internet, another area of potential problems, constitutes an untamed frontier filled with all kinds of academic offerings, from worthless degrees that can be purchased and unregulated academic programs from a diverse range of providers to a few thoughtfully designed programs offered by respected universities. There is great latitude for shady practices.

Corruption and related ethical problems present an unprecedented threat to higher education. The loss of higher education’s objectivity, honesty, and high ethical standards would remove the central rationale for public support. The growing number of bad apples in the barrel is threatening the entire academic enterprise.

## World Class Universities: American Lessons

**CHARLES M. VEST**

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In its new ranking of the world’s 200 best universities, *The Times Higher* found the top three to be U.S. institutions—Harvard University, the University of California, Berkeley, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

There are good reasons why U.S. universities fare well in competitive rankings, and other nations could profitably consider the structural and policy factors that help them achieve such heights.

But collaboration may be even more profoundly important than competition in determining the future of higher education. Indeed informal global cooperation is already beginning to create the meta-university that will see the best scholarship and teaching shared worldwide.

The factors I believe contribute the most to the excellence and competitive success of US higher education include:

- The diversity of institutions—from small liberal arts colleges to large public and private universities—allows students to select the school that best matches their needs
- New assistant professors have freedom to choose what they teach as well as research
- Our research universities weave together teaching and research in ways that bring freshness, intensity, and renewal to both activities
- We welcome students, scholars, and faculty from abroad. Their intellectual and cultural richness help define our institutions
- Support of frontier research in our universities has long been an important responsibility of the federal government, which awards grants to researchers on the basis of their merit in a competitive marketplace of ideas
- A tradition of philanthropy, fostered by U.S. tax law, encourages alumni and others to support our colleges and universities. Scholarship funds they provide allow talented students from families of modest means to attend even the most costly schools
- Open competition for faculty and students drive excellence.

Such factors could be integrated into the cultural and political contexts of other nations and perhaps be improved on.

The enormous success and impact of the Indian Institutes of Technology, established in the 1960s, demonstrate that great universities based on this research-intensive model can rise rapidly anywhere in the world.

Indeed, the situation is far from static. Germany is working to better integrate the powerful free-standing Max Planck Research Institutes with German universities to capture the dynamism that comes from interweaving teaching and research.

In the United Kingdom, issues of access, affordability, and top-up fees are subjects of intense debate, and visionary activities such as the Cambridge-MIT Institute seek to better couple the stellar intellectual power of British universities to national competitiveness, productivity, and entrepreneurship.

China has committed to transforming several of its universities into world-class research-intensive institutions, as have Singapore, Mexico, and many other nations. The next 50 years should produce healthy competition and progress in advanced learning and research. But cooperation is very important too.

The Internet and worldwide web will make possible global research collaboration, sharing of knowledge and collective creation of educational materials.

Local universities will not be displaced or replaced. Rather, teaching and the creation of knowledge at each university will be elevated by the Linux-like efforts of a multitude of individuals and groups all over the world. The tectonic shift can be thought of as the emergence of the meta-university.

Of course, scholars and teachers have always advanced their work collectively through conferences, seminars, and correspondence. But the scale of participation, speed of propagation, and sophistication of access and presentation that we will see in the coming years are unprecedented.

One catalyst for this new dimension of global cooperation is MIT's OpenCourseWare initiative, which is making the basic teaching materials for virtually all our subjects available on the Internet at no charge to all teachers and learners.

***The residential university will continue to be the best venue for bright young men and women to live and learn among dedicated scholars and teachers.***

The residential university will continue to be the best venue for bright young men and women to live and learn among dedicated scholars and teachers. Institutional quality will be raised through competition and adaptation of elements of the U.S. model.

But the meta-university—the electronically enabled global collaboration of teachers and researchers—will rapidly advance and improve higher education everywhere.

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## *Private Higher Education from Central and Eastern Europe to Central Asia*

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## Legitimacy in Central and Eastern European Private Higher Education

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The countries in Central and Eastern Europe have struggled with private higher education legitimacy over the last 15 years. Most of these issues exist globally as well but have proven to be starkly problematic in the region.

### *Belated Rapid Growth*

Except for a few religious institutions with limited private character, the region was almost unique for its lack of private higher education before 1989. Much of Asia and virtually all of Latin America had certainly already moved quite far in the private direction. Furthermore, in no other region was the private sector inaugurated by such a singular event as the fall of communism. Within a couple of years most Central and Eastern European countries had a significant private higher education sector. The expansion was particularly rapid in Romania, Poland, Georgia, and Ukraine and more moderate in Hungary, Russia, and the Czech Republic—increasing quickly from zero to 10, 20, or 30 percent. Some of the countries with the most explosive growth of the private sector faced the greatest problems of legitimacy (e.g., Romania). Expansion resulted from many factors, including the low cohort enrollments that had characterized public higher education in the region. Although certain countries had some history of private higher education in the precommunist period, others (such as Russia) basically did not.