

temic rather than institutional level. After the so-called polytechnization reforms, higher education was intended to produce an intellectual proletariat for the national economy. All degrees offered by communist higher education were linked to the professions. Over half the graduates were in engineering, and all faculties in the humanities, arts, and sciences became in fact teacher training institutions.

The academic drift in the public sector after 1990 came as a surprise to a large part of the population. Opinion polls taken in academia detected the changes in the value system. The expansion of higher education and the shift away from the vocational mission characterized the 1990s. It was apparent that disorder accompanied the autonomization of public higher education institutions. Fears concerning higher education expansion were voiced by the mass media, politicians, and civil society. Private universities in need of recognition preferred to present a value system closer to general public opinion of what higher education was meant to be.

***The expansion of higher education and the shift away from the vocational mission characterized the 1990s.***

Yet, during the expansion of the early 1990s many young people entered the public system, and changes in the leadership of higher education institutions took place. The former leaders—senior eminent professors—were in the best position to transfer their prestige into profits on the private higher education market. Thus, the vocational mission of these higher education institutions also reflects the internalized values of their creators.

The vocational character of Romanian higher education can also be traced back to a Napoleonic model of higher education, initiated as early as 1818 with the creation of the High Technical School in Bucharest, which later became the Polytechnic University. This tradition has evolved into higher education's role in preparing specialists, its inclusion in economic and administrative rather than cultural trends, and its relation to the needs of the economy or of society.

***Elitism***

Another frequent element in the mission statements is elite education. This perspective appears on the websites of accredited institutions, based in Bucharest, that have larger enrollments and broad disciplinary ranges. One explicitly states it is “a university in the classical sense,” while others describe themselves as “an elite university with elite graduates,” “an elite higher education institution,” and “devoted to academic excellence.” While there are no relevant differences between the quality of web pages of accredited and authorized institutions, so-called elite institutions have more complex and better-designed pages. Still, elite institutions do not pretend to be superior to public higher education institutions. Instead, they often make the point of having similar standards or “the same

quality as some of the best public universities.” The real quality of these institutions, of course, cannot be judged from the information we have at hand.

One explanation for the current debate over elite status is also related to the communist heritage. Most of Europe had already passed through some expansionist phase by the end of the 1980s, when Romania had the lowest number of students per 100,000 inhabitants in Europe (except for Albania). The expansion of the higher education system, the liberalization of access, and private higher education itself changed the context.

The founders of some private institutions sensed the need of prospective students and parents for elite education that had slowly but surely declined in the public sector. Still, private institutions, elite or not, have a lower prestige than most public universities.

***Conclusion***

Almost all private higher education institutions define themselves in relation to external factors. Private higher education institutions conform to the set of values based on communist higher education's rhetoric of elite vocational education. The institutions in our study revealed themselves as mostly conservative in their mission statements and in the design of their web pages. This might be a result of the institutions' need to satisfy the expectations of their stakeholders, the normative characteristics of their leaders, and the disciplinary structure of the institutions. ■

~End of PROPHE Section~

## Confronting Corruption: Ukrainian Private Higher Education

**JOSEPH STETAR, OLEKSIY PANYCH, AND BIN CHENG**

*Joseph Stetar is a professor of higher education at Seton Hall University. Oleksiy Panych, and Bin Cheng are part of Seton Hall University research group writing the history of Ukrainian private higher education since independence in 1991. Address: Seton Hall University, Kozlowski Hall, South Orange, NJ 07079, USA. E-mail: Stetarjo@shu.edu.*

The vice rector of a leading state university in Ukraine stated in an interview that allegations of bribery for such actions as admission to the university, passing courses, and recommendations were the misguided thinking of “hooligans and malcontents.” While other Ukrainian academics are also willing to make the dubious claim that they had never seen anyone taking bribes, the allegations of substantial if not pervasive corruption in all sectors of Ukrainian higher education persist. Now that approximately 175 private institutions of higher education have attained some level of accreditation, it is important to try and understand the challenges facing that sector as a result of corruption.

*Licensing and Accreditation*

The main area of corruption appears to be centered in the Ministry of Education and the large state universities controlling licensing and accreditation. In spring 2004 interviews were conducted with 43 rectors, vice rectors, and administrators at five private universities—located in Lviv, Odessa, Kharkiv, Donetsk, and Kyiv. A consensus emerged that successful licensing or accreditation applications, with few exceptions, required some form of bribery. Licensing, which is required only of private institutions, might require a bribe of U.S.\$200—about two months' salary for a typical academic—while accreditation might call for a 10 or 20 times greater “gratuity.”

Obviously, the role of bribery in Ukrainian higher education has become corrosive, and a small number of education leaders from both the private and state sectors are beginning to challenge the system. However, the leaders in the private sector largely acknowledge that the culture of bribery is deeply ingrained in society as well as in higher education and that bribes are part of the cost of getting a private university licensed and accredited. In his remarks, the rector of the private university in Odessa captured the beliefs of the private higher education leaders we interviewed: “if an American university, with exclusively Nobel prize-winning teaching staff, decided to transfer its base of operations to Ukraine, it would fail to get a license (without a bribe, of course) and could only dream of accreditation.”

**Students and faculty at the institutions surveyed share, with few exceptions, a common understanding of what constitutes academic corruption.**

*Student and Faculty Perspectives*

To explore other areas of corruption situated within private higher education institutions, we supplemented our interviews by surveying a sample of 77 faculty and 239 students at the same five private universities where we interviewed rectors and other administrators in spring 2004. To encourage reliable responses, students and faculty were guaranteed confidentiality.

Students and faculty at the institutions surveyed share, with few exceptions, a common understanding of what constitutes academic corruption. For example, more than 80 percent of faculty and students described accepting money in exchange for a favorable grade as inappropriate. Similar views are held with respect to the awarding of a favorable entrance examination grade. An even stronger consensus emerged as to whether it was appropriate for a student to have to pay money—over and above the officially set cost—to obtain a place in a student hostel, for a teacher to request sexual relations in exchange for a favorable grade, or for a student to be required to pay for borrowing a book from the university library. In those instances, more than 95 percent of faculty and students viewed such

actions as unacceptable. Faculty and students were considerably more accepting of practices such as professors receiving money, in private arrangements, for consulting with a student outside of normal classroom hours or requiring a student to purchase their books and provide proof of this purchase.

*Student and Faculty Experiences*

There were consistent responses from students and faculty concerning their direct experiences with corruption. More than 90 percent of the students and 95 percent of the faculty reported they neither had experienced nor knew of situations in which bribes were used to gain a favorable grade on an entrance exam or a course examination at their university. Similarly, there is little suggestion from either students or faculty of bribes being used to secure a place in a student hostel or paying a librarian to borrow a book from a university library. Finally, no data exist to indicate any personal experiences of sexual favors between faculty and students for favorable grades, although we recognize that data on this latter aspect of corruption may be the most difficult to obtain.

**Approximately 10 percent of the students acknowledged they had either paid a professor or were personally aware of a situation in which a student had paid a professor for assistance outside of the classroom.**

Few differences also seem to exist between faculty and student experience with what is characterized as “petty corruption.” For example, approximately 10 percent of the students acknowledged they had either paid a professor or were personally aware of a situation in which a student had paid a professor for assistance outside of the classroom. Similarly, 12 percent of faculty indicated they either had experienced or personally knew of situations where money or gifts were exchanged for consultation outside the classroom. About the same percentage of students and faculty reported either personally being in or knowing of a situation in which students were required to purchase a book written by their professor and provide proof of purchase.

While our sample is small and the private institutions studied clearly seek to be “corruption-free universities,” the data suggest these five private universities have been able to foster an institutional culture in which students and faculty agree on what constitutes corruption and have been able, especially when compared to reports from some of the other former republics (see *IHE* no. 37, Fall 2004), to create relatively “clean” institutions. Our interviews with the leaders of these institutions suggest a clear understanding of the conditions fostering corruption as well as a determination to root out behavior undermining the academic integrity of their institutions.

While it is unknown whether these findings might apply to other Ukrainian private universities, data collected in our earlier studies suggest a considerable number of institutions,

driven by the profit motive and resistant to even a hint of transparency, have little concern for academic integrity. Nevertheless, this current data collection seems to show that, if they make academic integrity a fundamental building block of their institutional culture, private universities can create a climate to combat the grim perspectives of corruption overshadowing higher education systems in the former Soviet Union. ■

## The Transformations in Mexican Higher Education in the 1990s

**ROLLIN KENT**

*Rollin Kent is professor at the Autonomous University of Puebla, Mexico. E-mail: rkent@puebla.megared.net.mx. This article is an excerpt from a presentation made at the 16th Annual Conference of the Consortium of Higher Education Researchers, Porto, Portugal, September 2003.*

From the perspective of the late 1980s, the future of Mexican higher education seemed somber indeed. No one would have predicted that by 2003 an accreditation system would be in place, that public universities would be doing strategic planning, and that there would be 40 new two-year technical institutes, more than 160 four-year technical colleges, 10 new polytechnic universities, a rapidly growing postgraduate level, and a booming private sector with a growing interest in on-line programs.

It is noteworthy that these changes occurred without a major reform movement in the political sense. There has been public debate, of course, but it certainly lacked the intensity that one would have expected, given the ideological climate of the 1980s. With the exception of student opposition at the National University (UNAM) to the attempt at raising fees, it turns out that every other public university in Mexico has raised fees moderately without much ado—a significant ideological shift in itself. The media pounced on the exception and downplayed the larger picture.

These transformations have not been the result of widely debated legislative decisions. They have been undertaken without legal reforms of any significance. The executive branch of government used its considerable authority and, of course, the power of the purse. For financially starved universities, the economic incentives set forth by the federal secretary of education were irresistible.

### *Funding for Higher Education*

Between 1989 and 2001 total public expenditures for education as a proportion of GDP increased from 3.7 percent to 5.2 percent. Federal expenditures on higher education as a propor-

tion of GDP almost doubled from 0.4 percent to 0.7 percent, going from U.S.\$1.4 billion to U.S.\$3.9 billion in the same period. Although figures for state expenditures are not available on a comparable basis, these figures also increased. Nevertheless, a closer look at the figures would reveal a less significant increase in terms of per student expenditures. Complaints by state university rectors are a constant, especially when they (rightly) point out that the enormous federal institutions with great political clout, like UNAM, get an unfairly large share of public funding. Overall, however, federal and state spending for education, with an emphasis on basic education, has remained a priority throughout the decade.

These figures tell only part of the funding story. Private expenditures in higher education have also grown over the past decade. Data from household income surveys show that the percentage of total family income spent on higher education has doubled since 1992. Figures for corporate donations are not available, but many large private universities depend more and more on this type of funding, as evidenced by the growing number of private foundations. If the data were available, they would certainly reveal a significant increment in private fund-

***The percentage of total family income spent on higher education has doubled since 1992.***

ing for higher education overall.

### *Social Participation and Equity Issues*

The trends in funding mentioned here are manifestations of the growing social demand and willingness to pay for higher education that were the driving forces behind enrollment expansion. National enrollments increased by 70 percent in the 1990s. Women and private-sector enrollments took up much of this growth. Also notable is the relative growth outside the capital city: regional expansion of higher education is a very important part of the current changes.

Nonetheless, the participation rate of 19-to-23-year-olds in higher education is still quite low, compared to other Latin American countries that have also reformed their systems, such as Argentina or Chile. While the middle and upper strata are sending their children to higher education, this is not so for lower-income families. In spite of its growth, Mexican higher education remains very inequitable. Household income surveys show that public subsidies favor middle- and upper-income over lower-income families. Expansion does not necessarily lead to social mobility, if poor students lack financial aid or if institutions are not within reach of the rural population. The opportunity costs of higher education for poor rural students in a transition economy such as Mexico's can also be very high: many young people between 15 and 20 years of age from the poorer rural areas in southern Mexico decide to emigrate illegally to the United States rather than continue studies beyond secondary school. The growth of private establishments, which are all based in large cities and charging fees,