

## A Dozen Years of Service to Higher Education

This is the 50th issue of *International Higher Education*. Our first issue appeared in the spring of 1995, almost 13 years ago. Our commitment then, as now, is to provide thoughtful analysis of contemporary events in higher education worldwide and information on current developments, especially in countries that do not receive much attention. We have a special concern with the broad issues of globalization and internationalization. Because of our sponsorship by a Jesuit university, we have been interested in issues relating to Catholic and Jesuit education worldwide. Ours has been an effort at network building and information provision.

We have focused attention on themes and countries sometimes neglected in discussions of higher education. *IHE* has from the beginning had a special interest in developing countries—especially on how the developing world can cope with international trends largely determined by the major academic powers. Among the topics we have emphasized over the years have been private higher education (our collaboration with the Program of Research on Private Higher Education-PROPHE at the University at Albany has been especially important), corruption issues, internationalization and globalization, and others. A combination of independent and often critical analysis, focus on central issues for higher education worldwide, and short but incisive articles has proved to be a successful strategy.

*IHE* is aggressively noncommercial. We do not charge for a subscription. We are always happy to provide permission, without any fee, to publications interested in reprinting our articles. Our Web site is available without charge and is linked with many other Web sites focusing on higher education. We accept no advertising in any of our publications or on our Web site. We have been able to do this work because of support from the Ford Foundation and from Boston College.

*International Higher Education* is by now recognized as a source of information and analysis worldwide. We mail to readers in 154 countries. *IHE* is available on our Web site and is widely used. We have been careful to archive all of the back issues and have indexed them so that researchers and others can have easy access. *IHE* articles are widely cited in the literature and are often reprinted by journals in many parts of the world. We currently work with publications in Mexico, the United Kingdom, the United States, and China that regularly reprint our articles. *IHE* is translated into Arabic, thanks to Google, and we are working on starting a Chinese-language edition in collaboration with the Shanghai Jiao Tong University Institute of Higher Education.

We have asked colleagues who have been associated with *International Higher Education* to reflect on some key trends in

higher education in an international perspective over the past decade of our publication. Several of these articles follow. Additional contributions will be published in the coming issues. We look forward to our 100th issue!

Philip G. Altbach, Editor

## Globalization and Forces for Change in Higher Education

PHILIP G. ALTBACH

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What is globalization and how does it affect higher education policy and academic institutions? The answer is deceptively simple and the implications are surprisingly complex. For higher education, globalization implies the broad social, economic, and technological forces that shape the realities of the 21st century. These elements include advanced information technology, new ways of thinking about financing higher education and a concomitant acceptance of market forces and commercialization, unprecedented mobility for students and professors, the global spread of common ideas about science and scholarship, the role of English as the main international language of science, and other developments. Significantly, the idea of mass access to higher education has meant unprecedented expansion of higher education everywhere—there are about 134 million students in postsecondary education worldwide, and many countries have seen unprecedented and sustained expansion in the past several decades. These global trends are for the most part inevitable. Nations, and academic institutions, must constructively cope with the implications.

Contemporary inequalities may in fact be intensified by globalization. Academic systems and institutions that at one time could grow within national boundaries now find themselves competing internationally. National languages compete with English even within national borders. Domestic academic journals, for example, often compete with international publications within national academic systems, and scholars are pressured to publish internationally. Developing countries are at a significant disadvantage in the new globalized academic system, but smaller academic systems in rich countries also face problems. In a ranking-obsessed world, the top universities are located predominantly in the United States, the United Kingdom, and a few other rich countries. The inequalities of the global age are just as profound and in part more complex than the realities of the era of colonialism.

Academic systems will need to cope with the key realities of