

The quality of private higher education has yet to surpass that of the public institutions. Despite their short history, private institutions are catching up and some offer programs competitive with those at public institutions. One view is that state institutions receive such a small portion of funding that they actually operate with state titles but in private mode. However, the private sector declares virtually no support is provided by government and that the current balance of enrollments should be reversed—that is, one third of enrollments should be in state institutions with the private institutions enrolling the rest. In Korea, Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, and Indonesia private universities enroll the majority of students—in some cases upwards of 80 percent. Mongolia's private institutions enroll 34 percent of all students and believe that a level playing field is lacking.

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With far too many (162) institutions, the average number at each one is about 900 students—no way to attain economies of scale. Consolidation has been used to address this problem elsewhere. The average number of students in Chinese institutions was 3,112 in 1990, up from 1,919 in 1990, when about 80 percent of higher education institutions had less than 4,000 students and 60 percent had less than 3,000 students. By 2000, 612 colleges and universities were consolidated into 250, and several universities now have over 50,000 students. Other countries are dealing with similar problems, especially at the outset of privatization, when an overabundance of small colleges spring up with little to offer in the way of quality instruction. After the initial phase of privatization, a system is needed for quality assurance, which often ends in the closure and consolidation of many institutions.

Mongolia's premier universities have obtained too few faculty members for the number of students served, about a 1:23 teacher-student ratio. At top universities elsewhere, the ratio is lower. It is 1:10.5 at the University of Pennsylvania and 1:11.5 at New York University. In the engineering faculty of the National University of Singapore, it is 1:13. In the recent QS World University rankings of top universities in the world, student-faculty ratio counted for 20 percent of the ranking. While student-faculty ratio is not automatically indicative of quality teaching and research, it is relevant enough for Mongolia to consider recruitment of outstanding academic staff.

Mongolia aspires, as do its neighbors in Northeast Asia (Japan, South Korea, and China) to have internationally recognized research universities. The intention to establish a highly recognized research university needs to be matched by a national budget that does not skimp on funds for research and development. Some observers continue to argue that making a

direct association with research productivity is risky. The R&D budget for Hong Kong is only 0.7 percent of GDP but has very high per capita rates of research publications. Regardless, Mongolia's R&D budget of 0.28 percent of GDP places it 70th in the world. Hong Kong ranks 50th. Moreover, Mongolia has a military and natural resources, which Hong Kong lacks. Therefore, Mongolia's research universities will remain hard pressed without a larger national R&D budget.

The academic profession must find better ways to retain top scholars. Meager salaries are an obstacle to improving quality. It is not unusual for faculty to leave their university to enter business where they can earn a higher wage. At present, part-time staff who need to work elsewhere to supplement their income account for 18 percent in public and 44 percent in private institutions. Winning the best academic staff should be a priority, but the state of the economy greatly inhibits the ability of colleges and universities to attract and retain the talent needed to significantly improve the quality and competitiveness of higher education.

A BRIGHTER VISION OR MORE OF THE SAME?

While many people agree that the discovery of one of the world's largest mineral deposits (coal, copper, and uranium) means a promising economic future awaits Mongolia, the economy is currently too weak to support the large number of university graduates, and many are seeking employment elsewhere. Unless the above challenges facing higher education are urgently addressed with the political will necessary to overcome entrenched self-interests, Mongolia may find itself ill-prepared to take advantage of the opportunities on its horizon. ■

Celebrating 200 Years of Humboldt University

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On October 15, 1810 a new university was founded in Berlin. With only 256 students and 53 professors, this university had modest beginnings, but it would eventually shape the entire German as well as the international higher education landscape. The Universität zu Berlin, later renamed Humboldt Universität, revolutionized the concept of a university. Harvard

would not have become the Harvard of today if it had not emulated some of the innovations in higher education introduced by Humboldt. Such progress would probably have constituted the factor for most other research universities in the United States. While Humboldt is today in urgent need of reform, this university also forms the key part of the history of German higher education over the past 200 years. This story represents the originally most successful university system in the world, which became a sclerotic and bureaucratic behemoth and only recently started to renew itself.

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REFORMING PRUSSIA'S EDUCATION SYSTEM

The newly founded university in Berlin was revolutionary because European universities were not, traditionally, research institutions in the modern sense. Rather, they functioned as places of knowledge preservation, teaching, and examination. In the 18th century, many universities had actually become far removed from the rapid speed of social and scientific change that had developed outside of academia. Like monasteries hidden behind thick walls and insurmountable hedges, they were forgotten or even disdained by the outside world.

In some German states, efforts were undertaken to end this issue of academic misery—such as the establishment of reform universities, like Göttingen and Halle. Halle eventually became Prussia's most essential university, but it was closed down in 1806 by Napoleon, who thought most universities were useless. Bereft of the flagship university, Prussian reformers started thinking about founding a new institution of higher education, and Wilhelm von Humboldt, the state's envoy to the Vatican, became responsible for reforming Prussia's education system in 1809. He stepped down after just one year but left an enormous legacy. Humboldt created a uniform school system, established standards for teacher education, and also became the driving force in founding the University of Berlin.

FROM MEDIEVAL UNIVERSITY TO MODERN RESEARCH INSTITUTION

Napoleon had abolished his nation's universities in 1802 and replaced them with specialized schools. Humboldt chose a different approach; he wanted to innovate the mission from merely preserving tradition to actually producing science. Sylvia Paetschek—a history professor at Freiburg University and scholar of 19th-century Germany—has indicated that Humboldt's university, rather than performing radically as a

new institution, synthesized reform ideas from other German universities. Moreover, this new university did not initially function as an explicit research university. However, steady and generous state funding as well as state-created demands helped to establish large-scale research at the university during the next decades.

In the late 19th century, American universities adopted this combination of research and teaching by creating graduate schools or entire graduate institutions—such as Johns Hopkins and Clark University. Harvard was more skeptical of actual research and waited almost until the start of the 20th century before adopting this model.

HUMBOLDT'S CURRENT CHARACTER

While Humboldt served as an international model of higher education, attracting such great thinkers as Hegel, Schopenhauer, Einstein, and Planck and receiving a total of 29 Nobel Prizes in the first third of the 20th century, it has lost its appeal since then.

In the early 1930s, when my grandfather had transferred from Tübingen University in southwest Germany to Berlin to study with Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the young professor of theology, he was able to witness the demise of the university. In 1933, books of Jewish writers and professors were burned, in front of the library, by incited students. Jewish professors were expelled from the faculty, and the university lost many of its best and most innovative professors. After the end of the Nazi regime, the university found itself in the Soviet sector of Berlin. In 1947, students and professors were again expelled, at that time for not being in line with communist thought.

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Supported by the mayor of West Berlin (and also the Ford Foundation and, supposedly, the CIA), a dozen free-minded students and professors refounded the university in the American sector of Berlin and called it Freie Universität (Free University) as opposed to communist Humboldt. Freie Universität grew into one of Germany's largest universities. When the Berlin wall fell it remained unclear what would happen to the two main universities in Berlin. Initially, it seemed as if Humboldt would regain its former strength: money was generously poured in, excellent professors were hired, and Freie Universität faced a dim future as an overcrowded and mediocre institution.

HUMBOLDT AND THE DECLINE OF GERMAN UNIVERSITIES

Humboldt was not able to retrieve its character as an international hub of academic excellence that it held before World War II. It is a university plagued by the challenges faced by most contemporary German universities: a dramatic lack of financial resources; the absence of a clear mission and effective governance structures; an outrageously bad student/faculty ratio; buildings that have not been repaired since the 1970s; a system of strict hierarchies between tenured professors and an “academic proletariat”—consisting of adjuncts and assistant and associate professors; and the migration of some of the best and brightest young researchers to US universities.

In 2007, Germany created an artificial Ivy League by designating nine “excellence” universities to be showered with federal money. The clear front-runner, Humboldt Universität, was shocked not only when it did not win but also given that Freie Universität was among those nine universities. Humboldt may

have suffered from the lack of a clear research profile, but it also did not help that Humboldt's president left in the midst of the preparations for the excellence competition. His successor did not turn out to be the strong leader needed to establish new self-confidence.

2010 AS A NEW BEGINNING

This year, a new president will assume office. Jan-Hendrik Olbertz, a native Berliner who spent his career as a professor at Halle University and as one of Germany's most respected state secretaries of education, is an unusually bold and interesting choice. His election could provide a great opportunity to develop a vision of how to bring Humboldt back to its origin: as one of the most exciting and innovative places of higher education worldwide. Humboldt has the chance to reinvent itself and once again to become a model for higher education.

New Publications

Bhandari, Rajika, ed. *International India: A Turning Point in Educational Exchange with the U.S.* New York: Institute of International Education, 2010. 141 pp. \$39.99 (pb). ISBN 978-0-87206-321-1. Website: www.iiiebooks.org.

A consideration of U.S.-India higher education relations, this book focuses on both Indian and American policies and programs. Among the themes discussed are the role of immigrant entrepreneurs, Indian policies relating to U.S.-India exchanges, the internationalization of Indian higher education, intercultural competence, and several case studies of U.S.-India university collaboration.

Clark, John B., W. Bruce Leslie, and Kenneth P. O'Brien, eds. *SUNY at Sixty: The Promise of the State University of New York.* Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2010. 365 pp. (pb). ISBN 978-1-4384-3302-8. Web site: www.sunypress.edu.

The State University of New York is the largest public university system in the United States, with 64 campuses and 440,000 students. It is also one of the newest. This volume marks the 60th anniversary of the system. It includes chapters on the history of the system, the variations among the campuses, the global policy of SUNY, diversity in a large academic system, and others. There is a good deal of attention paid to the history and evolution of the SUNY system and its constituent campuses.

Cole, Jonathan R. *The Great American University: Its Rise to Preeminence, Its Indispensable National Role, and Why It Must Be Protected.* New York: Public Affairs, 2010. 750 pp. \$35 (hb). ISBN 978-1-58648408-8. Web site: www.publicaffairsbooks.com.

A broad analysis of the American research university by Columbia University's former provost, this volume discusses the history of the American university and the current crises facing it. The author strongly argues that the American university has provided most of the knowledge and innovation that has shaped the American economy in the past half century. Considerable space is allocated to discuss specific scientific discoveries and how they have contributed to the economy and society.

Douglass, John A., C. Judson King, and Irwin Feller, eds. *Globalization's Muse: Universities and Higher Education Systems in a Changing World.* Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Public Policy Press, Univ. of California, Berkeley, 2009. 405 pp. (pb). ISBN 978-0-87772-432-2.

A wide-ranging discussion of global trends in higher education, this book focuses both on a number of case studies and provides theme-based chapters. Especially noteworthy are analyses of the global race for human capital and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development trends for higher education. Among the case studies are Australia's fee policy, orientations in fees between the United States and the European Union, competition in German higher education, university-industry linkages in Taiwan,

European responses to global competitiveness, and others.

Garland, James C. *Saving Alma Mater: A Rescue Plan for America's Public Universities.* Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2009. 268 pp. \$27.50 (hb). ISBN 978-0-226-28386-9. Web site: www.press.uchicago.edu.

Garland, a former university president and professor, argues for radical change in how American public universities are managed and funded. He advocates more attention to efficient management and governance in the universities and recommends that the state governments permit more autonomy. His most radical suggestion is that the states no longer provide direct funding to public universities—the universities would be responsible for their own financing. This book, written prior to the financial crisis, may have even more relevance now.

Gaston, Paul L. *The Challenge of Bologna: What United States Higher Education Has to Learn From Europe, and Why It Matters That We Learn It.* Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2010. 225 pp. \$35 (hb). ISBN 978-1-57922-366-3. Web site: www.styluspub.com.

A discussion of what the European Union's Bologna initiatives mean for the United States, this book presents the various elements of Europe's approach to higher education harmonization and mobility, including how the process has evolved over time. The author focuses on the need for American higher education to understand and also to engage with Europe's continuing internation-