

needed to do in order to remedy its deficiencies. More importantly, and in order to lend the study credibility by presenting a balanced picture, the discussion of each standard had to be followed by a list of the university's five greatest strengths and five greatest weaknesses relating to that standard. The committee's insistence that for each of the areas under consideration—mission, faculty, programs, library, governance, planning and evaluation, research, physical and financial facilities, and student services, etc.—there be a balanced view of each facet of the institution was very different from previous reports. The existence of these lists, which were widely distributed, made it equally difficult for administrators and faculty to discount the study's findings as obviously biased toward one side or the other.

Impelled by the needs of the global marketplace as well as the concern of the government, the university has developed learning objectives for all its programs and is mapping places in the curriculum where the outcomes for these objectives can be found as well as the various ways of assessing their degree of achievement.

To ensure that this not be perceived as a document prepared by and for the central administration, the committee arranged various kinds of feedback: newsletters on its progress, universitywide presentations, and workshops where methods for assessing were demonstrated and practiced, with the new emphasis on outcomes. Questionnaires on various (sometimes sensitive) topics were distributed to multiple constituencies on campus and then followed up by interviews with faculty and administrators chosen both hierarchically and at random. Not only were the resulting comments discussed and incorporated into the final report but frequent feedback assured those who had participated (as well as others who had withheld their participation because of previous experiences) of the dispositions of their comments.

The institution moved (or, rather, is moving) slowly but inevitably toward becoming learner- rather than teacher-centered. Impelled by the needs of the global marketplace as well as the concern of the government, the university has developed learning objectives for all its programs and is mapping places in the curriculum where the outcomes for these objectives can be found as well as the various ways of assessing their degree of

achievement. Several of the best and most innovative teachers at the institution have begun to experiment with alternative ways of teaching and assessing their students; later this year a series of workshops will be held at which these instructors will describe their experiences and model the ways in which their approach can be generalized.

The university community realizes that the road to complete implementation is long and that, in fact, the cycle of assessment, analysis, and revision is a never-ending search for excellence. Nevertheless, as the GCC moves toward establishing a regional accrediting agency, the University of Qatar is well positioned to assume a leadership role in overcoming entrenched obstacles (some of them cultural) to develop into a university whose graduates will be able to move effortlessly into the world of work as it evolves into new and as yet unknown fields. The three-year activity in establishing and beginning to implement American-style accreditation has, therefore, more than validated the psychological and physical energy expended. ■

International Linkages in Malaysian Private Higher Education

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IHE devotes a column in each issue to a contribution from PROPHE, the Program for Research on Private Higher Education, headquartered at the University at Albany. PROPHE and the CIHE are partners in a cooperative effort supported by the Ford Foundation to build and disseminate information about private higher education globally. See <http://www.albany.edu/~prophe>.

In many parts of the world, the need for increased access to higher education has led governments and educators to look for alternative sources of financing as well as cheaper and innovative modes of delivery. Private-sector higher education and transnational education constitute recent developments in many higher education systems. In Malaysia, private higher education has expanded tremendously since the 1980s. Malaysia offers a case in which the response for cheap, innovative access has largely involved foreign linkage programs.

The Impetus for International Linkages

Private colleges in Malaysia are not allowed to confer degrees, and many private universities lacked the expertise to design their own curricula when they were first established in the mid-1990s. Yet demand remains strong for degree programs and professional courses in the education market. Therefore, many private higher education institutions established formal arrangements with foreign universities to offer educational programs ranging from certificate courses to postgraduate programs.

The impetus to form international linkages can be viewed from the perspective of the foreign as well as the local institutions. Ongoing budget cuts for higher education in countries like Australia have made universities there keen to “export” their educational programs to secure additional revenue. For local institutions, international linkages represent a means of acquiring and delivering an additional or new course at minimal cost. Furthermore, they provide local institutions with the opportunity to enhance staff development in new fields of study. Moreover, if a particular program is popular, it then translates into an additional source of income for all parties concerned.

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Accredited Programs

Under the validation and accreditation arrangement, a local institution conducts a program on behalf of a foreign institution, consortium, or professional body. The curricula, syllabi, and examinations are set by the foreign institution, and the local institution assumes responsibility for teaching the programs and conducting the examinations without further inputs from the foreign institutions. Such programs can be found from the preuniversity level all the way up to the postgraduate level. A very popular overseas preuniversity course is the GCE A-level examination from the United Kingdom. Private colleges offer a wide range of courses that provide practical, employment-oriented training in technical, trade, and craft areas. Many of these courses lead to formal awards of certificates, diplomas, and higher diplomas from foreign bodies such as the Business and Technology Education Council in the United Kingdom. Another form of validation and accreditation is from

foreign professional or subprofessional examination bodies related to different fields in commerce, trade, and industry. These examination bodies are not teaching institutions but, rather, councils that represent their specific skill or trade. They are responsible for devising the syllabi and conducting examinations. Private colleges in Malaysia offer these professional or semiprofessional courses and help to conduct the examinations set by these bodies. An example of a foreign professional examination body is the Chartered Association of Certified Accountants in the United Kingdom. The external degree programs offered by the University of London in law (LL.B) and business administration (MBA) can be included in this category of foreign-linked programs.

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Twinning Programs

In the twinning or split degree programs, the local institution is linked directly to one foreign institution or a consortium of universities that sets the curriculum, tests, and institutional standards of the program. Usually the foreign institution provides on-site supervision to ensure quality, and in this connection the local institution pays the foreign institution some kind of royalties or franchise fees and administrative costs. Under the terms of the twinning arrangement, transfer students are guaranteed a place at the foreign institution. This arrangement allows the partial completion of a foreign program at a local institution. Qualifying students would then proceed to the final segments of the program at the foreign institution. However, since the Asian currency crisis in 1997, the Malaysian government has approved private colleges to offer programs in which students can study the whole three-year foreign degree program in Malaysia, without going abroad to the twinning partner’s campus. Twinning programs are extremely popular among students qualified to do a degree program because they can get a foreign degree at a reduced cost. The wide range of available twinning programs includes fields of study such as business and commercial studies, engineering, computer studies, law, science, the arts, medicine, pharmacy, and many others. The foreign universities include institutions in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Canada, or the United States.

Credit Transfer Programs

Credit transfer programs allow for the conferment of a degree by the accumulation of credits. Under this arrangement, students can accumulate credits locally that are then transferable to one of the foreign-linked universities for the completion of the degree program. Basically, a student intending to study overseas collects sufficient credits through a local private college and then applies for entry to a foreign university. The credit transfer program grants students greater flexibility to choose among a group of foreign universities or programs. The program has proven very popular among students who plan to go and study in the United States.

Foreign Branch Campuses

Besides these three groups of foreign-linked programs, other forms of international linkages are making a significant impact on the private higher education scene in Malaysia. One form is distance education programs. Many of the postgraduate programs, especially MBA programs offered by foreign universities, are delivered through the distance learning mode. Another form is the establishment of branch campuses by foreign universities on Malaysian soil. Today, there are four foreign branch campuses, and the first of these was Monash University Malaysia. Not all the international linkages are with Western countries. Higher education and training institutions from India, like the Manipal Medical University, have also set up private colleges in Malaysia through joint ventures with local partners.

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Conclusion

The emergence of international linkages in higher education is not unique to Malaysia. In fact, this case study on Malaysia shows the multiple forms of transnational education that are also found in other countries. In a rapidly globalizing education and human resource market, higher education and training are no longer confined within national boundaries. Through innovative and strategic partnerships, educational programs are offered offshore across national borders. With advanced infor-

mation communications technologies, distance learning programs are provided electronically as well as through face-to-face instruction. In this new borderless educational arena, students and academic staff move to and fro across nations.

Beyond Dead Reckoning: Research Priorities for Redirecting American Higher Education

By Patricia J. Gumpert and Colleagues

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For 30 years, a staple of higher education policy in the United States has been promoting access, based on the rationale that higher education serves not only the individual student but also society as a whole, by producing an educated citizenry and a productive national workforce. Yet American higher education's very success at extending access and expanding knowledge, together with major societal changes in demographics, technology, the nature of work, and the demand for education—have resulted in a terrain that is both altered and uncharted. American colleges and universities, along with the public agencies that support and monitor their efforts, find themselves relying on a kind of dead reckoning to plot their future course.

Access to What?

Higher education in the United States continues to enjoy broad public support, and there is little examination of what students are gaining access to. Much of higher education's traditional language no longer describes actual conditions, notwithstanding its continued rhetorical appeal. Discrepancies between ideals and realities, between assumptions and data, render obsolete guidelines that were once effective. Research is needed, not only for more complete information, but also to help reorient higher education within this new landscape. New questions informed by current knowledge can yield a fresh assessment of higher education's purposes and