

United States postsecondary lobbying has increased significantly over the past two decades as public and private nonprofit institutions have sought “earmarked” funding from the US Congress. Working individually, with hired lobbyists and through associations, nonprofit and for-profit institutions have also endeavored to influence legislation on a variety of higher education issues, as have private student-loan providers and others pursuing education-related commerce.

FOR-PROFIT LOBBYING

Lobbying is an arena in which for-profits have a number of structural advantages over nonprofit institutions. For-profits can provide direct political contributions to legislators and political parties. Indeed, the leaders of the House and Senate committees that guide legislation relevant to higher education have received significant support from for-profit colleges and affiliated interest groups. Given their relatively narrow focus, many for-profit universities are well positioned to target resources on a few essential issues. While nonprofits seek to use political support to maximize a variety of public and private goods, lobbying by proprietary institutions has one ultimate goal—shaping legislation to maximize profit.

As mentioned earlier, for-profit colleges and universities in the United States have been extremely active in the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, seeking to shape federal regulations governing institutional eligibility for aid, distance

The United States has long been a mixed system with a great deal of direct government provision through public nonprofit institutions as well as direct and indirect government subsidies for public nonprofit institutions.

learning, and the standardization of credit transfer. For-profits have also been prominent in lobbying at the state level. For example, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* reports that for-profit colleges spent nearly \$500,000 during a recent session of the California legislature. These efforts have led to a number of challenges to existing policies that will likely be manifest in emerging legislation. For-profit universities have had a disproportionate impact in the higher education lobbying arena, given that only about 6 percent of postsecondary students in the United States are enrolled in for-profit institutions.

CONCLUSION

Can states preserve regulations that protect the public and private benefits of higher education while satisfying the profit demands of an evolving postsecondary market? As with most political contests, much will depend on the ability of a variety of postsecondary stakeholders to become involved in the political arena shaping higher education. Future research on the

tension between states and markets will benefit from turning attention to the evolving balance of political legitimacy, lobbying, and policy challenges evidenced in the rise of for-profit degree-granting colleges and universities. ■

Knowledge Economies: The Singapore Example

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Singapore has been noted for its foresight in matters relating to its economic development, and since it has drawn up plans to rebuild itself into an innovation-led, value-added knowledge economy. These policy efforts were strengthened following the 1997 Asian financial crisis. Henceforth Singapore would direct significant resources toward transforming itself into an education and medical services hub. Although its knowledge-economy aspirations are not especially exceptional—Romania, Ireland, and Malaysia number among countries those with similar goals—Singapore’s single-minded pursuit of these goals is unique.

THE GLOBAL SCHOOLHOUSE

Singapore’s government formulated the Global Schoolhouse, a policy platform based on three pillars: investing financial support with an identified group of “world-class universities” to establish operations in Singapore; attracting 150,000 international students by 2015 to study in both private and state-run education institutions; and remodel all levels of Singaporean education. The Global Schoolhouse articulates with policy reforms in education, research, urban redevelopment, taxation, immigration, and intellectual property.

The policy strategy of inviting foreign world-class universities to Singapore rests on exploiting their “brand equity.” Research-intensive American institutions initially dominated among those invited: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Georgia Tech, and Duke University were funded to run graduate-level programs, while Johns Hopkins University was to conduct biomedical research and provide doctoral training. The University of Chicago Graduate School of Business was assisted to establish a campus in a refurbished heritage building, and Wharton Business School was contracted to provide expertise in setting up Singapore’s third university, Singapore Management University. The field has since widened to include non-American universities and institutions that focus

on technical and creative disciplines. For example, INSEAD, a European business school located in Paris, has a bricks-and-mortar campus in Singapore, as does the Indian Jain School of Management. New York University's TISC School of Arts will start classes in 2007.

Bringing in foreign expertise to contribute to Singapore's knowledge-economy agenda resonates with earlier state-led industrialization policies. The government's aphorism, "build it and they will come," was translated into the provision of state-of-the-art facilities and tax concessions and grants for foreign companies. This enabled Singapore to build capacity in key industries and integrate itself into the capitalist economy, at a time when the newly independent states were deeply suspicious of capitalism. The prime minister noted that Singaporeans were "learning to do a job" from foreign companies, something they may not have otherwise learned. The issue of "whether or not we were exploited" was less relevant to him.

World-class universities are expected to participate with Singapore's universities and nascent research institutes in creating "a self-sustaining research eco-system." US\$8 billion has been allocated for R&D for 2006–2010. A US\$600 million Campus for Research Excellence and Technological Enterprise (CREATE) is under way.

The realities of faculty involved in the Global Schoolhouse have brought challenges unanticipated by Singapore's cadre of rational policymakers. "Leap-frogging" into a research-intensive culture is an ambitious goal given differences in institu-

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tional histories, mandates, and research experience. Singapore's universities are young and have largely been steered to focus their energies on producing high-quality undergraduate programs. Thus these universities face challenges to establish research synergies with globally positioned institutions, such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, that operate with minimal government steering. Singaporean faculty are cajoled to benchmark themselves against a real and imagined standard of global excellence, meet goals of access and quality, while facing constraints from an institutional environment closely steered by government.

Some lessons have been learned almost a decade after the outset of the Global Schoolhouse. Two events are the closure of Johns Hopkins' research school and the executive decision made by Australia's University of New South Wales to close. The substantive research-intensive transnational endeavors are very expensive and require the commitment and involvement of faculty.

NEITHER A LIBERAL DEMOCRACY NOR A POLICE STATE

Even if this city-state holds a deficit in liberal democracy, that factor is not perceived to affect the professional freedoms of the vast majority of expatriate knowledge workers involved in the Global Schoolhouse. Instead, Singapore is seen as offering elements of academic freedom made unavailable by the neo-conservative US administration—such as restrictions on stem cell research. In contrast to the harsh fiscal discipline and competitive environments of British and Australian universities driven by several decades of neoliberal economic policies,

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Singapore's research institutes and universities are perceived as more generously funded environments. The government offers resources and opportunities to do less administration and more research, including scientifically proactive research unencumbered by short-term commercial imperatives. Expatriate faculty also express appreciation for the professional freedoms provided by a forward-thinking, scientifically literate leadership that prizes intellectual achievements and a setting without any urban violence. Despite the limitations in democratic freedom for its citizenry, Singapore is not considered a police state. It is described as well governed, with impressive public-good achievements in infrastructure, health, education, and redistribution exceeding those of its neighbors.

REGIMES OF VALUE

In many former colonies, state policies sought to fend off multinationals and protect national industries from foreign capital. Unlike these more conventional forms of economic nationalism, Singapore continues to use foreign companies, universities, and knowledge institutions to build capacity in key knowledge industries and to exploit new and emerging expressions of knowledge capitalism.

Its knowledge economy plans require Singapore's citizens to be self-reliant, to better themselves through education and training, and if necessary to relocate themselves regionally to exploit opportunities, rather than expecting their government to take responsibility for their employment. Their "first world" status also steers Singapore's citizens towards a geopolitical identity aligned with the "global north" (United States) and with China—an emerging superpower. Significantly, it is a geopolitical identity that separates them psychologically from their Southeast Asian neighbors. ■