

CHANGES SINCE 1981/82

The number of international students in the United States nearly doubled between 1981/82 and 2007/08 (from 326,299 to 623,805). But while undergraduate enrollments increased 25 percent, graduate enrollments rose 160.5 percent during the same period, and as a consequence, the proportion of undergraduate students has declined.

Among the top places of origin, students from Iran in 1981/82 comprised the largest cohort of international students in the United States, followed by students from Taiwan and Nigeria. These top three places of origin accounted for 23 percent of all international students in the United States in 1981/82. Since then, not only have the top places of origin shifted, a clear trend has appeared of greater concentration from the top places of origin, with the current top three places accounting for 39 percent of all international students in 2007/08.

CONCLUSION

While there has been enormous growth in the number of international students in the United States since 1981/82, it is also clear that the students come from different countries and are enrolled at different academic programs than their peers from the past, as changing economies and political situations at home, as well as the changing landscape of higher education around the world, have created both new opportunities and barriers for internationally mobile students.

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It's the Faculty, Stupid! The Centrality of the Academic Profession

PHILIP G. ALTBACH

Philip G. Altbach is Monan University Professor and director of the Center for International Higher Education at Boston College.

In 1992, Bill Clinton was elected president of the United States in considerable part by emphasizing the importance of the economy. His mantra—"It's the economy, stupid!"—

focused this point. For higher education, the mantra should be "it's the faculty, stupid." In fact, no university can achieve success without a well-qualified, committed academic profession. Neither an impressive campus nor an innovative curriculum will produce good results without great professors. Higher education worldwide focuses on the "hardware"—buildings, laboratories, and the like—at the expense of "software"—the people who make any academic institutions successful. Look at the often-criticized rankings. What do they measure? Numbers of Nobel prizewinners, the research productivity of professors, grants obtained by faculty, and the quality of the students are central. Budgets and facilities are less important in the rankings.

Almost everywhere, the faculty is forgotten in the rush to cope with ever increasing enrollments and in the midst of deepening financial problems. If higher education is to succeed, "It's the faculty, stupid!" must be a central rallying cry for universities worldwide.

It is depressing, but quite essential, to examine the status of the academic profession worldwide. A few examples will illustrate global realities. One issue involves the fact that the academic profession is aging in many countries. In much of the world, half or more of the professoriate is getting close to retirement. In many countries, too few new PhDs are being produced to replace those leaving the profession, and many new doctorates prefer to work outside of academe. Too few incentives for advanced doctoral study and an uncertain employment market for new PhDs, along with inadequate financial support in many fields, deter enrollment and ensure that many students drop out of doctoral programs. Countries with rapidly growing higher education systems are especially hard hit. Vietnam, for example, requires 12,000 more academics each year to meet expansion goals, and only 10 percent of the academic profession currently hold doctoral degrees.

Global examples of the current state of the academic profession will illustrate contemporary deteriorating. These examples are chosen to highlight widespread realities.

THE RISE OF THE PART-TIME PROFESSION

To be most effective, professors need to be truly engaged in teaching and research. They must have full-time academic appointments and devote attention exclusively to academic responsibilities and to the universities and colleges that employ them. The full-time professoriate is a dying breed. Latin America is the homeland of the part time "taxicab" professor, rushing between teaching jobs or between class and another profession. Except for Brazil, in almost all Latin American countries up to 80 percent of the professoriate is employed part time. Paid a pittance, they have little commitment to the university or to students. It is not surprising that there are almost no Latin American universities among the top 500 and little research productivity. In the United States, only half of newly hired academics are full time on the "tenure

track”—scholars who can hope for a career in higher education. The rest are part-time “contingent” faculty who are paid poorly for each course and have few benefits. A new class of full-time contract teachers has grown in recent years as a way for universities to ensure flexibility in staffing. Traditional tenure-track academic appointments tend to be most common in the upper-tier colleges and universities, thus increasing inequalities in the academic system as a whole.

In many countries, universities now employ part-time professors who have full-time appointments at other institutions. Many eastern European countries, China, Vietnam, Uganda, and others are examples of such a higher education sector. Academic salaries are sufficiently low, and the universities expect that faculty will earn extra funds to supplement their own incomes and in some cases to subsidize the university's own budget. At some Chinese universities, professors are expected to practice consulting and other outside work as part

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of their academic duties. In other cases, universities set up additional degree-granting colleges and ask the faculty to perform extra teaching at those schools, enhancing university revenues and individual salaries at the same time. It is also the case that professors at state universities in much of the world help to staff the burgeoning private higher education sector by “moonlighting.”

The decline of a real full-time professoriate is undermining high-quality higher education. If professors cannot devote their full attention not only to teaching and research but also to maintaining an academic culture, working with students outside of the classroom, and participating in the governance of their universities, academic quality will decline. As the British say, “penny wise and pound foolish.”

THE DUMBING DOWN OF THE PROFESSORIATE

It is possible that up to half of the world's university teachers have only earned a bachelor's degree. No one knows for sure. What we do know is that the academic profession is growing rapidly, and facilities for advanced degree study are not keeping up—nor are salary levels that encourage the “best and brightest” from joining the professoriate. In China, the world's largest academic system, only 9 percent of the academic profession has doctorates (although 70 percent do in the top research universities). Thirty-five percent of Indian academics have doctoral qualifications. In many countries, significant parts of the profession have a bachelor's degree, and some have not even attained that basic degree. In most developing countries, only academic staff at the most prestigious universities hold a doctoral degree—usually under 10 percent of the

total. The expansion of graduate postbaccalaureate programs has been identified as a top priority worldwide, but expansion has been slow because the demand for basic access is so great.

THE PAUPERIZATION OF THE PROFESSION

It is no longer possible to lure the best minds to academe. A significant part of the problem is financial. Academic salaries have not kept up with remuneration for highly trained professionals everywhere. A recent study of academic salaries in 15 countries shows full-time academic staff can survive on their salaries. However, they do not earn much more than the average salary in their country. Relatively few of the most qualified young people undergo the rigorous education required for jobs in the top universities. However, highly trained individuals frequently flee to higher paying jobs in other professions or, in the case of developing countries, leave for academic or other jobs in Europe or North America.

THE BUREAUCRATIZATION OF THE PROFESSORIATE

In years past, even if academics were not well paid, they held a good deal of autonomy and control over their teaching and research as well as their time. This situation has changed in many academic systems and institutions. In terms of accountability and assessment, the professoriate has lost much of its autonomy. Assessment exercises and other accountability measures require a lot of time and effort to complete. The pressure to assess academic productivity of all kinds is substantial, even if much of that work is in fact quite difficult or impossible to accurately measure. Much criticism has been aimed at the British Research Assessment Exercises, which many claim has distorted academic work.

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Universities have also become much more bureaucratic as they have grown and have become more accountable to external authorities. Heavy bureaucratic control is deleterious to a sense of academic community and generally to the faculty's traditional involvement in academic governance. The power of the professors, once dominant and sometimes used by them to resist change, has declined in the age of accountability and bureaucracy.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

It is not difficult to identify the path to a restored academic profession—and thus successful higher education systems. The academic profession must again become a profession—with appropriate training, compensation, and status. This means that academic programs to provide master's and doctoral

degrees must be significantly expanded. The rush toward part-time teachers must be ended and, instead, a sufficient cadre of full-time professors with appropriate career ladders appointed. Salaries must be sufficient to attract talented young scholars and to keep them in the profession.

In a differentiated academic system, not all professors will focus on research—typically the gold standard in terms of prestige and status. Most academics mainly teach, and their workloads should reflect this. It would also be impossible to return to the days of unfettered autonomy and little if any evaluation of academic work. Yet, accountability and assessment can be done in ways that are appropriate to academic work rather than punitive exercises.

If there is any good news in this story it is that more professors enjoy what they are doing and feel a loyalty to the profession. The 1992 international Carnegie study of the academic profession found surprisingly high levels of satisfaction, and the 2007 Changing Academic Profession global survey found much the same result. Despite their problems, academic life has significant attractions. The challenge is to ensure that the academic profession is again seen by policymakers and the public as central to the success of higher education.

In the current environment, the popular press as well as some university administrators and many government officials are happy to criticize professors as the root of academe's problems. In fact, the opposite is the case—the professors are the root of the unprecedented success of higher education. There is always room for improvement, but professor bashing will lead to neither reform nor greater productivity. ■

The Academic Profession: Colombia's 2019 Vision

IVÁN F. PACHECO

Iván Pacheco was the Director of Quality Assurance for higher education in the Colombian Ministry of Education for more than three years. He is currently a doctoral student in higher education at Boston College. E-mail: ivan.pacheco.1@bc.edu.

The emergence of the knowledge economy poses dramatic challenges for developing nations that have to struggle to insert themselves in a highly competitive market. Colombia's case illustrates this situation.

Colombia's government planning is focused on 2019, its 200th anniversary of independence. Policymakers concentrate on their country's movement into the knowledge economy as well as the role researchers and highly skilled workers play in that process. However, the country's current reality of academ-

ic human capital will present a challenge in reaching this goal. Not enough high-quality researchers work in the higher education sector, in part because Colombia lacks the conditions to attract and retain talented academics.

Colombian teachers' salaries are not competitive in the international context, as illustrated in a recent study by the Boston College Center for International Higher Education, in which Colombia was ranked among the four lowest-paid countries within a group of 16. In addition, the country has not succeeded in developing alternative incentives to counterbalance the limited monetary rewards—such as, availability of good laboratories, supportive academic communities, and job stability. Although a few official documents have considered the importance of attracting foreign scholars, compensation and other mechanisms to retain local faculty and attract foreign talent have not yet been analyzed in depth. A picture of how faculty are hired and paid in Colombia illustrates the urgency for changes in its enrollment and remuneration structure.

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COMPENSATION AT PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS

The institution's nature (public or private) is perhaps the most relevant factor to explain how teachers are paid in Colombia. Among the 272 higher education institutions in the country only 81 are public, but they account for about 50 percent of the nation's enrollment.

Full-time and part-time teachers at public higher education institutions are considered public servants and are subject to special legal statutes. Faculty at private institutions, however, are subject to the general labor law applied to any other workers in the country.

To enter the academic track as a public employee, faculty must participate in a meritocratic process in which candidates' curriculum, academic productivity, and other elements are evaluated. A probation period can also be part of this process. Once the candidate is formally incorporated as a professor he or she will be tenured, under very similar conditions as for any other public employees in the country. Salaries are calculated based on a set of tables established by the central government, with little room for negotiation.

Two types of teachers at public higher education institutions are not considered public employees: the so-called occasional teachers and those hired through an hourly based contract, called *profesores de hora cátedra*. Conceived in the law as an exception, these two groups, usually referred to as “temporary teachers,” are a significant portion of the total teaching personnel in the public sector—in 2005, representing 64 percent of Colombian higher education instructors, compared to only 25 percent of full-time teachers.