Africa, but a recent survey found 1,468 of them.

As Christian movements become strong national forces, their educational aims are broadening to engage larger social responsibilities. Universities are a better fit than seminaries for these broader purposes, and more than a dozen of the new African universities have seminary or Bible college ancestry. Church people start these universities so their own youth can flourish, but the institutions also aim to build up the nation. Most are open to enrollees beyond their own young people.

Challenging Mandates

The Christian universities face some of the same challenges that confront other African universities. From the state's perspective, they exist to provide broader access, so their chartering often mandates steep enrollment increases and rapid development of new programs and campus facilities. Bowen University, a Baptist-founded institution in Southern Nigeria, opened with 500 students in 2002 and now enrolls 5,000. Covenant University, founded in 2002 by the Nigerian Pentecostal megachurch Winner's Chapel, now has 15,000 students. Uganda Christian University, an Anglican institution founded in 1997, now has more than 10,000 students. Officials cite rapid growth as both a blessing and a challenge; added tuitions help their budgets but strain their ability to recruit adequate instructors and add sufficient facilities.

Other challenges stem from Christian educational mandates. These institutions announce Christian purposes and perspectives for learning nonreligious subjects and they structure campus life to reflect Christian norms. Yet most of them welcome qualified students regardless of faith. Students might chafe at taking courses in religion and having religious orientations infused into what most of society sees as nonreligious subjects. Some are frustrated by chapel or behavior codes. Part-time professors, so common to African universities generally, do not see why their teaching might need to be different in a Christian context. State officials have decided to accommodate religious educational partners, but wonder why hiring criteria, curricular development, or student norms need to be different on Christian campuses.

These new Christian universities are very dynamic places, and their leaders express high hopes that they will help their nations flourish. But one of the main themes of higher education history has been secularization. Broad state purposes inevitably rub against religious particularity, even in highly religious Africa. Even so, Christian universities persist in the West and are rising up afresh in other realms. It is too soon to predict the trajectory of the African wing of the worldwide Christian university movement, but one cannot miss its growing presence and emerging challenges. ■

Latin American Universities: Stuck in the Twentieth Century

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In 2018, Latin American universities will commemorate the centennial of the Córdoba University Reform. This movement, and its aftermath, changed the idea of the university in Latin America, and ushered in an era of optimism about the social relevance of universities at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Universities have indeed played a role in the social, political, cultural, and economic development of Latin America, but have somehow fallen short (as has the region's development, generally). The twenty-first century finds higher education in a process of radical change, throughout North America, Europe, Asia, Oceania, and the Middle East, forging new "social contracts" with the communities that sustain them. Universities in Latin America, in contrast, seem firmly entrenched in a twentieth century mindset, discourse, and repertoire of functions.

Why is this so? Why are Latin American universities rarely places of radical innovation, stellar research performance, or forward-looking projects?

Latin American Universities: Shaped by Accretion

The first universities in the region were founded in the Spanish colonies during the sixteenth century. Their legacy of scholastic teaching and authoritarian governance persisted for the most part after independence and into the nineteenth century. After freedom from Spain and Portugal in the first decades of the eighteenth century, the universities embodied a model that awkwardly combined the Hispanic medieval tradition of Alcalá and Salamanca with the French Imperial University.

A turning point came at the beginning of the twentieth century, as the University of the Republic in Uruguay allowed students to participate in collegiate bodies. Expectations for university reform were expressed at the First International Congress of American Students in 1908 in Montevideo, and later in Córdoba, Argentina, the place of the historic university reform of 1918. Cogovernance by faculty, students, and graduates, a fledgling research mission, and concern with social problems, were championed as means to shake up the lethargic mores of the traditional university.

The ideology of Córdoba, along with an emerging middle class, the political engagement of faculty and students, the development of research capacity, and (more recently) massification and diversification, piled with little or no design on top of the "Scholastic-Napoleonic" tradition. As a result, the ethos of the Latin American university reflects layers of disparate social pressures, political agendas, international influences, and internal developments. In older Latin American universities, one can see in the heterogeneity of professors, students, structures, functions, glories, and grievances, the evidence of this "geological" sedimentation, layer upon layer, of different ideas of the university.

The Region and its Universities Today

Most of the region's universities are rather new. In Brazil, the first bona fide universities were not created until the 1930s, more than 400 years after the Portuguese founded the colony (in 1531) and more than a century after Brazil had become an independent nation (in 1822). The late start was amply balanced by a rapid buildup of faculty cadres and research capacity that has put Brazilian universities at the apex of scientific output in the region.

Latin American higher education consists of close to 6,000 public and private postsecondary institutions. While only 15 percent qualify as universities, they account for approximately 70 percent of the region's tertiary enrollment. They serve almost 500 million inhabitants in 19 countries, with an annual population growth rate of about 2.1 percent and improving life expectancy.

While the most prestigious public and private universities (usually the oldest) represent a small component of each national system, what happens in them, with them, and to them has critical relevance to the system as a whole. Largely, they serve as benchmarks for the rest, train faculty for most of the system, execute the bulk of research, educate the larger part of the social and political elites, and shape national consciousness, cultural identity, and social cohesion. Today, as flagships, they should stand out and lead, but, for the most part, they don't—they preside. Past achievements and reputation are the basis of the continuing influence and respect they command.

Common Challenges

At the risk of generalization, there are characteristics common to these flagship universities that explain why they find it so difficult to transition comfortably to the twenty-first century, and reimagine their mission and commitment to future generations.

First is the perennial dislocation of the trajectory of universities in the region from the rest of the world. Not only is higher education in Latin America not developing at the same pace as elsewhere, but it often seems to be going against global trends. With few exceptions, governments have pushed institutions (not always wisely) to be more accountable, more effective, more inclusive, more productive, and more efficient. It is the universities, especially the more established ones, that resist change and protect the interests of specific internal constituents. Of course, the fact that the universities ignore reforms taking place elsewhere is not necessarily wrong, but there must be a justification for protecting the *status quo*. It is unlikely (not impossible, just unlikely) that higher education systems as marginal to the global knowledge stream as those of Latin America, have development strategies unbeknownst to more advanced systems.

Universities have indeed played a role in the social, political, cultural, and economic development of Latin America, but have somehow fallen short.

Linked to this problem is the obsolescence of the governance structures and practices of most universities that hinders the development of new thinking. In public universities, politically active faculty, often in alliance with students and administrative staff, successfully block attempts to make universities more accountable to stakeholders and purposes other than themselves and their vested interests. Typically, private universities suffer from either too much influence by the founder or from weak governing boards.

Additionally, the younger generation of scholars, often better prepared for research than their predecessors, find it hard to get academic jobs in universities clogged with ageing professors who hesitate to retire, as leaving is often financially ruinous. Worse still is the situation of public universities that must pay pensions for retired professors out of operating budgets. Sadly, career prospects in research-oriented universities are not sufficiently attractive to the best young talent in a competitive global market.

Money is an issue as well; higher education is consistently underfunded throughout the region. But governments are reluctant to increase public investment when institutions are unwilling (or unable) to guarantee that funds are spent transparently and effectively. Thus, it is no surprise that much of the growth has taken place in the private sector. As private institutions become eligible to stake claims on public funding throughout the region, a private vs. public tension has emerged, along with a debate about who pays for what, which public goods are worth subsidizing, what funds should be allocated competitively, what the quality thresholds should be for public money, and other issues.

At the political level, there is a general lack of understanding about the fundamental role higher education systems play in sustainable development. The lack of comprehensive and strategic long-term policies that look beyond the term in office of a government hinders system-level planning and coordination.

Changing the Higher Education Landscape

In truth, higher education systems in Latin America need a complete transformation—a reform that is not a short-term reaction to circumstance, but the result of purposeful deliberation and rational design to guide expansion, provide consistent quality assurance, foster student persistence, support smart diversification, and provide societies with the knowledge-based resources they need.

Some of this is already happening. There are incipient movements toward a diversification of systems in some countries, along with increasing concern for social inclusion and affirmative actions. The region provides some important examples of college-readiness programs, support for retention of students, value-added assessment exams, and more robust information on employability. While the generally poorly regulated expansion of the private sector in the region has raised concerns about quality, the most consolidated new private institutions have contributed some innovation and dynamism to their national systems.

Interestingly, most of this change is taking place outside flagship universities. Institutions that do not find a way to participate, using their intellectual capacity to contribute to, and implement, creative responses to the foreseeable demands of the future, will be left behind by systems that will evolve without them.

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Disruption in the US Accreditation Space

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It is a time of disruption, in politics and government, in many national economies and cultures. In the United States, disruption has also penetrated the accreditation space, with debates and differences about student achievement, access and affordability, and transparency, topics also challenging quality assurance around the world. Higher education, accreditation, and quality assurance are not immune from the current swirl of competing ideas and views.

Today, US accreditation is undergoing a seismic shift. What has been the primary form of quality assurance and quality improvement in the United States for more than 100 years is being repositioned. It is shifting from an independent, collegial process by which higher education decides and evaluates academic quality on its own, to a compliance-driven process by which external stakeholders decide and apply requirements for quality that accreditors are to use. This shift involves four major changes. The first change is in who provides oversight and takes the lead in accreditation. The second change is in how quality is defined. The third change is about accountability: for what and to whom accreditation is answerable. The fourth is in how accreditation itself is to operate.

Until recently, the complex array of 85 private, nongovernmental institutional and programmatic US accrediting organizations have been operating independently, managing and directing their own work. This continued even as, in the 1950s, accreditors became engaged with the US federal government to serve as a reliable authority about quality in higher education. Accreditors, working with their institutions and programs, defined quality. They were accountable to these institutions and programs and developed their key accreditation practices with the institutions and programs.

New and Different Oversight of Accreditation

The first major change is that the US federal government has now taken on primary oversight of accreditation, overlaying the longstanding independent operation of these organizations. Government is expanding and deepening its examination of how accrediting organizations operate. It is now probing the performance of accrediting organizations based on its—not accreditors'—expectations of the effectiveness of accredited institutions and programs. This presence of government in accreditation or quality assurance is