
GLOBAL TRENDS IN UNIVERSITY REFORM AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE US-EURASIAN UNIVERSITY COOPERATION

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A former vice-president of the United States, Dan Quayle, once observed, "I believe we are on an irreversible trend toward more freedom and democracy-but that could change." Irreversible but subject to change! That amusing unintentional paradox may describe how many current trends in higher education appear internationally: moving forward dramatically, but unpredictably, persuading us of their inevitability one moment, of their transience another.

Our obligation to manage change every day may sometimes prevent our acknowledging just how much change we have already experienced. But the distraction of continuous motion also can inhibit careful planning for the future. Higher educators must therefore assume the perspective of mountain climbers and understand the value of taking stock and looking ahead. We are in some sense at a "base camp," a staging area, in that we should take the opportunity to look back down the mountain to appreciate how far we have come as we plan the next stage of our journey looking up at the mountain before us.

In this paper I want to provide a broad view of issues confronting higher education, to discuss some responses to these issues, to consider ways in which higher educators are called to address global issues, and, finally, to suggest directions we may want to consider for the future.

The challenges I shall cite are indeed global, though many of them have a particular importance for the nations and cultures of the northern hemisphere. Some of these challenges are particular to higher education, but others, while not indigenous to colleges and universities, require attention. Hence the reforms I will mention concern both the academy itself and the world in which we live. Similarly, my examples of progress will in some cases concern our institutions of higher education. Others appear more broadly in societies that benefit from our engagement.

Let us picture in the mind's eye two circles joined, as in a Venn diagram. Imagine that the circle on the left represents broad global issues, while that on the right points to issues that pertain principally to higher education. The two circles intersect in global issues that receive the attention of our universities. There remain on the left side global issues that may deserve study but discourage our more active engagement.

I approach this complex topic according to five fundamentals. First, I want to consider internal challenges we face as higher educators and ways in which we are responding to them. Second, I will offer a highly selective view of global issues that invite the engagement of universities in the US and Eurasia. Third, in the light of

these issues, I will suggest that US-Eurasia university partnerships are now especially important. Fourth, I will offer salutary examples of some signal accomplishments in this regard. Finally, I want to propose what more higher educators and their institutions might do.

Issues Higher Educators Face

Most will find few surprises in a selective list of internal issues higher educators face. I will suggest that the principal disadvantage in barely adequate support for our institutions lies in a restriction of access to well-qualified students who deserve an education. But I believe also that we can do a better job in educating the students we do recruit. How we respond to increased demands to document our effectiveness may also be worth our attention. Taken together, these issues suggest we need to offer stronger, better coordinated public messages, and that such messages must stand as part of our commitment to breaking down insularity and provincialism. We understand also that the collaborations we celebrate, together with those we plan, rest on an information foundation that must be secure. Otherwise, the ties that bind us can unravel easily. Finally, because we know well the benefits of experience in other cultures, we must meet head-on impediments that limit such experience only to a few.

So far as resources are concerned, few would boast that their institutions receive all the support they need. Rather, most higher educators continue to face the challenge of doing more with less. But the most troubling dimension of this issue is its practical effect on students. When student support is inadequate or when highly challenged institutions must force students to pay higher instructional costs, the result is a higher wall around colleges and universities. If high costs bar students who would benefit from higher education's offerings, another victim is society itself. Without a well-educated workforce, nations will be challenged to compete effectively in the global economy. And if social concord depends at least partly on access to opportunity, risks may prove to be even greater than imagined.

Fortunately, there is evidence to suggest that higher education is responding to this challenge through increased efficiency, requiring additional instruction from professors, through working to create a closer alignment between what is taught and what students require, and through the sharing of access to equipment, publications,

and services. Many universities have centralized library resources. Other institutions, having conceded that a comprehensive mission is not longer affordable, have strengthened areas of focus. That has allowed a greater differentiation among universities while reducing duplication. Finally, many colleges and universities are turning to new ways of making money-through the licensing of products and technologies, through the offering of services to society, and through seeking philanthropic support for their mission.

By balancing our books, we support our shared responsibility for recruiting students and for encouraging their perseverance to graduation. But we face the reality that many students attend more than one institution. Fewer than half in the United States receive the baccalaureate degree from the institution at which they matriculated. Hence, if we are to support all students, we must enable them to transfer their academic credits easily from one institution to another, both within our respective nations and internationally. However, having recognized this reality, we should continue to teach the value of a student's commitment to a single university and provide the services and support that encourage such persistence. As part of that support, we should consider that formal recognition of progress towards the baccalaureate degree can become a valuable incentive to stay the course.

As we face changes in our resource base and student populations, we must acknowledge the present force of a familiar axiom: a government that must reduce resources may seek to compensate through increasing regulations. For instance, universities in the United States are facing increased demands from society, from accrediting agencies, and from state and federal governments to document in more detail what they accomplish. There are benefits of such expectations, certainly. As educators, we should be willing to define more clearly what students should accomplish, we should be willing to measure how successful we are in supporting the success of our students, and we should use what we learn through our measurements to make our programs stronger. These commitments will enable us to satisfy those who certify the effectiveness of our institutions and should reassure our citizens: our students, their parents, and those whose taxes help to support our institutions. But because funds, time, and attention spent on measuring the educational process must inevitably be diverted from learning itself, we should insist that measurements be useful-and that they be used.

Given all these issues, it should be no surprise that colleges and universities are banding together to defend their interests, to provide information to the public, and to offer sustained advocacy that is truthful, consistent, and persuasive. In the United States, most large universities employ individuals who represent the institution's interests in the federal and state legislatures. However, broad interests shared by many universities are more often the purview of national associations created to ensure the development and delivery of consistent messages.

Some of these associations represent institutional categories. For instance, the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) speaks primarily for large, state-supported institutions, most of which have well-developed programs of research and graduate study. A similar organization, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), represents smaller state-supported universities, those that emphasize undergraduate teaching. The American Association of Universities (AAU) convenes by invitation the most prestigious universities, public and private, while the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) addresses the interests of that sector. The American Council on Education (ACE) serves as an umbrella organization for many associations and offers the most influential voice on Capitol Hill.

An example of a broad interest that draws the attention of such associations is the periodic legislation to approve reauthorization of the federal Higher Education Act, the means by which federal funding for student aid is provided. Consideration of this legislation, which can take a very long time, has been a recent priority of associations seeking a more generous and less restrictive outcome.

Other kinds of associations are responsible for different kinds of messages. The Association of American Colleges and Universities promotes the advantages of a comprehensive general education for all students. The Association of Governing Boards provides development opportunities for those who accept appointment as university regents or trustees. The Modern Language Association convenes scholars of language and literature, while the Renaissance Society of America attracts specialists in a particular era. I have mentioned a few; there are hundreds more.

Such examples will suggest universities in the United States find it expedient to join forces. By doing so, they develop and articulate messages that encourage understanding and support, just as they offer opportunities to create shared understanding and well-coordinated approaches to issues. But there are similar advantages to be found in a broader association of universities across national and continental boundaries. Because colleges and universities share many of the same commitments, the same aspirations, and the same challenges, they do well to continue their exploration of the benefits to be found in closer cooperation with one another.

Standing as an impediment to such broader cooperation is the threat of redeveloping national insularity, local provincialism and Xenophobia, and cultural hegemony. There is always the concern that when nations face eras of national anxiety and fiscal constraint they will erect barriers, turn inwards, and think principally of themselves. Universities must apply a counter-force. Universities that live up to their name will take the lead in insisting that nations work to resolve cultural misunderstandings, to move beyond national self-interest in favor of a more global perspective, and to seek the well-being of all as the only

realistic basis for peace and security. The sharing of ideas at international conferences and the relationships that develop between colleagues and institutions represent one of the world's more promising resources.

In the light of the effectiveness of associations, both regional and international, the accomplishments and aspirations of the "European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students," known as ERASMUS, appear in clear relief. This program of the European Commission, begun in 1987, extends exchange opportunities within the European Union and its candidate countries. Now a part of the Socrates program that seeks to address all education, ERASMUS has the laudable goal of linking higher education institutions, their faculty members, and their students. But to reach its full potential, this program, like its philosophical namesake, Erasmus of Rotterdam, should continue its emerging pursuit of a truly international vision of cooperation. Bequeathing his fortune to the University of Basel to promote student mobility, Erasmus of Rotterdam would surely have welcomed the effort to extend important principles of partnership beyond the European community. By our commitment to consider different models for trans-national accreditation, our creation of international clearinghouses for higher education information, and our sharing of resources across national boundaries (and oceans) through collaborative higher education centers, we can support the expansion of the values of ERASMUS to the international stage where they should prove even more fruitful.

A final institutional challenge in this highly selective list is that of information security. The assured and efficient exchange of information has become the circulatory system in the body of higher education. Because threats to information are threats to the core mission and values of higher education, there are few areas of cooperation more important than this one. In the United States, as is the case elsewhere, we continue to review and improve information protocols as we expand our ability to communicate on present and anticipated threats. But university administrators share the broader responsibility of educating all our colleagues on the collegial responsibility for the protection of data and the means of communication. Just as higher educators can all be made vulnerable by anyone who carelessly downloads and transmits a virus, so, too, can they join their efforts to affirm the importance of well-informed twenty-first century vigilance.

Issues the World Must Face

Issues not those of higher education institutions, per se, but of the world at large—issues of the economy, of the natural world, of society at large—may nevertheless demand and reward the attention of higher educators. Of course, institutional roles will differ according to circumstances, to the capacities of universities, and to their success in securing cooperative relationships. Again, a brief paper cannot hope to be comprehensive, but a

review of five representative issues may suggest an important point, that issues requiring the attention of universities will on the whole be addressed the more effectively by universities working cooperatively across national and continental boundaries.

One issue is that of economic globalization, a phenomenon celebrated most recently in American author Thomas Friedman's worldwide best-seller, *The World is Flat*. As Mr. Friedman observes, the world's increasing economic interdependency depends on highly sophisticated networks of authority, supply, and marketing that enhance productivity as they stimulate and satisfy consumer demand. At best, such systems largely transcend the cultural differences they comprehend—or at least appear to do so.

What may not be understood is the extent to which current economic interdependency reflects work accomplished within universities. And even fewer may appreciate just how much the future of such interdependency rests on the efforts of higher education.

On the technical side, academicians work alongside leaders in the industry to apply financial engineering to mathematical models that sustain complex logistics chains, investment strategies, and currency exchanges. It is the academy that has supported the increasing sophistication of quality control approaches and mechanisms. And it is the academy that continues to work on the emerging problems of supply, distribution, and marketing that an interdependent economy encounters. But such applied sciences are only part of the story.

Interdependent economies must communicate with one another, a process facilitated by second-language programs in English and by advances in the technology and, indeed, the art of translation. For instance, Kent State University's Institute for Applied Linguistics, which offers a four-year Bachelor of Science Program in Translation and a 2-year Master of Arts specializing in Translation, educates a new generation of translators through a focus on "scientific and technical translation, legal and commercial translation, computer-assisted terminology and translation, translation research skills, internationalization, software localization and project management for the language industry" (www.kent.edu).

Even less direct but no less significant are the cultural studies in universities that promote broader awareness of and respect for cultural differences. I suggested above that successful economic partnerships can at least temporarily camouflage significant cultural issues. That such issues rarely disrupt economic partnerships may be attributable in part to the work we do to increase cultural knowledge and sensitivity. But this is an effort that must continue, for economic partnerships cannot coexist easily with cultural discord.

A second global issue concerns another kind of division, that between the technological "have's" and the "have not's." In some ways, access to technology may prove for the twenty-first century what access to land has been in the past: the means by which societies are sustained and individuals are given mobility. Fortunately,

unlike land, a fixed resource, technology is an expanding one. The question is, expanding for whom? That is a question of much concern to higher educators, who understand that technology has the capacity to support learning international in scope, collaborative in method, focused in intent. In turn, the commitment to the expansion of such technology represents the key to advances in many other fields, from computer science to metallurgy. Yet that commitment expresses itself also in thousands of applied endeavors that respond to corporate priorities, regional requirements, and social needs. The bridge between "have's" and "have not's" must be built one strut, one beam, one plank at a time on the dual foundation of economic realism and altruistic commitment. For the world's educationally dispossessed, there may be no more direct route out of insularity and despair than through the opportunities afforded by growth in the responsiveness and potential of technology. Through sharing the fruits of technology with those divided from us by culture or history and by making it possible for those gaining technological literacy to achieve commensurate financial gains, we enhance the possibility of a constructive dialogue and mutual understanding.

A third issue concerns the world's competition for limited resources such as water and oil. Our grandchildren will judge our leadership with regard to this issue, for the resources we are squandering must be conserved for them. How are universities responding? We should above all be providing good examples, because through our visible commitment to the efficient use of resources, we educate a generation of citizens even as we offer society the direct savings we produce. But beyond our operations, our scholars are hard at work developing renewable forms of energy, finding ways of using more efficiently current resources, and calculating sophisticated metrics for weighing long-range benefits of particular energy strategies against long-range costs. Even on such technical matters, the sciences are not the whole story, for patterns of consumption have deep roots in culture, in history, in religion, and in economics. Regional or global approaches to consumption must take such factors into account, lest initiatives well conceived and thoughtfully implemented fail because of misunderstanding or cultural resistance.

A fourth global issue, responses to emerging markets, is directly related to the first, that of economic globalization. But effective responses are necessarily related also to the spread of technology and a more responsible use of finite resources. The difference is that economic globalization presumes a formed community of interest, alliances already in place, while approaches to emerging markets, such as those of rural China, are necessarily more tentative and unpredictable. In such circumstances the counsel of university faculty experts can prove particularly helpful. Complex financial engineering can justify and protect international investment. And cultural research can facilitate economic relations by reducing the likelihood of unintended affronts.

But the chief contribution of the academy to new markets lies in the broad perspective it can offer. If new markets are perceived only in economic terms, those who endeavor to enter them are less likely to succeed. By contrast, those who seek mutual benefit based on informed understanding of local priorities and sensitivities are more likely to achieve a firm footing. An alliance between commerce and the academy is indispensable.

A final issue, the most immediately topical, concerns the world's ability to remind us that we depend on partnership with others. When an acknowledged economic, military, and educational power offers the world harrowing images of misery and desperation in the wake of a hurricane or earthquake, we are reminded afresh that we depend on one another even more than we might realize. When there is catastrophe, attributable either to natural causes or arising from discord, nations assist one another, often according to their particular competencies. Here, too, however, our universities have a major role to play. University-based science enhances our ability to predict natural disaster. Meteorologists provided more than four days' warning with regard to the potential for flooding in New Orleans, for instance. Our capacity to predict earthquakes continues to develop, as does our ability to detect emerging viral and bacterial strains. Economic studies of crisis aftermath can propose practical strategies for recovery, and experts in post-traumatic stress syndrome can address significant public health issues. So far as terrorism is concerned, the academy may be the one credible counselor against simplistic responses to events born of desperation, ignorance, indoctrination, and wickedness. Complex problems require complex answers based on an appreciation for the root causes of unrest, however contradictory or intractable they may be. With a historic commitment to dispassionate analysis, our universities offer understanding, without which retaliation adds fuel to an already dangerous fire.

Taken together, the internal issues we share and the global challenges we help to address point us to the understanding that educational partnerships between the United States and Eurasia have become not only desirable, but critically important. While these areas share many internal and global issues with the rest of the world, United States and Eurasian universities have the particular obligation to create educational opportunities for highly diverse populations that comprise strongly differentiated cultures. Because insensitivity to such cultures can create powerful impediments to learning, we can learn from one another as we strive to achieve coherent educational objectives in ways that respect a variety of academic preparations, cultural expectations, and learning capacities. Our success in this regard matters to us-and to the rest of the world-for through a principled and creative approach we create a model for others.

We share also the particular privilege-and the particular challenge-of contributing to the management of the many resources that lie in the Northern Hemisphere, just as we

must manage also our demands for resources that do not lie beneath our lands. Our advantage in this effort is our proximity, both physical and technological. Although travel between Eurasia and the United States is rarely pleasant, it is at least efficient. And nations and their scholars stand side-by-side through the internet. To the extent that we recognize the educational values for our faculty members and students in frequent and meaningful exchange, we will communicate often and in depth. Moreover, it may not be too much to hope that educational collaborations will provide those in government and commerce with useful bridges of their own. For educational exchange is never just about education. The acquaintance of educators leverages the expertise of specialists, encourages the scholarly enthusiasm of young people, and reduces the risks of cultural misunderstanding.

There are promising directions that deserve exploration as universities seek to expand their partnerships. But it is important to acknowledge first that further undertakings will build on a substantial base.

For instance, we build on an impressive legacy of those who have taken advantage of opportunities for study and training in the United States. Since 1993, more than 100,000 citizens from Russia and former Soviet republics have participated in diverse educational programs. A specific program focused on undergraduate exchange supports participants for one year of non-degree undergraduate study that in turn can lead to community college and university scholarships. Access to graduate programs, on the other hand, is available through the Muskie program.

In addition, the Fulbright program sends American faculty to teach in Europe and Asia and offers research awards for scholars from this area to study in the United States. This program also supports students in study abroad. Similarly, IREX, the organization supporting this conference, places Russian university graduates with leadership skills in non-degree programs in the United States covering community, governmental, or corporate affairs.

In a different kind of outreach, some United States accrediting associations have begun to work internationally to support assessment and institutional strengthening. Because accreditation in American higher education depends on peer rather than governmental assessment, it is notable that in the year of record nearly 7000 citizens in Europe and Asia worked with American associations. And as but one of the ways in which they engage themselves with international matters, several of the non-accrediting higher education associations in the United States have sought to assure greater convenience for those applying for United States visas.

Two other programs worth mention are the Eurasian Junior Faculty Development Fellows program, through which participants enter two-month practical internships in the United States, and the IREX program that offers officials and professionals access to issues critical to regional redevelopment through four-month programs in the United States.

A program unique for extending the benefits of institutional partnership to universities outside of major cities is the Educational Partnership Program. This program emphasizes curricular reform and professional development in fields such as law, business, economics, education, public administration, public policy, government, and journalism and communications.

Assuming the perspective of a single institution can clarify the influence of such programs. Kent State University, which enrolls 35,000 students, lies in northeast Ohio in the United States, far from the Atlantic or Pacific. Yet its engagement, while not extraordinary for an institution within its category, is illustrative. First, from 1995 to 2000, fellowship support from different sources enabled more than 30 students from Russia and former Soviet republics to earn graduate degrees. Second, as a consequence of this program, graduates of Kent State are now assuming positions of educational leadership in their home countries. For example, students from five Yerevan and six United States schools participated in an online chat in February 2005, enabling Kent State faculty to answer students' questions about Black History Month, Malcolm X, and Dr. Martin Luther King. Finally, the University is gratified to be working with Voronezh State and other universities to establish the Association of Black Sea Higher Education Leaders.

This review of some current efforts prompts concluding suggestions as to what universities might do to expand their commitment to partnership and collaboration. I look forward to the day when there is less emphasis on the exchange of individuals between disparate programs and more on the development of shared programs. Such genuine alliances would support even more productive work by our research faculty. Similarly, the sharing of administrative expertise might mean that higher educators could address issues in common without having to reinvent strategies already implemented elsewhere. We have just begun to engage administrators in long-term exchanges, but I hope that we will continue to expand this opportunity. In technology as well we have the opportunity for more creative and fruitful collaboration. There also, new ideas that prove successful are often worth sharing.

Urging greater collaboration at the programmatic level should not suggest any lack of appreciation for the value of direct exchange opportunities, of course. To the contrary, there is no substitute for faculty members and colleagues working directly with one another as colleagues. We should continue to expand such opportunities for faculty, students, and administrators, with the expectation that they be substantive and of value to both home and host institutions. And the balancing idea is that even within a world of global alliances, the relationship between American and Eurasian colleagues in higher education continues to present a particularly compelling rationale. There is every reason to go forward to build that relationship on an ever firmer and more accommodating foundation!