INTERNATIONAL & DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION


# Higher Education in Asia/Pacific

## Quality and the Public Good

EDITED BY

TERANCE W. BIGALKE AND
DEANE E. NEUBAUER

EAST-WEST CENTER
FORMING AND INFORMING LEADERS

Higher Education in Asia/Pacific

**East-West Center International Forum on Higher Education 2020**

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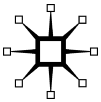

HIGHER EDUCATION IN ASIA/PACIFIC

Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2009 978-0-230-61323-2



First published in 2009 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN®
in the United States—a division of St. Martin's Press LLC,
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

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ISBN 978-1-349-37776-3 ISBN 978-0-230-10046-6 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/9780230100466

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Higher education in Asia/Pacific : quality and the public good / edited by Terance W. Bigalke and Deane E. Neubauer.
p. cm.—(International & development education)
Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Education, Higher—East Asia. 2. Education, Higher—Southeast Asia. I. Bigalke, Terance William, 1948– II. Neubauer, Deane E.

LA1143.H54 2009
378.5—dc22 2009006636

A catalogue record of the book is available from the British Library.

Design by Newgen Imaging Systems (P) Ltd., Chennai, India.

First edition: September 2009

To the memory of Victor Ordonez and his intellectual reach, passion for life, dedication to social justice, contributions to improving education worldwide, and impact on everyone he knew.

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# Preface

As we are preparing this volume for submission to the publisher in October, 2008 the world is reeling from the greatest global financial shock since the Great Depression. As publics throughout the world have been informed repeatedly by both their media and governments, the crisis is an unmistakable testament to the degree of global interdependence that now links countries to each other—for good and for ill. The vast majority of commentary and opinion, from whatever sources, agrees that the financial crisis has two root causes. One is the U.S. housing market, in which many mortgages of doubtful integrity were provided to homeowners whose ability to sustain them, especially when their interest rates (and consequently their payments) rose. The other is the packaging of such mortgages to be traded throughout the world in a vast, but completely unregulated global market. As the "security" basis of these instruments collapsed with the U.S. housing markets, banks and other financial organizations the world over were revealed to be massively overleveraged and exposed.

With what can be viewed from many perspectives, national governments throughout the world reacted with stunning speed to take actions that in one way or another increased governmental regulation and control over their nation's banks, in some cases to the extent of creating de facto nationalization. Elaborate efforts have been made at top governmental levels and through the most powerful multinational entities such as the International Monetary Fund to create a coordinated response to the crisis. Within weeks, on the face of it, governments have reversed a course that they have progressively followed for decades—that of deregulation, privatization and the privileging of markets—usefully summarized for many as the path laid out by neoliberal theory in practice.

The chapters in this book, in the main, tell the stories of how neoliberal orientations have affected the rapid growth and transformation of higher education throughout the Asia Pacific region. As we document in these various chapters, in country after country, governments have embarked on this course, albeit in ways that reflect the histories and particularized politics of those countries—in the end creating a patchwork that we view

as a selective and expedient adoption of neoliberal tenants and practice where that has been convenient. Throughout the region a policy framework of privatization and marketization has produced these developments, again, however much in practice discrete national policies have selectively utilized these devices for their own purposes.

The events of the fall of 2008 lead us to raise questions about the extent to which "neo liberalism may be over"—with its emphases on restricted governmental reach and ever-increasing privatization. On the face of it, government action in this period seems to dramatically underscore one of the most widely accepted propositions of policy analysis, namely that for the overwhelming number of cases, governmental policy changes tend to be incremental in their conception and course. It is crisis that permits a "politics as usual" frame of mind to be laid aside and exceptional changes to be made. So it would seem, in this case, that sudden nationalization of major financial institutions has arrested the broad policy march to further neoliberal transformation.

Yet, for higher education as an institutional array and policy subject, this may not be the case. As we observe in case after case, and as reported in these chapters, what higher education reform has shared in common across these several and diverse national experiences is the continued reduction of government spending to support higher education. The general global recession looming on the horizon as we write can only have the effect of further challenging governmental revenues. As seen across the region, a decline in governmental revenues has already forced governments to cut budgets for education in general and higher education in particular. While governments may be acting to nationalize or socialize aspects of their banking systems in an effort to stave off an even greater crisis and downturn, it is probably more realistic to see this as a massive act of pragmatism occasioned by crisis than a studied policy turn away from the generalized commitments to a prevailing neoliberalism. As leader after leader has announced in this crisis, they are doing what they feel they must to respond to it—not what they would like to do, or what their fundamental political comments recommend they do.

Only the passage of time will tell, of course, but our belief is that the current world financial crisis does not fundamentally challenge the relevance of the policy descriptions and analyses contained in the following chapters. Indeed, to make our point once again, just the contrary may be the case: the forces that have impelled many of the discrete aspects of higher education transformation these chapters detail may, ironically, be strengthened by the crisis.

The chapters in this book stem from a writers' conference hosted by the East-West Center, in Honolulu, Hawaii during July 2007. They represent

a continuing effort of the Center's International Forum for Education 2020 to identify and organize the course of the major changes taking place that will determine the kinds of higher education structures and content likely to be in place in 2020. Our basic premise is that the world is changing very rapidly. Historically, education has been highly resistant to change. We seek to document and analyze this tension for the benefit of practitioners and policymakers alike.

# Series Editors' Introduction

*John N. Hawkins and W. James Jacob*

This book is part of Palgrave Macmillan's *International & Development Education Book Series*, which focuses on the complementary areas of comparative, international, and development education. Books in this series emphasize a number of topics ranging from key international education issues, trends, and reforms to examinations of national education systems, social theories, and development education initiatives. Local, national, regional, and global volumes (single authored and edited collections) constitute the breadth of the series and offer potential contributors a great deal of latitude based on interests and cutting-edge research. The series is supported by a strong network of international scholars and development professionals who serve on the International & Development Education Review Board and participate in the selection and review process for manuscript development.

This edited volume by Terance W. Bigalke and Deane E. Neubauer is the product of a Senior Seminar sequence held in Honolulu at the East-West Center as part of a broader initiative known in the region as the International Forum on Education 2020. This initiative has produced a series of Senior Seminars and Policy Institutes over the past five years that has involved some of the most thoughtful scholars in the Asia/Pacific region. The topic addressed is an important one: the tension between viewing education as a public good or a private commodity in the context of the drive for quality assurance. The scholars who assembled to discuss this issue and their subsequent chapters are outstanding. They represented some of the best higher education institutions in the region (Hong Kong University, Tsinghua University, Peking University, National Chung Cheng University, Hiroshima University) as well as major agencies such as UNESCO, the Center for Higher Education Development, Germany, the Ministry of Education in Korea, the Commission on Higher Education, Thailand, and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, California).

The book tackles a number of interrelated issues arising from the neoliberal drive for privatization that has impacted higher education institutions throughout the Asia/Pacific region and the pushback by those concerned with maintaining the public good character of the academy. Woven into this tension are issues related to higher education governance, league tables and rankings, quality assurance and accreditation measures, and the relationship between higher education and transformation/development. The region is well represented with contributions from China, Southeast Asia, Japan, Thailand, Taiwan, Indonesia, Korea, the Philippines as well as the United States and Europe. While the authors are not united in their analysis and conclusions about what these movements mean for the future of higher education they are unanimous in agreeing that the institution of higher education as we know it is undergoing dramatic changes. As the editors note in the preface, the issues discussed in the volume are particularly relevant today and in many respects presage the global economic crisis now facing higher education institutions worldwide. It is imperative in this global age that we learn to recognize the successes and failures of the past as we develop new approaches to higher education and the training of the next generation of university graduates.

# Acknowledgments

Many people directly or indirectly provided valuable support to make this book possible. The editors express their particular appreciation to Charles E. Morrison, president of the East-West Center, for encouraging the Education Program to pursue the educational policy initiative that emerged as the International Forum on Education 2020. Virginia Suddath provided assistance with the East-West Center Senior Seminar in July 2007 from which most of the original papers developed. Eric Hanson and Patricia Masters along with Virginia contributed to various editing tasks that helped the chapters take their final form. Larina Hawkins provided graphics expertise in producing tables and figures. Wendy Nohara supported this endeavor from its inception. Julia Cohen of Palgrave Macmillan gave timely editorial advice throughout. And John Hawkins, Series Editor, shared his wealth of knowledge in the field, often on short notice. Our deep appreciation goes to the contributors of the chapters whose perspective, judgment, time, and effort have made this volume possible.

# Chapter 1

# Quality and the Public Good: An Inseparable Linkage

*Terance W. Bigalke and Deane E. Neubauer*

## Introduction

Increasing global interdependence is bringing to bear two powerful forces that are changing the nature of higher education throughout the world. This is, perhaps, nowhere more evident than in the Asia-Pacific region where the combination of continued social and economic development is accompanied by emergent varieties of state forms within which higher education is conducted.

One of these forces is the gradual but apparently constant movement away from the presumption that the state—as the repository of the public good—should contribute to various versions of that good through continued investments in education and especially higher education. As the state retreats from its overall higher education role, private sector activity increases. While particulars differ by country, overall one can observe the state in various ways withdrawing its financial support for higher education and in some cases, its oversight. The implications, country by country, are many and broad, taking forms particular to the politics, cultures, and institutional proclivities of the societies involved.

The second force, a renewed emphasis and reconstitution of notions of quality, emerges as a critical issue in the face of the state's reduced role and the public sector's increased role in higher education provision. The quality

focus derives on the one hand from legitimate questioning of the standards maintained in programs driven by the bottom line, and on the other by a more aggressive assertion of state prerogatives over any funds it provides to higher education. Throughout the region questions of quality and the search for methods of quality assurance are gaining a central place in higher education policy discussions.

In this introductory chapter we provide a brief examination of the intersect of these two forces on higher education, paving the way for later chapters that examine these elements either in greater detail or through the lens of particular country experiences. Our exploration of the nature and impact of these forces within the region is sensitive to the fact that they exist within significantly differing national contexts. For example, viewed simply from the perspective of demographics the "Asia Pacific Region" constitutes three very different types of societies. Table 1.1 indicates that whereas population growth is slowing throughout the region (and indeed throughout the world), an extraordinary range exists between the highest rate of reproduction—the Philippines—and the lowest—Japan—a difference between a rapidly growing population and one below the level of reproducibility. While global dynamics may bring similar pressures to bear on all societies, their essential demographic components will individually frame their educational tasks and mission very differently. Younger societies, such as the Philippines and Malaysia, look to the private sector to supply much of their higher education capacity. Aging societies with lower or declining birth rates, such as Japan, face issues of excess capacity.

**Table 1.1** Birth rates for selected countries and regions

| Country/Region | 2000–2005 | 2005–2010 | 2010–2015 |
|---|---|---|---|
| China | 0.67 | 0.58 | 0.54 |
| India | 1.62 | 1.46 | 1.31 |
| Indonesia | 1.31 | 1.16 | 0.98 |
| Japan | 0.014 | −0.02 | −0.18 |
| Korea | 0.46 | 0.33 | 0.18 |
| Malaysia | 1.95 | 1.69 | 1.47 |
| Philippines | 2.08 | 1.90 | 1.67 |
| Thailand | 0.76 | 0.66 | 0.50 |
| United States | 1.03 | 0.97 | 0.89 |
| East Asia | 0.62 | 0.52 | 0.47 |
| SE Asia | 1.40 | 1.27 | 1.11 |
| Europe | 0.07 | −0.02 | 0.09 |

*Source*: World Population Prospects, 2006 Revision, UN Population Division. Assembled by authors.

Societies between these extreme positions confront yet other combinations of demands and alternatives.

The size of the 15–24-year-old cohort is, of course, of critical importance for higher education, especially throughout the Asia/Pacific region where perhaps more than in other regions it remains the source of traditional higher education enrollments. Examining table 1.2 one can observe a tendency throughout the region for population growth to slow over the coming decades and with it a relative contraction of the cohort. All countries will find challenges, first to accommodate this expansion and then to consolidate capacity as growth slows. Again, however, the distance between the largest and smallest cohort sizes, roughly a factor of two between Japan and India, Malaysia and the Philippines, suggests starkly different higher education situations, which in turn premise different public policy environments.

Finally, table 1.3 provides a more direct look at societal aging. Here, the social distance between younger and older countries is dramatically illustrated, with the median age of the Philippines standing at approximately half that of Japan. Also worth noting are the differences between China and India. Whereas overall population growth and that of its education cohort are slowing for China, in the case of India these data all point in the direction of continued growth. The data also make startlingly clear the importance of aging in Korea that the population ages more rapidly during this 15-year-period than any other in this sample. Fitting these data into a larger global picture emphasizes how much closer to Europe and the United

**Table 1.2** Population cohort 15–24 years by selected country and region

| Country | Cohort 2000 | Cohort 2005 | Cohort 2010 | Cohort 2015 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| China | 15.6 | 16.6 | 16.2 | 14.2 |
| India | 19.2 | 19.3 | 19.3 | 18.7 |
| Indonesia | 20.1 | 19.0 | 17.6 | 16.6 |
| Japan | 12.7 | 11.0 | 9.9 | 9.6 |
| Korea | 14.7 | 15.1 | 16.3 | 12.7 |
| Malaysia | 22.1 | 20.7 | 19.4 | 18.3 |
| Philippines | 20.3 | 19.9 | 19.7 | 19.1 |
| Thailand | 17.4 | 16.1 | 14.8 | 13.7 |
| United States | 13.8 | 14.3 | 14.3 | 13.7 |
| East Asia | 15.3 | 16.0 | 15.6 | 13.8 |
| SE Asia | 19.7 | 19.2 | 18.3 | 17.1 |
| Europe | 13.9 | 13.9 | 12.7 | 11.1 |

*Source*: World Population Prospects, 2006 Revision, UN Population Division. Assembled by authors.

**Table 1.3** Median age by selected countries and regions

| Country/Region | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| China | 30.0 | 32.5 | 34.9 | 36.4 |
| India | 22.7 | 23.8 | 25.0 | 26.5 |
| Indonesia | 24.8 | 26.5 | 28.2 | 30.1 |
| Japan | 41.3 | 42.9 | 44.6 | 46.4 |
| Korea | 32.0 | 35.0 | 38.0 | 40.8 |
| Malaysia | 23.6 | 24.7 | 26.3 | 27.9 |
| Philippines | 20.8 | 21.8 | 22.8 | 24.1 |
| Thailand | 30.1 | 32.6 | 34.7 | 36.5 |
| United States | 35.3 | 36.0 | 36.5 | 36.9 |
| East Asia | 31.0 | 33.4 | 35.8 | 37.3 |
| SE Asia | 22.4 | 26.0 | 27.7 | 29.4 |
| Europe | 37.6 | 38.9 | 40.2 | 41.6 |

*Source*: World Population Prospects, 2006 Revision, UN Population Division. Assembled by author.

States East Asia is than to Southeast Asia, or South Asia (taking India as a marker in this instance for South Asia).

## The Tensions between Public and Private

The current era of increasing global interdependence has been marked by the diffusion of neoliberal political and economic philosophy, which has spread far from its initial ideological home in Reagan-Thatcherism to reside eclectically within governmental policies of remarkable diversity. At its core, whatever these elements of local diversity, neoliberalism has come to signify a relationship between government and society in which the emphasis is on a devolution of governmental responsibility and authority to the private sector, however it is constituted. Such notions of *liberalization* have in practice spanned enormous differences in policy, but it does not step too far afield to cluster under the generalized umbrella of neoliberalism policies as diverse as the G. W. Bush tax cuts, both corporate and personal, which are significantly biased toward wealth holders, the "reform" of the health care system in China that in effect devolved responsibility for health from the central government to local governments and individuals, or the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), signed in 2001.

Such diversity of instance is reflected back toward what have come to be the essential principles of neoliberalism that include the notion of a restriction of governmental reach for welfare and social policies with a

corresponding lessening of governmental financial responsibility for such policies; a predisposition toward reducing taxes, especially on personal incomes, in favor of generalized use and value taxation, such as excise or value added taxation; a public emphasis on the responsibility of beneficiaries of public services to pay for such services (be they roads, schools, hospitals, centers of recreation, etc.); a basic commitment to world trade as the organizing principle of global exchange; and a generalized attitude toward reducing the reach and implementation of government as an instrument of regulation (Harvey 2006).

A review of the past several decades across numerous societies would demonstrate the unevenness of neoliberalism's course as it has advanced and retreated across the complex particulars of postwar national social and economic policies. It would also reveal in the United States and the United Kingdom, arguably the countries of its modern origin, a conflation of neoliberalism with its arguments for a smaller state of limited pretenses with *neoconservatism*, a doctrine of projected national power that led both countries into the war in Iraq and has made a shambles of the prudent fiscal rationales that underlay the initial conceptions of neoliberalism. The reality is that throughout the world, and especially within the United States, among the Anglo countries and other outlying states, until the massive global financial crisis of 2008 we lived at the intersect of this conflation between the neoliberal vision of a smaller, restricted state and the reality of national states that are extending their reach to protect borders, restrict immigrants and various forms of cross-border traffic, and which in many instances are staggering under enormous amounts of public debt. As we discuss at greater length in chapter 16, how neoliberalism will come out of the experience of this crisis and the extent to which as a global movement it will seek to reassert its principles of progressive deregulation is likely to be the definitive policy question of the next decade. Our position is that neoliberalism has been "structured into" the dynamics of globalization and while these will no doubt change in many ways, the unlikely repudiation of these principles would usher in an entirely new conception of globalization from that with which the world has been living over the past three decades.

The public policies of many nations in the postwar period led to an expansion and redefinition of the "public" particularly as various forms of social welfare doctrines were carried into national policy. Neoliberalism was in large part a reaction against the existing and foreseeable burdens of continued welfare state policies and their associated demands on governmental resources, and by extension, revenue policies. As neoliberalism took form, the result was to reproblematize the notion of the public sphere by shifting the emphases of public policy away from entitlement programs toward an increased emphasis on the responsibilities of the individual in

social life, with the direct implication that individuals and not government should bear the cost burdens of many of the benefits that were being attained from welfare-oriented policies (Peterson and Lupton 1996). The corresponding shift was to expand the private sector by reducing the amount of societal wealth extracted through taxation, by promoting the development of new private sector institutions and practices (justified by the belief that the result would be enhanced economic growth), and to redefine governmental responsibility—and by mirror inference that of the private sector—through deregulation of many core economic activities, from finance to manufacturing to service provision. As contemporary globalization progressively developed over this period, the private sector was further redefined in a de facto manner by the promotion of cross-border capital movement and the vast extension of economic ownership and equity trading across national borders. The public vehicle for this latter extension of the private sector was the movement that became the WTO and the subsequent GATS treaty. The national facilitator of this global activity was the active promotion of private sector initiatives in countries across the globe, particularly those in the developing world, which extended private capital out from the old core industrial nations.

Politically, the issue of what activities of society should be located within the sphere of public authority and engagement and which within private—and much less regulated—sectors, has become a dominant political tension of the past three decades. Efforts to contract and expand each respectively have come to redefine the meanings of the political right and left, and are the source of "reform" movements of virtually every stripe. Where public authority is held to be excessive, the burden of reform is deregulation ("autonomy," "incorporation," or some such symbol); when the expansion of the private sector has been too rapid, or where deregulation has produced manifestly negative consequences (such as the collapse of financial markets), the burden of reform is to reestablish public sector regulation of an appropriate order. It is not at all an exaggeration to suggest that this public/private tension has been the dominant dimension of political ordering for the past three decades.

From this dynamic tension have emerged the meanings ascribed to the public good, or to the provision of public goods. In its early formulations in liberal philosophy, a public good was one to be provided by government either because no identifiable private actor should or could (e.g., national defense), or because the activity provided a service to all that was of manifest benefit to the community as a whole, and for which the apportionment of a specific user-benefit value was difficult or impossible (e.g., John Stuart Mill's notion of the lighthouse as a public good). Under the sway of expanding liberal theory in its nineteenth-century realization and the

spread of national democracies, the public good came to have the meaning of that positive collective outcome that would be provided by public sector actions that contributed aggregate benefits to society as a whole. As Western nation-states expanded in social and economic complexity, in regulatory activity, and eventually in the direction of welfare policies, specific policies were justified as claims upon public wealth in terms of both the discrete benefits they provided to recipients of a given government service and the generalized benefits that accrued to society at large.

In the nature of its claims and formulations neoliberalism reproblematizes the public good and public goods in general by resituating them within a redefined private sphere. In effect a revived economic calculation is being advanced. Whereas liberal/welfare social policy argued that a given benefit could be gained for a given public cost, for example, public education, and that this gain was superior (in both moral and practical terms) to that which could be gained from private sector activity in the same sphere, neoliberalism argues that in this historical period the overall costs of this benefit exceed their worth. Specifically, neoliberalism holds that for the given cost extracted from society (e.g., the amount of tax dollars needed to support the activity) a better outcome can be gained overall from expanded private sector activity and the reduced public cost of smaller budgetary allocations required to produce the benefit. This is the claim of superior outcomes from the private sector. Further, neoliberalism also advances the moral argument that individuals should have the choice (where it is practical) to gain the service from the private sector over the public sector (e.g., in education or health care), and that the combined social benefit from performance and enhanced choice lead to a higher quotient of aggregate public good. Thus, for neoliberalism, privatization leads directly to overall enhancements of the public good, and argues that this can come about through a contraction of what is regarded as a public good—again, for example, education or healthcare.

## The Intersect: Higher Education Quality in a Constantly Changing State Environment

As the value of higher education is increasingly linked to its vocational deployments, a university degree has come to be viewed as a personal acquisition, one with strong individual and instrumental entailments. The neoliberal framing of this global shift argues that individuals should be prepared to make their own investments in a commodity that is going to be so important to their income earning potential later in life. And as

such, these matters are proper to be viewed within their market contexts: higher education is a personal engagement to be undertaken much like any other act of commodity consumption. We see in this dynamic a host of implications for how higher education is organized, recruited to, conducted, managed, promoted, and rewarded or penalized. At the core of our interest in the tension that increased privatization and marketization have brought to higher education is the original—and now residual—question of the public good. What is the relationship of higher education to the public good and to what extent is it impacted by these processes of marketization?

This question intersects at virtually every point with that of quality. Quality has always been an important element in higher education. When higher education was a more unabashedly elitist activity, quality was assumed to reside self-evidently in the most elite institutions, those knowable by the nature of their research and scholarship, their ability to attract the best students, or the size of their endowments. Quality higher education institutions contributed to the vitally important social reproduction of elites. And, in some important way, top quality institutions could be readily identified by their ability to obtain valuable social resources of personnel and money, either from the private sector or government.

The massification and globalization of higher education have brought extraordinary complications to the quality issue. Preeminent has been the question of how one achieves and assures quality in higher education environments in which the fraction of the population enrolled in higher education has been significantly expanded. American universities pioneered this question in the postwar decades by developing a rich and complex (and largely unplanned) system of public and private universities offering different models of quality. The effort has proved enormously costly. Government has become a primary source of funding for research and contracts, as well as the facilitator and guarantor of student loans to make mass access possible. As the quality issue has expanded throughout this multilayered system, parts of it have been bid up by market dynamics. At the high quality end in both public and private sectors, costs have in many instances become prohibitive, sufficiently so to provoke the attention of the U.S. Secretary of Education who has argued that among other things, the presumptive guarantor of higher education quality, the accreditation associations, have failed to protect the interests of students and their families in controlling higher education costs. Governments, especially in times of their own budgetary distress, have backed away from the kinds of financial burdens they were willing to bear when higher education as a public good was less effectively challenged by the private sector. The result has been significant

cost-shifting onto students, viewed increasingly as consumers of a higher education commodity.

These dynamics are being replicated throughout the world as the competitiveness engendered by increased global interdependence brings new importance both to the expansion of higher education systems (to ensure more trained workers for the economy) and as quality becomes the marker for national economic competitiveness. Within this context, the public policy process has produced a range of institutions, practices, and techniques meant to identify and assure quality. The clear public policy message is that enhanced quality assurance is a necessary tool for achieving competitiveness and thereby economic success.

And, here in Asian societies, the circle closes. For those societies where rapid economic expansion has triggered massification, such as India and China, quality assurance is required to ensure that sheer expansion of institutional numbers and sizes can be accomplished within a quality framework, especially where private sector liberalization has promoted expanded capacity. The issue of the quality of traditional institutions and their ability to complete globally is laid over this more fundamental quality question raised by massification. And, all of this is happening simultaneously: as institutions are being expanded in size and number, reputed quality institutions are being brought up to competitive standards, and institutional standards for quality measurement and assurance are being hastily assembled by the public policy process. In countries where massification occurred earlier, most especially Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, quality issues have brought into play the historically dominant and conservative governmental bureaucracies charged with creating and certifying quality. Again, the test of certitude is the ability of top-ranked institutions to compete globally. This situation is compounded systemically where declining birthrates have made higher education available to virtually every high school graduate. In this circumstance, quality focuses on the desirability of providing tertiary education to all members of an age cohort. In public policy terms, maintaining quality within the system is tied to questions of contracting its size—never a popular public policy option.

## What Is Quality? The Problem of Definition

In seeking to define quality it is useful to note that higher education debates on quality have followed with only a moderate time lag with similar quality discussions in manufacturing and the service industries occasioned by increased global competitiveness. Over the past three decades a

host of "quality movements" have moved through organizations of all kinds from steel plants to hospitals to call centers. From this perspective, institutions of higher education may be seen as just another type of organization for which organizational perspectives and expectations have changed.

Quality in fact is hard to define and measure, and clearly means different things to various stakeholders and the different interests that they represent. Many, frustrated by an inability to specify exactly what they mean by quality, but determined to have it nevertheless, argue that they "know it when they see it," a reaction that implies that quality is inherently related to some notion of standards. This suggests that the complexities of the social and political process reside in seeking to make such standards explicit and to build consensus around them. Another difficulty with developing notions of quality is gaining a sense of what should be included and excluded in the definition, or alternatively, how broadly the notion of quality should be extended.

To take just a few examples,

- As a market oriented stakeholder group, employers often develop "floating" ideas of quality when applied to university graduates, wherein the relative value of graduates is measured against an industry's particularized needs. The rapid changes that take place within and between industries that in turn determine employer perceptions of high utility often do not enter this equation. Higher education institutions have a difficult time keeping up with this shifting ground (and often default by associating these ideas as more appropriate for vocational education). Indeed, many in the academy question whether they should even seek to respond to these short-term workplace need cycles.
- When used in such contexts, quality may be spoken of as a present or absent attribute (graduates are either of high quality or not), or as something capable of being defined by highly subjective criteria relevant to particular employers. However the concept is used, in most cases the implication is that quality refers back to a standard, either implicitly or explicitly. Thus, setting high standards for university graduates carries the implication of setting standards to produce useful (albeit idiosyncratic) outcomes in a particular industry.
- Quality as such tends to be often opposed to differentiation or variety in the sense that in order to "define and hold to rigorous standards," it is necessary to specify a measure of equality to which all applications or graduates may be held. This compulsion to equality, ironically, can and does work directly in opposition to the adaptive

characteristics that employers seek of graduates in the market place, and the goals of differentiation that many HEIs have set for themselves. Certainly, too great an emphasis on standards alone challenges the idea of the university as a place for promoting innovation and creativity, as well as issues of equity and access.

- Within higher education institutions the meaning of quality is highly contested on the basis of disciplinary experience and preferences, in which professionals have a tendency to value the demands particular to their discipline over those of others, leading to a conclusion (not always broadcast) that some disciplines are of much higher quality than others. This leads to differential measures to assess the quality of faculty output, student input, and value of certain programs, departments, and curricula—all of which are critical when decisions over scarce resources become relevant.
- Finally, to conclude these few examples, in the absence of explicit standards and processes, many who make higher education choices do so in response to information they gain from the "market," based on the various ways in which institutions gain reputations for quality, for example, producing famous alumni; having many applicants especially of high status; being a wealthy institution with a large endowment; doing high profile research, achieving high placement results on professional qualification examinations for graduates; having a good public relations department, faculty reputation, R&D status, and large numbers of contracts and grants received; and, in the case of the United States, having a high statused sports program. All of these elements and many more have become part of the branding from which institutions seek to gain status and contribute to the proliferation of "league tables" that exist for ranking HE institutions (Salmi and Saroyan 2007).

To pursue the complexity of the quality conversation one step further, in their review of quality issues in higher education conducted for the 2007 meeting of the Global University Network for Innovation, Sanyal and Martin (2007) identify 10 definitions of quality that collectively embrace much of the above diversity of view and purpose:

1. providing excellence;
2. being exceptional;
3. providing value for money;
4. conforming to specifications;
5. getting things right the first time;
6. meeting customers' needs;

7. having zero defects;
8. providing added value;
9. exhibiting fitness of purpose;
10. exhibiting fitness for purpose.

As their work illustrates, seeking to precisely define quality raises many further questions about its context, intended targets, the mechanisms for obtaining it, and so on. However, despite these difficulties, defining and measuring quality has become increasingly important to the politics and policy debates that frame higher education. Whatever it is, everybody wants it. This is particularly the case in the Asia Pacific region where the rapid expansion of higher education to ever larger segments of the population and the more recent expansion of the private sector as a major provider of higher education has both inflated expectations for quality in higher education ("Why don't we have more universities that are world famous?") and brought on real issues of the quality of much of the higher education being offered to students.

There is a ubiquity to these issues: they are as relevant in the older developed countries as they are in the developing countries. Eventually all societies that support higher education are faced with two issues: how to address quality issues and make choices about the kinds of structures and processes that will be employed in seeking to improve quality outcomes.

## Four Quality Assurance Trends

One can point to four basic trends in "HE quality talk" that have resulted from these developments.

First, where little or no quality assessment or quality capacity existed, authorities moved to build it. China and Thailand are cases in point where largely Western models have been imported and imposed on institutions by government. To a considerable extent these models have been either highly capacity focused (intended to measure various capacity metrics), or organized around first-level output measures (number of articles in journals ranked by some standard, number of graduates per input, etc.). The critique of this approach (which was widely used in the United States through the early 1990s) is that it provides very crude measures of quality—to which the riposte has been but better than nothing.

Second, where the quality assurance/accreditation process was better developed, numerous efforts have been undertaken to make evaluation standards more quality sensitive. This pattern has developed following the

expansion and differentiation of higher education systems. The analogy is often made that the early stages of quality assurance tended to mirror the essential structures of the industrial process, in which a one-size-fits-all system of production is designed to meet basic needs. As organizational structures and processes become more complex, it is widely recognized that quality assurance efforts need in turn to be more flexible and sensitive to the particular (and diverse) missions of given institutions. Also following the rubric of the total quality movement, the idea emerged over the 1990s that quality needed to be viewed not necessarily as a product and an output, but as a process that requires continuous attention and monitoring. Within the United States the Balridge movement has been suggestive of some of the ways that quality might be approached in HE contexts (http://www.quality.nist.gov/). Flexibility within the standards context has come to characterize the quality assurance movement in Europe, particularly in Britain. Efforts to develop transnational approaches to accreditation and quality assurance and to seek convergence have gone a considerable distance toward specifying what the effective guidelines should be to allow for both rigor and compatibility, for example, in the declarations of the UNESCO/Council of Europe Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education (Knight 2008).

Third, in some smaller, but suggestive cases, the power of transformation within and around higher education convinced accreditors that a somewhat different model of accreditation was required, *one that could focus more directly on measuring the effectiveness of education*. An early exponent of this model has been the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Senior Commission in the United States, which is contained in its *Handbook for Accreditation*. This model links the central idea of capacity and preparedness (the central underlying concepts of the older model) with that of educational effectiveness—the ability of an institution to identify outcomes and the evidence that supports them to demonstrate that it is effective in delivering quality outcomes (producing a so-called culture of evidence). This model seeks to be more flexible and nimble than the "industrial" model, capable of being applied to institutions of different sizes and engaged in different missions (http://www.wascsenior.org/wasc/). To some extent it has been adopted by all six of the American regional higher education accreditation bodies, in recognition of the role that the assessment of student learning has taken on within the overall quality assessment process (see, for example, the Guidelines for Institutional Improvement provided by the largest of the U.S. associations, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2008, and Wolff, Chapter 6).

Finally, over the past two decades, the globalization of education and the widespread clamor for quality has led to demands for cross-border

accreditation. This new market has been developing in much the same way that the private education market has developed in deregulated settings—namely, with the proliferation of new entities with various accreditation processes and labels that are seeking "customers" and credibility for their product in the market. Predictably, the older national accreditation processes are seeking simultaneously to preserve discipline and quality in the international/cross border accreditation "business" (Knight 2008).

The chapters that follow explore various diverse efforts to grasp the idea of higher education quality in all its many meanings and across a significant range of national experiences. Throughout these explorations issues of public and private and ideas about the public good continue to reassert themselves. Indeed, in chapter 3 we address the very issue of what the terms public and private even mean in many of the novel institutional arrangements that have characterized contemporary higher education.

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# Chapter 2

# The Growing Importance of the Privateness in Education: Challenges for Higher Education Governance in China

*Ka Ho Mok*

## Introduction

Under intensified pressures for improving the global competence of university graduates, national governments across different parts of the globe must expand higher education enrollments, and high quality in teaching and research in order to ensure that their higher education systems can compete internationally and globally. How to differentiate their higher education systems from other systems abroad and delineate the way universities' global competitiveness could be enhanced have become increasingly important issues confronting governments across the globe (Dill and Soo 2005; Merisotis and Sadlak 2005; Mok 2007). In order to improve national competitiveness in the context of growing global pressures, many Asian states have raised the higher education participation rate. Acknowledging the fact that relying upon state financing and provision alone will never satisfy the growing demands for higher education, governments in Asia increasingly allow the market/private sector and other non-state sectors to venture into higher education provision. Thus, diversifying education services and proliferating education providers are becoming

popular trends (Mok 2006a). In recent years, a more marked tendency is government's encouragement of and active cooperation with the private sector (the market) in running higher education in Asia (Lee and Healy 2006; Levy 2006). Such an active private higher education sector has paid for much of its expansion, leading to revolutionary changes and resulting in growing "privateness" in Asian higher education systems (Altbach 2004; Altbach and Levy 2005).

More significantly, the rise of the "privateness" in higher education is found in developed economies, in developing economies, and even within socialist countries like China and Vietnam (Altbach 2004; Mok 2005; Dai 2006). Analyzing the private higher education developments of Asia in the light of Umakoshi's typologies, one can observe that a number of Asian states have transformed their traditional state-monopolized higher education systems into a private-peripheral type or even a private-complementary type of higher education (Umakoshi 2004). This chapter is set in this wider policy context to examine how China's post-Mao leaders have reformed the higher education sector by adopting far more procompetition and market-oriented policy tools. I also examine the policy implications for the growing prominence of the "privateness" in higher education in China's transitional economy.

## China's Transitional Economy and New Education Strategies

Since the late 1970s, the modernization drive, reform policies, and opening up to the outside world have transformed China's highly centralized planning economy into a more dynamic market oriented economy. In this new context the old way of "centralized governance" in education has been rendered inappropriate (Yang 2002). Acknowledging that overcentralization and stringent rules would kill the initiatives and enthusiasm of local educational institutions, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) called for resolute steps to streamline administration and devolve powers to units at lower levels so as to allow them more flexibility to run education. The *Outline for Reform and Development of Education in China* issued by the Communist Party of China in 1993 identified the reduction of centralization and government control in general as the long-term goals of reform (CCPCC 1993). The government began to play the role of "macromanagement through legislation, allocation of funding, planning, information service, policy guidance and essential administration," so that "universities can independently provide education geared to the needs of

society under the leadership of the government." As Min (2004) has rightly suggested, higher education in the post-Mao era has experienced structural reforms ranging from curriculum design, financing, promotion of the private/*minban* sectors in higher education provision, to adopting strategies to create world-class universities.

Recasting the monopolistic role of the state in educational provision, reform of educational structures started in the mid-1980s has manifested itself in a mix of private and public consumption (Cheng 1995). To meet the needs of a socioeconomic environment driven by the rise of a knowledge-based economy, the Chinese government has recognized that the state alone was not able to satisfy growing demands for higher education. Therefore, support for the proliferation of education providers and diversification of education finance has become increasingly prevalent in the post-Mao era (Chen and Li 2002; Ngok and Kwong 2003). Despite ideological debates over the private-public distinction in education, the post-Mao leaders have become more pragmatic, allowing nonstate sectors including the market (the private sector) to provide education (Yang 1997; Mok 2000). With intentions to identify and learn the good practices of foreign universities, the Chinese government has also allowed overseas universities, in collaboration with local institutions, to jointly develop academic programs in the Mainland. As a result, transnational higher education has developed rapidly since China joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) and signed the GATS agreement (Huang 2005).

## Proliferating Education Providers and the Rise of Private/*Minban* Sectors

In late 1993, "The Program for Reform and the Development of China's Education" stipulated that the national policy was actively to encourage and support social institutions and citizens to establish schools according to laws and to provide right guidelines and strengthen administration (CCPCC 1993). Article 25 of the *Education Law* promulgated in 1995 reconfirmed that the state would give full support to enterprises, social institutions, local communities, and individuals to establish schools under the legal framework of the People's Republic of China (SEC 1995). In short, the state's attitude toward the development of nonstate-run education can be summarized by the phrase "active encouragement, strong support, proper guidelines, and sound management" (*jiji guli*, *dali zhichi*, *zhengque yindao*, *jiaqiang guanli*). Under such a legal framework, framed by the "decentralization" policy context, educational providers have proliferated, particularly

as the Chinese state has encouraged all democratic parties, peoples' bodies, social organizations, retired cadres and intellectuals, collective economic organizations and individuals subject to the party and governmental policies, actively and voluntarily to contribute to developing education by various forms and methods (Wei and Zhang 1995, 5).

In March 2005, Hu Jin, Head of the Department of Education Planning and Development of the Ministry of Education, People's Republic of China (MOE), reported the development of private/*minban* higher education at a press conference, indicating that by the end of 2004, 1.4 million students had enrolled in these institutions, which accounts for 10.4 percent of the national total, an increase of 3.16 percent. According to Hu, around 1300 private/*minban* higher education institutions existed in 2004, among which 228 of them had received official authorization to grant diplomas and 23 had been authorized to offer undergraduate degrees (China Education and Research Network 2005). Another report suggests that of the 1260 private/*minban* higher education institutions, 50 of them had become the so-called *wanren daxue*, meaning that each of them has enrolled over 10,000 students (Lin 2006). Officials from the MOE also project that future higher education expansion will rest upon the private/*minban* sector (China Education and Research Network 2005). Despite the fact that the private/*minban* higher education sector remains a small part when compared to the large public sector, the private share of enrollments has been spectacular in terms of the growth rate especially in a socialist political context. Seen in this light, education provision has obviously been diversified in the post-Mao period, especially with the increase in privatization and the popularity of market mechanisms in higher education governance (Lin et al. 2005; Mok 2005; Levy 2006).

## Second-Tier Colleges: "Governed Education Market" in Formation

In order to achieve the policy objectives of expanding higher education enrollment, the MOE has encouraged public (national) universities to establish "second-tier colleges" (also known as "affiliated colleges" or "independent colleges") to create additional undergraduate programs for meeting pressing needs. Unlike conventional public universities, these newly founded second-tier colleges are run as "self-financing" entities and operated under "market" principles. The first second-tier (*minban*) college (*erju xueyuan*) was formed by Zhejiang University in Jiangsu province. With the intention to set up a new Zhejiang University as one of the leading

research universities, the MOE allowed Zhejiang University to set up a City College, a second-tier college run on a self-financing basis with more undergraduate programs for local students, thus leaving Zhejiang University to focus on postgraduate education and research activities. Having the "blessings" of the central and provincial governments, City College has indeed possessed degree conferring authority from the beginning and has no difficulty recruiting students, especially when the college has a strong affiliation with its mother institution, one of the top five universities in China's university league table (Wen 2005). In my field interview with Prof. Zhou, Executive Director of City College, I was told that graduates of his college could be directly admitted to Zhejiang University; while undergraduate students with outstanding academic performance during their studies with the college could also transfer to Zhejiang University with the "fast track" in place (field interview with Professor Zhou, Executive Director of City College, Zhejiang, April 2004). It is clear that the "quasi-*minban* nature" of City College has strengthened its standing against *minban* counterparts.

With the success of the City College model in meeting national policy targets for both expanding higher education enrollment on the one hand and allowing Zhejinag University to focus more on research, the MOE has endorsed the City College experiment and developed more such colleges across the country. By July 2003, there were more than 300 second-tier colleges in China, taking up the responsibility of nurturing 30 percent of bachelor students (Shi et al. 2005). Criticizing the conventional type of *minban* colleges for "manipulating official policy in the interest of profit making, in the process damaging or undermining the rights of students and parents," the MOE believes the launching of these second-tier colleges can fulfill a very important mission at this particular juncture of history (field interviews with officials, Beijing, January 2004). Considering conventional *minban* colleges lacking in "self-discipline" and posing difficulties for management, Chinese officials believe the establishment of these second-tier colleges to be a better alternative for achieving the policy objectives of increased higher education enrollments (Lin 2004; Lin et al. 2005; Shi et al. 2005).

It is within such a policy context that other public universities have begun to expand student enrollment by establishing their second-tier colleges in the past few years. Examples of such developments include the Shenzhen Financing & Engineering College affiliated to Nankai University, Tianjin; the Science and Technology College of Northern China Electrical Power University in Hebei; and the Pacific Financing College of Fudan University in Shanghai. These colleges are run under *minban* operation principles, with initial financial assistance from local government or state-owned enterprises

and they are assigned the mission of nurturing talent to serve local social and economic needs (Shi et al. 2005). In order to meet the national policy goal of expanding higher education learning opportunities, these second-tier colleges aim to increase their enrollment from about 20,000 to 30,000 students, matching the size of a "comprehensive university" as outlined by the MOE for the future model university (Lin and Yu 2006). As these second-tier colleges expand enrollment, it is not surprising that conventional *minban* colleges are running into difficulties in recruiting sufficient students. According to Lin, "students are so heatedly competed for that private [*minban*] universities have to spend 20 percent or more of their revenue on advertisement and recruitment" in order to attract more students (Lin 2004, 18). One report shows that in 2003, conventional *minban* colleges had to admit all students, while more than a quarter of the students admitted did not show up, and about 10 percent of them eventually dropped out during the course of their studies because they were not satisfied with the *minban* institutions (ibid.). Hence, the conventional *minban* institutions are in a relatively disadvantageous position. When competing with the newly established second-tier colleges, the conventional *minban* colleges find that the education market in China is not an open one, but rather a "governed market" or "state regulated market."

## Transnational Higher Education: The Rise of Public-Private Partnership

After joining the WTO, the Chinese government revised legislation to allow overseas institutions to offer programs in the mainland in line with WTO regulations. In September 2003, the State Council started implementing the "Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools." This newly enacted legal document provides further details on the nature, policy and principle, concrete request and procedure of applying, leadership and organization, teaching process, financial management, supervised mechanism and legal liability, and so on. More specifically, the 2003 legal document encourages transnational higher education, particularly encouraging local universities to cooperate with renowned overseas higher education institutions in launching new academic programs to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to introduce excellent overseas educational resources to local institutions (State Council 2003, Chapter 1, Article 3). Moreover, the 2003 legal document does not forbid overseas institutions of higher learning from making a profit by running courses in China.

It is within such a policy context that public-private partnership in running higher education programs has become increasingly popular in China. In 1995, there were only two joint programs that could offer a foreign degree. But by June 2004, the number of joint programs offered in Chinese institutions in collaboration with overseas partners increased to 745, while joint programs that were qualified to award overseas or Hong Kong degrees were up to 169 (MOE 2004). Most of academic partners are from countries and regions with developed economies and advanced technology. With the largest shares of educational service export in the world, almost half of the cooperative universities are from the United States and Australia, while a number of universities from European countries are approved by the Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council (ADCSC) to grant their degrees to Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools (CFCRS) students. Other major overseas partners launching joint programs in 2004 include Hong Kong, Canada, France, and Britain.

These degree programs approved by ADCSC are taught in some well-known universities in China such as Peking University, Tsinghua University, and Zhejiang University in collaboration with over 100 foreign universities or colleges. But among these foreign higher education institutions, most are not ranked as "world class" universities in terms of research and teaching. For example, among 40 approved CFCRS American degree programs, most are provided by state universities or second-class universities in the United States. Such a situation indicates the gap between the policy and the practice of promoting international collaboration between top universities in China and renowned universities abroad. According to the list of CFCRS degree programs altogether 103 degree programs have been developed, in that about 31.7 percent of which are bachelor degrees and the rest advanced degrees including doctoral degrees or high-level professional diplomas. In June 2004, for instance, the Chinese government recognized only 164 foreign degrees out of the total run by foreign institutions in cooperation in China. Most of these are programs or courses related to business, commerce, and management.

In terms of location most of these programs are run by institutions concentrated in the eastern coastal areas, the most economically prosperous region in China. In 2004, they were concentrated in the provinces of Shanghai (111), Beijing (108), Shandong (78), Jiangsu (61), Liaoning (34), Zhejiang (33), Tianjing (31), Shanxi (29), Guangdong (27), and Hubei (23), most of which are close to the east coast of China.[1] Putting the current developments of transnational higher education into perspective, it is clear that those living in the eastern coastal areas of China have experienced the first success of economic growth in the past two decades and many of them are willing and have the financial abilities to pay for these

overseas programs. More importantly, the rise of these transitional higher education programs has also suggested that private-public partnership in higher education provision is becoming a growing trend in Mainland China.

## Policy Implications for the Growing "Privateness" in China's Higher Education

### Blurring Public and Private Boundary of Education

The label *minban* is not helpful either in offering precise definitions, nor a clear description of the nature of the higher education institutions. Sometimes the notion of *minban* is confusing when one closely scrutinizes issues related to sources of finance and ownership. For instance, currently "multiple channels" for educational financing exist, including government subsidies, private donations and investments (e.g., individuals, overseas Chinese, foreign businesses, and private corporations), state-owned and collective-owned enterprises donations and investment, tuition fees, and revenue generated from school-run enterprises and research (Chen and Li 2002). Analyzing the sources of finance of these nonstate funded education institutions indicates that these private/*minban* schools obtain funds from more than one single source. Even public institutions may receive financial sources from the private sector. In some cases, the proportion of nongovernment financing may constitute a dominant part of public school funding (Tsang 2003, 182; Wang 2003, 8). In addition, the increase in transnational higher education has blurred the public and private distinction in education since public-private partnerships are now encouraged. In summation, it is clear that the growth of "privateness" has indeed rendered the conventional public-private dichotomy inappropriate in conceptualizing the complicated relations between the private and public sectors in education governance in a transitional economy like China (Yang 1997; Zha 2004).

### Quality Assurance Issues and Social Status of Private/*Minban* Institutions

The rise of private/*minban* higher education institutions has also raised concerns about quality assurance and the social status of these institutions.

According to reports as early as 2004, thousands of students gathered at some private/*minban* higher education institutions staging riots, protests, and sit-ins in response to new regulations regarding the types of degree they were receiving. Some student protests are related to excessive fees charged by these private colleges, while other complaints are closely associated with the teaching quality and status of the degrees being offered upon graduation. Some participants complain about the "mismatch" between the promises made by these institutions upon admission and the reality after graduation. A female student from the privately funded Shengsa Business School in the central city of Zhengzhou told the reporter of Radio Free Asia's Cantonese service that: "I still have the prospectus we were given when we applied to the university. . . . They told our intake and the year that came after us that we would get a degree certificate issued by Zhengzhou University. That was the promise they made to us." But what they discovered at the graduation ceremony was that the graduating certificate that they received had not been issued by Zhengzhou University. When confronted with such a situation, some respondents commented that: "The School admitted that the brochure made such a promise, but it said it was a printing error. It's obviously that they deliberately deceived the students" (Interviews cited in www.rfa.org access on August 7, 2006).

According to interviews with students of Shengda Business School, most enrolled in this institution because they believed that they would be offered graduation certificates issued by Zhengzhou University. Because of the close association of Shengda College with Zhengzhou University, one of the highly ranked universities in the national league table, Shengda College had no problem recruiting students. Attaching significant weight to the ranking of the College, particularly its close association with Zhengzhou University, graduating students had to pay a total of 50,000 yuan to complete their four-year degree programs, fees many times higher than the average for state universities. In a similar manner, students enrolled in Bohai Institute in the northeastern city of Shenyang because they were impressed by the strong association of the Institute with the Shenyang Normal University (www.rfa.org access on August 7, 2006).

Things changed, however, when the MOE began issuing new regulations governing the certificates of these newly developed private/*minban* institutions in 2003. Previously, these private/*minban* institutions could issue graduation certificates with the names of their closely associated public institutions, yet the revised regulations stipulated that newly issued certificates could only display the names of their own institution. Such new arrangements obviously disappointed many of these graduating students. Therefore, it is not surprising that around 3,000 students at the Dongruan Information Institution affiliated to China's Northeastern University went

on a rampage smashing school property in anger at the change, while several thousands of students from Qiushi Institute in Hangzhou took a petition to the provincial complaints office criticizing the Institute for deceiving them (www.rfa.org access on August 7, 2006). Moreover, hundreds of students protested in front of Shanghai's Fudan University in early September 2006, criticizing the university for not keeping its promises to support a series of courses in a certificate program offered by the university's computer and information-technology department and the Shanghai Yangpu Fucai Supplementary School in Yangpu district of Shanghai. According to the statement issued by Fudan University explaining the closure of these courses and the expulsion of about 700 to 800 students, the department concerned had violated the Ministry of Education and Fudan University regulations by "exceeding the scope and plan" for courses it was authorized to offer and by "blindly recruiting students" (Mooney 2006, 1). According to Mooney, the protest was at least the second in a brief period as Chinese universities began tightening control over academic credentials issued under their names.

The expansion of higher education in China has also raised deep concerns about the capacity of Chinese institutions to handle such rapid growth. In 1998, university student enrollment in China was about 8 million (less than 10 percent of the gross enrollment rate), but it jumped to 23 million in 2005 with a gross recruitment rate over 21 percent. Such a massive increase within a relatively short period has raised concerns of quality assurance. Recent reports have also suggested that the Chinese higher education system is facing substantial logistical and quality problems. While we may legitimately raise questions related to quality issues when an individual faculty has to supervise 40 research degree students at the same time (Chen 2006), some reports even suggest a number of PhD dissertations were found with verbatim copying of written and Internet material. Similarly, my fieldwork experiences generated from a research project related to transnational higher education in Zhejiang province have found similar findings: that the issue of greatest concern for students enrolling in joint overseas academic programs is the social status of these transnational education programs and recognition of graduation certificates by local governments and communities (Mok and Xu 2008).

## Tensions between State Ministry and the Private/*Minban* Sectors

Despite the fact that conventional *minban* institutions have been granted legal status and are now given the right to share the profits being generated

from running their institutions under the newly enacted private higher education law, many conventional *minban* colleges find their institutions increasingly marginalized. For example, the Chinese government has never made it clear how much (or the exact proportion of) profit *minban* institutions can generate, despite passage of a Law of Private Education Promotion. The ambiguity has put these *minban* institutions in a difficult position, and many presidents of these institutions are afraid of being trapped by the undefined notion of profit making (Lin et al. 2005). In addition, without authority to offer undergraduate degree programs, future development of these conventional *minban* colleges will be hindered and their "social status" severely questioned by local communities. Most conventional *minban* higher education institutions find their operational autonomy greatly constrained by having to follow the central ministry's guidelines closely when developing and launching academic programs, designing curricula, conferring of degrees or qualifications, and so on. (interviews and fieldwork observations in China, 2003 and 2004).

Therefore, it is not surprising that when presidents and senior administrators of *minban* higher education institutions met in a conference in Nanjing in October 2003, they severely criticized the government for being unable to promote the interests of *minban* education despite passage of the *Law on Private Education Promotion* in late 2002. Government's encouragement and support for the newly developed second-tier colleges has been perceived by these *minban* higher education presidents as discriminating against their institutions, making them "step-children" and devaluing their institutions. Therefore, many of them complained about the confusing role of the newly established *guoyau minban* colleges, arguing the "quasi-*minban*" nature and their special treatment from government have indeed marginalized conventional *minban* higher education institutions. When I participated in a *Minban Education Forum* in Beijing in 2004, all speakers from these conventional *minban* colleges were greatly disappointed by the rise of second-tier colleges and therefore openly criticized the state for imposing "double standards" between conventional *minban* and newly established second-tier colleges (field interviews and observations in Beijing, January 2004). They also considered the MOE's policies regarding *minban* education to be reactive and passive, without any strategic plans and long-term visions. Thus, *minban* higher education institutions have to struggle very hard for survival in the "governed education market" characterized by significant state intervention in China (Lin et al. 2005; Wen 2005).

The official endorsement of the second-tier colleges has clearly shown how the Chinese state has manipulated the education market politically. The adoption of such a policy has served two major purposes. On the one hand, the state has skilfully and tactically made use of the conventional

*minban* institutions to resolve the state's own problem in fulfilling the national goal in higher education expansion. Thus the Chinese government can easily control and regulate the "education market" by creating an unfair internal competition between its affiliated second-tier colleges and the conventional *minban* institutions. This is a double-edged sword. By making use of the blurred public and private boundary in higher education, the Chinese state is able to capture both the public and nonpublic education sectors by riding over the complicated nature of public/*minban*/private education in the Mainland (field observations generated from Mainland China in 2003 and 2004). As Lin has rightly suggested, "private [*minban*] higher education in China has been a contested terrain with regard to control and autonomy. Private universities are calling for the loosening of government controls. Government officials argue that the private sector requires rigorous supervision and control" (Lin 2004; Lin et al. 2005). In this regard, the expansion of the "privateness" in higher education has intensified the tensions between the state ministry and the private/*minban* sectors in China, particularly when the education market is not an open but a highly state-mediated one.

## Critical Reflections on the Growing Privateness in Chinese Higher Education

### Moving beyond the Public and Private Dichotomy

Under a decentralized policy framework, higher education financing and provision have been diversified. The growth of 'privateness' in China's higher education has led to the complexity of developing a clear and precise nature of higher education institutions in China. Similar to other Asian developing economies, China has relied on both state and a wider range of funding sources, proliferating providers, and different means of delivery in higher education. Analyzing the different kinds of higher education institutions in China in the light of the typology set out in the chapter by Lee and Neubauer, we find at least five types of institutions in China, including

1. public national: traditional state universities;
2. public subnational (provincial or municipal universities);
3. private proprietary;
4. quasi-private (second-tier or affiliate college);
5. transnational.

Such a diversity of institutions in China has certainly made the public/private distinction difficult. When we look closely into the issues related to ownership, sources of funding, and the mode of management/governance, we may recognize that the discussion of public/private distinction in the Chinese context is not a simply dichotomous one. Instead of a dichotomy of public and private, the Chinese conceptions are far more complex. There are at least three different types of institutions: state (*guan*), public (*gong*), and private (*shi*) institutions. Nonetheless, the rise of the conventional *minban* colleges, together with the state blessed second-tier colleges (quasi-private colleges), and those institutions run by private educational corporations, as well as the newly developed transitional institutions based upon public-private partnership, have made even the state-public-private distinction not entirely productive in conceptualizing the growing diversity of institutions in China's transitional economy.

In this regard, I believe a better alternative when we critically reflect upon the public/private distinction is to adopt a view that accommodates a wider range of institutions that genuinely reflects the complexity of the state-public-private mix of funding, delivery and management models higher education institutions in Mainland China. Such critical reflections have pointed out the limitations of a public/private distinction, a dichotomy based upon European conceptions or perhaps Western oriented experiences. More importantly, such a reflective discourse has shown us the importance of being sensitive when adopting social science concepts based upon Western experiences and ideologies in analysing Asian societies, since the formation of education institutions in general or the understanding of education in particular is still nationally diverse, culturally and socially different. We must therefore take into account the rich traditions, history, and cultures when developing clearer typologies in a society with growing complexity and diversity.

## Rethinking the Nature of Higher Education: Private or Public Good

The proliferation of higher education providers and the diversification of education funding, coupled with the marketization and commodification of higher education in post-Mao China, have resulted in a major dilemma that the Chinese government is now facing: whether higher education is a private good or public good. As higher education has become increasingly market-driven, people in China have begun to find that education financing relying primarily on private and family contributions is unacceptable.

It is in this particular context that there is a popular saying that another major mountain (burden) is education. Finding ways to finance children's education has driven parents mad since the state or local governments have shifted the social responsibilities of higher education to the individuals and families. Although people living in the coastal areas of China can afford to pay for higher education offered by the nonstate sectors (including those programs offered by the market), we should also recognize that not many other Chinese citizens can afford such an expense, especially those living in the less economically developed areas in inner or Western parts of China. For those who cannot afford the increasing costs of higher education, would the state revisit the issues related to higher education: whether it is a public good or a private one?

As Bigalke and Neubauer have rightly noted in their introductory chapter, higher education is unlike other public utilities such as transport and health; education is heavily involved with value judgments. The liberal tradition in educating informed citizens and critical minds still remains important in achieving the policy goals of the Chinese government to establish a more socially harmonious society. With more well-educated citizens, the whole society will benefit not only from workers with better skills for the job market and economic development, but with more civilized, open-minded, and well-educated people who can promote a more peaceful and harmonious society. After all, the purposes for education are not only confined to efficiency and promotion of economic development, but also to social development and cultural enrichment. Hence, the benefits of higher education have gone far beyond individual benefits for getting jobs and promotion after a university education, but the more educated minds and informed citizens we can develop would certainly contribute to the sustainable development of society.

## Developing a New Higher Education Regulatory Regime

With the strong intention to improve the educational levels of the Chinese population, the government has adopted various measures to transform the higher education sector: proliferating providers in higher education, diversifying higher education finance, and allowing overseas institutions to run programs in China. All these reform measures have drastically changed the higher education sector. What is urgently needed is the introduction of a new regulatory framework to govern various types of higher education programs in China. The adoption of more procompetition policy instruments

in higher education governance (i.e., adhering to the preferred model of market-driven strategies and indirect government policy tools), the proliferation of providers, and the blurring public/private distinction in China's higher education have inevitably made the traditional governance regime inappropriate. The increasing scope of procompetitive regulation by independent regulators and the deployment of new regulatory instruments are becoming increasingly popular trends along with the corporatization and privatization of state-owned public services and the opening up of new markets to multiple providers (Painter and Wong 2005; Jordana and Levi-Faur 2005). With the prominence of "privateness" within the increasingly diverse and complicated higher education environment in China comes an urgent need for the Chinese government to devise a new regulatory framework appropriate for governing the growing diversity in higher education sector (Mok 2006b). More specifically, it is desirable to distinguish between the scope of state activities and the strength of state power. For the former, I mean the different functions and goals taken on by the government, while the latter refers to the ability to plan and execute policies and to enforce laws (Fukuyama 2005). This is particularly true when the higher education sector has been significantly diversified and the private/public mix has become increasingly complicated. The Chinese government needs to redefine the relationship between the state and different educational providers, especially specifying the roles, responsibilities and functions, and legal statuses that different actors should perform in a more market-driven and diversified education market in China's transitional economy. In conclusion, the Chinese government should develop a new regulatory regime that can respond sensitively and match appropriately to local administrative cultures and political circumstances.

## Note

1. The number in each case represents the overseas programs jointly run by local Chinese universities and overseas partners as of 2005.

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# Chapter 3

# Redefining Public and Private in Asia Pacific Higher Education

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## Introduction

Higher education institutions throughout the world are engaging the challenges they face within a context of competing public and private spheres. As we have indicated in other chapters, the core concepts of "public" and "private" carry a set of critical meanings concerning the conduct of life within the state and the ways authority is constituted in a society and given issue through the rule of law. These concepts also have a reality in social life—a way of being in practice—that is far more complex and ambiguous than suggested by their formal and legal constructions. This often has been the case in most societies, as the needs for institutional flexibility at a given historical moment cannot be readily resolved at the interface between formal public or private institutions as constituted.

We are familiar, for example, with situations in which the state weakens in its ability to create and exercise authority, a condition that allows various kinds of "grey" institutions to arise, or practices to exist outside the realm of state enforceability. These may promote the exchange of various goods, currencies, and services outside the reach of the state that permits their private acquisition free from state control and taxation. Indeed, ancient as well as modern states come replete with such practices, recreating what

economists and sociologists term an "informal" economy (ILO 2002). However, even within the formal institutions of the state it is often useful to define and develop institutions that are neither of the state, nor of the private sector. In the United States, for example, *public corporations* are authorized by law and often provide public money to operate, but are overseen by a board acting on behalf of the public within a realm of private authority. Such entities exist across the society from healthcare to energy provision. Indeed, the much-celebrated American private university is in reality something of a hybrid structure itself. It requires authorization by the state to operate and may choose to subject itself to various forms of governmental regulatory activity by accepting and administering federally funded student loans or research dollars. It may also open itself to regulation through quasi-public authorities such as voluntary higher education accreditation agencies.

The range of novel organizations emerging throughout the dynamic Asia regional economy (Sun 2003) has an analogue in higher education. The very social, cultural, and economic complexity of Asian nations brings diversity to the practices of higher education, especially in the current context of pressing challenges to provide capacity and access, to align graduates with social needs, and to assure quality. Compounding this situation are the many national differences in how states developed and embraced higher education as a set of practices and a social good. As our other chapters make clear, even where strong central states sought to develop higher education primarily as a vehicle to assure cultural conservation and the perpetuation of elites, the patterns of higher education provision that have emerged over the past three decades do not neatly conform.

In practice, knowing whether a Higher Education Institution (HEI) is nominally public or private may carry little significance. As important as these terms may be in shaping the meta-discourses of society, in many contexts they, increasingly, are losing their descriptive and analytical edge.

In the material that follows we explore some of the many differences included within the terms public and private. We have sought to identify some common pathways that HEIs have taken in trying to resolve many of their common challenges. Often these pathways are provided by national policy reforms that alter existing patterns of central governmental authority, and encourage HEIs to explore new institutional relationships in search of enhanced capacity. The categories and data that follow make no pretense toward comprehensiveness. Rather, they seek to expand the reader's frame of differentiation for what in practice constitutes public and private higher education in Asia Pacific.

## Part One: Differentiating Institutions

Our task in this section is to initiate a typology that identifies some of the major organizing and structural elements in public and private higher education. One can specify some fundamental features of an "ideal" type of both a public and private HEI. A public HEI is one that is

- "owned" by the state;
- governed by a branch of government;
- regulated by rules developed through governmental authority;
- funded mostly or entirely from government; and
- organized to accept students and conduct research in response to some element of governmental direction.

We might call this a "pure" public HE institution.

In contrast, a private institution is one that is

- owned by a group or individual (though typically its activities are authorized by law);
- funded through private sources including student fees;
- free to hire and evaluate its own personnel;
- responsible to attract and accept students from the general population on the basis of criteria it establishes (though possibly aided by governmental devices such as national examinations); and
- governed by and reports to a board of trustees or governors.

Similarly, we might term this a "pure" private institution. Various mixed-mode institutions developing throughout the region possess some of these elements, but not all. If we were to view these two institutional types as defining ends of a continuum, our perception is that very few institutions any longer meet all of criteria for either the public or private ideal type.

We have found it instructive to construct a typology of higher education institutions based on a set of core structural, regulatory, and operating criteria. Conceptually, we have sought to identify the range of institutional types currently operating in the region. Empirically, we identify one or more examples of institutions that match a given criterion. The result of this exercise appears in the Appendix.

The second section of this chapter discusses some implications of this range of institutional diversity for higher education in the region, returning our attention to how the elements of public and private affect patterns

of providing education as a public good, or as a market commodity. Before embarking on the task it is useful to clarify the primary concepts with which we wish to work.

## Ownership

The ownership of a HEI is one of its central defining characteristics, historically determining how other elements of institutional structure or practice will take place. Public ownership throughout the world has been most common, generally through the instrumentality of the state. Conventionally, primary or total funding came from the state and any "revenues" accruing to the institution, such as student tuition and fees, either remained with the institution or were returned to central governmental coffers.

Public institutions can be national in scope, such as U.S. military academies, Japan Imperial Universities, or national universities in Korea, China, or India. Public institutions can also be subnational, gaining their authority and support from governmental subunits, such as American states and cities, or provincial and municipal governments in China, Japan, and elsewhere. They may also be *transnational*, operating outside a home nation either as a single entity or, as we discuss below, in conjunction with another institution or set of institutions.

Private ownership may take multiple forms. The major distinction for private HEIs is whether they are proprietary and profit making. Private HEIs may be proprietary, with ownership concentrated in a single person (a common pattern in Korea), or corporate in form. In both instances, proceeds from institutional endeavors (profits) may be extracted from institutional practices and deployed for further private use. Nonprofit private institutions historically have clustered into those associated with a faith-based enterprise (e.g., Catholic universities in the Philippines and the United States), or those chartered by the state to serve a public purpose, albeit while functioning in the private sector. Usually these institutions operate without direct public funding, as is the case with the bulk of U.S.s private universities.

## Source of Funds

A HEI has to have one or more sources of funds for its physical, operational, and developmental expenditures. In its "pure" form, a state institution

receives most or all its funds from the government whereas a nonstate institution raises its funds from private sources. But in reality, most HEIs have diverse sources of funds. The following analysis suggests the range and diversity of funding sources for state and nonstate institutions.

State institutions can receive both direct and indirect state funding. Direct funds are disbursed by government either through line-item budgets or block grants. Any unused funds in line-item budget allocations have to be returned to the government at the end of the financial year. To cite a different practice, in the University of California system, even line-item funds at the campus level can be carried forward at the discretion of the chancellor, although the system office can overrule this practice if need be; these were part of the decentralization reforms that shaped the university in the 1980s and 1990s. In other large U.S. systems, government-appropriated monies cannot be carried forward from one fiscal year to another, but so-called special funds can be created that are not so bound and to some extent also are fungible. For example, at the 10 campus system of the University of Hawaii, normal tuition revenues are held within a special fund and some programs are allowed to develop special tuition funds for executive programs that are in effect fungible.

In contrast to line-item budgets distributed on an annual basis, block grants usually are given as a lump sum for a certain period of years so that any unspent funds can be carried over to the following year. Public universities in Singapore are given block grants instead of line-item budgets, for example. Some state institutions obtain a majority of their funds from the state while other state institutions receive only minority state funding and rely heavily on private funds. At the University of California the percentage of state funds is about 20 and in steady decline. In Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Japan, granting various degrees of autonomy to public universities progressively reduced direct state funding and corporatized universities, forcing them to seek other sources of funding. Indirect state funding can take the form of research grants, contracts, and student support such as government scholarships, loan guarantees, and financial aid.

Some state institutions may receive funds from multiple governmental levels. Regional universities in Thailand, state universities in the Philippines, and provincial universities in China receive funds from municipal and provincial or local levels of government. Some state institutions in China have been able to obtain long-term construction loans through the private banking industry.

Nonstate institutions receive most of their funding from private sources including student tuition, business donations, contracts, university

entrepreneurial activities, and philanthropic donations. In some countries such as Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and India, private universities also receive government subsidies.

## Regulation

Another defining characteristic of a HEI is formal control of the institution. Through the wide range of variation in practices, the critical questions are who actually controls the institution with respect to expenditure, types of educational programs offered, terms and conditions of employment, and student admission? It is critical to know whether such controls are internal or external to the institution and direct or indirect.

With respect to the expenditure of funds (perhaps the bedrock of the regulatory relationship for any public HEI) government can control exactly how an institution spends its annual budget through strict public finance management systems such as line-item budgeting. But in other cases, the expenditure of public funding is less restrictive, including block grants, research grants, developmental grants, and similar financial mechanisms. Within the private sector funding may also range from unrestricted to highly restricted.

Direct government regulation is accomplished in every country through a government regulatory framework for the establishment, funding, monitoring, and assessment of its HEIs. National universities are established by governmental ministries, usually the Ministry of Education or Ministry of Higher Education. In ex-socialist countries such as China, Vietnam, and Cambodia (which also includes those influenced by this practice such as Indonesia), other ministries also established HEIs in specific disciplines to prepare graduates for the respective ministry. In some countries, ministry control of public institutions is both direct and strong, such as those in Indonesia, Singapore, and Vietnam. In China, education reform has limited the role of governmental agencies other than the Education Ministry. In Japan, the Education Ministry itself has been assigned other functionalities creating a Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. In countries that follow the British tradition, university grants commissions (UGCs) are a buffer between the government and HEIs. Most of the countries in South Asia such as India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, have their own university grants commissions. UGCs have great authority over HEIs in allocation of public funds, types of awards conferred and educational programs offered, tuition and fees, and many other aspects of higher education.

In many countries external quality assurance agencies and accreditation bodies are established to control the quality of HEIs through mainly indirect means. Some quality control agencies are quite independent of government, including the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA), Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA), and Philippines Accrediting Association for Schools, Colleges and Universities (PAASCU). Others are less independent of government, often functioning as integral parts of the education ministry. Examples of this kind include the Badan Akreditasi Nasional Perguruan Tinggi (BAN-PT) in Indonesia, the Malaysia Qualification Agency (MQA), the Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan (HEEACT), and the National Institute for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation (NIAD-UE) in Japan. In Thailand the Office for Quality Assessment and Accreditation is organized to report directly to the Office of the Prime Minister, outside Education Ministry reporting channels.

Indirect regulation works in multiple ways for both state and nonstate institutions that receive grants from either public or private sources. Each is subject in some ways to expenditure audits. In the United States, where the bulk of higher education research funding comes from both competitive and noncompetitive grants at federal and state levels, governmental audit is broad, rigorous, and consequential.

Other forms of regulation include public or private boards of trustees that govern HEIs in both public and private sectors. Corporatized public universities in Malaysia and autonomous universities in Indonesia are governed by public boards of trustees that usually consist of representatives from various stakeholders drawn from academia, business, and government. In the United States, where virtually all public universities are legal creations of state governments, the prevailing practice is for the governor to appoint a board of regents or trustees (usually with the advice and consent of one branch of the legislature) that serves for fixed terms and to whom effective public authority has been delegated. In a few states having complex multicampus systems (e.g., North Carolina and Florida) each campus will also be governed by a second, local board, also appointed by state public authority. Nonstate institutions are governed by private boards, which may consist of shareholders of publicly listed companies, family members of individual proprietors, elders from a particular religious order, major financial contributors, or even stalwarts of a political party, depending on the ownership of the institutions.

In the case of multinational university entities, the governing body can be complex as well as innovative. For example, Universitas 21 is governed by a Board of Chief Executive Officers (Presidents or Vice Chancellors) from 21 member universities based in 13 countries. The International Islamic University Malaysia operates under the direction of a Board of

Governors with representatives from the eight sponsoring governments and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

## Market Distinctions

The market environments in which higher education institutions operate vary by country. Regulatory frameworks set up by governments or relevant authorities to supervise, monitor, and assess higher education institutions vary in turn according to the market conditions prevailing in a particular country context. These minimally can be categorized across a continuum anchored at one end by unfettered markets and at the other end by controlled markets.

Free market examples, while conceptually easy to specify, are more difficult to locate in practice. Their most distinctive feature is the existence of minimal conditions for entry into the market. The least developed countries in the region such as Cambodia, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and many of the Pacific countries have higher education markets that are approximating these. In such circumstances where the market for higher education is itself quite undeveloped, few restrictions exist in the form of regulations for the establishment of private higher education institutions, either domestic or foreign.

A mixed market has partial free entry into some segments while others are regulated to a greater or lesser degree. In the middle-income countries, such as Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines, state regulations place conditions on the establishment and operation of nonstate higher education institutions that limit their degree of market freedom. For example, foreign branch campuses in Malaysia may only be set up by universities invited to do so by the government. Many of the ex-socialist countries in the region are also subjected to mixed market conditions. In China, the higher educational market is heavily regulated by government with free entry permitted only to the second-tier segment of *minban* universities. Similarly, the tightly governed educational market in Vietnam is only open in the universities segment that is people-funded. Such "peoples-funded" universities were modeled after the Chinese *minban* university (described at length by Ka Ho Mok in chapter 2). Translated, *minban* means literally "people run." In China the term allowed the government to experiment with the market while still highly regulating the terms under which the *minbans* operated. In a different set of circumstances, the relaxation of market restrictions in

Taiwan after 1996 created conditions that led to the very rapid expansion of HEIs.

Most of the countries with mature higher education systems such as Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, India, Japan, and the Republic of Korea have a controlled market for higher education. There are various governmental rules and regulations to follow and conditions to be fulfilled before a nonstate higher educational institution can be set up in these countries. The higher education market in the Philippines over the past 50 years, depended in large part on the whims of the prevailing political parties—sometimes controlled and at other times permissive.

## Part Two: Public-Private Partnerships

Public and private partnerships are cooperative ventures between the state and private businesses intended to spread financial risks between the public and private sector while expanding access and capacity. The liberalization of higher education in the region has resulted in a wide range of innovative public-private partnerships taking increasingly complex forms, as outlined below.

### State/Provincial Governments and Private Companies

Where higher education has been decentralized from the central government to the state or provincial governments, local governments have partnered with private companies to set up higher education institutions such as provincial universities in China, deemed universities in India, and state universities in Malaysia.[1]

### Public Universities and Private Companies

When public universities are corporatized, they may form partnerships with private companies to engage in market-related activities. In China, private colleges have become affiliated with state universities, as have high schools. Australian public universities have established off-shore campuses in Malaysia, Vietnam, and Thailand. These off-shore campuses are often joint ventures between the Australian universities and private companies in the host countries. For example, Monash University Malaysia is a joint

venture between Monash University in Australia and the Sunway Group in Malaysia.

## Public Universities and Private Colleges

In countries such as Malaysia and India certain private colleges are not allowed to confer degrees. These colleges will franchise degree-awarding educational programs from public universities, either domestic or foreign, and offer them as twinning or credit-transfer programs.

## Consortia of Public Universities

The establishment of consortia of public universities to offer educational programs through distance learning modes is becoming increasingly popular. The Open University Malaysia is owned by a private company set up by a consortium of 11 public universities to run open distance learning programs. Universitas 21 is another consortium of 21 universities that offers distance education programs throughout the world.

## Nonprofit Private Universities

Many nonprofit private universities set up by communities can be found in ex-socialist countries such as Vietnam and China. In Vietnam, semipublic higher education institutions are built, managed, and operated by the state in cooperation with economic sectors, social organizations, and individuals. Similarly, the *minban* schools in China are established by social, professional, and economic organizations and are run on a full cost recovery basis, with all income derived from student fees. Most private universities in the United States are nonprofit, although many elite universities among them have become very wealthy through the accrual of large endowments.

In addition to these, other forms of public and private partnerships in higher education have emerged that are more amorphous and do not involve any specific institutional linkages. For example, private universities in Japan and India are provided public subsidies. Japanese private universities receive as much as 25 percent of their budget through public subsidies, but in return they are subjected to tight governmental regulations on the size of their student enrollments and the types of academic programs they can offer.

In many countries of the region one finds faculty members with positions in public or state HEIs who also teach or work part time in private

institutions, a practice, that is common in Indonesia, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos. The respective governments permit this practice because it can be seen as an aid in kind from the government to the private higher education sector, and thus a contribution to expanding higher education access and capacity. It is also implicit recognition of the limited capacity of governments to provide salaries at an appropriate level.

An increasingly common form of cross-sector cooperation and an aid in kind is government loans to students studying in private institutions. In Malaysia, students enrolled in accredited programs in private institutions are entitled to apply for government loans. In the United States, where loans exist throughout all sectors, institutions wishing to provide students with government loans must be accredited by a body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

The practice of outsourcing to private companies is becoming increasingly popular among public universities. For example, public universities in Malaysia engage private companies to provide student services such as running student canteens and building student dormitories. This practice at times overlaps with the establishment of industrial parks and incubators by public universities to promote public and private partnerships in research, in particular short-term applied research geared toward the development of marketable products. In the United States combinations of public and private universities operate research laboratories and facilities with governmental departments or private companies under complex contractual relationships. These ventures may not contribute directly to "the bottom line" in a conventional sense, but they enormously expand the universities' research capacities and ability to generate jointly funded budgetary support for staff. Technology transfer and other intellectual agreements are looked on as a growing source of HEI income. In China entire branch campuses may be built through a cooperative combination of government (often local or provincial government) and the private sector.

It is increasingly common for faculty to position themselves as having expertise to sell in private markets. After the corporatization of public universities in Malaysia, for example, faculty members have been allowed to sell their expertise through consultancies and offering other professional services for hire. In particular, medical doctors are allowed to offer private consultation to their patients for a certain number of days per week while continuing to work in public universities. These practices are common in U.S. universities including those with faculty unions, which routinely allow faculty members to designate up to eight hours a week for private consulting activity. Also in the United States complex intellectual property agreements exist between universities and faculty that allow faculty to own or share patent rights to discoveries.

In the United States the rapid growth of private for-profit HEI's focused on adult learners has stimulated new growth in older parts of public and private universities that offer "extension" education, traditionally nondegree supplemental education for adult learners. Given changes in the marketplace these units within conventional universities in many cases have become important "profit centers" contributing significant income to "regular" university schools and colleges.

## Part Three: What—Then—Is Public and What Private?

It seems clear that the answer to this question largely lies in the specific usage of these important terms in social discourse. Within each term lies a distinct historical value that maintains a core moral and ethical virtue. When many people employ the term "public" with respect to an institution, they imply that it operates and produces outcomes that contribute to the overall good of the collectivity (municipality, state, province, or nation) for which such a public stands. The values attached to ideas of the public go beyond the rational to the aspirational character of nations and societies. Here we sensibly can use it as an adjective, in terms such as public good, public purpose, or even public responsibility.

Many connotations are attached to the term "private." These particularly are associated with the rewards that can and should come to the efforts of individuals to work, create, and preserve not only their own fortunes, but the individual and aggregated goods produced by and for their societies. Between these poles of public and private lie the critical but dynamic endeavors of institutional construction and preservation that forge the balance between the two.

It seems also clear, however, that the evocation and utilization of these important values is fully up for grabs in the contemporary era. Those seeking to gain position in this dynamic struggle selectively and strategically deploy these terms to maximize their own advantages. The resulting contests in many arenas—social, political, economic—have generated a kind of de facto currency for these terms never far removed from their instrumental value.

Angelo Armenti, Jr., has documented this recently in a particularly arresting way. Armenti is the long-serving president of California University of Pennsylvania founded in 1852. It is one of the 14 state-owned universities and former state teachers' colleges that comprise the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education. California University, Armenti suggests,

has fallen victim to "being privatized without a plan," by which he means that it like many other American public universities has been subjected to such persistent reductions in public funding support from the state that it no longer deserves to be known as a public university (Armenti 2008). Administrators and trustees of many such ostensibly public universities have argued this designation needs to at least reflect the current empirical state of affairs, which is far closer to "state-assisted" than "state-supported." Funding alone is rapidly creating de facto privatization of much public higher education in the United States. As these trends are adopted by numerous national governments committed in belief and the policy to the principle that they no longer can fund the majority of higher education, these institutions also will become essentially privatized, no matter what terminology governments use to describe them.

In the Asia Pacific region what we typically have viewed as hard and fast distinctions between public and private institutions is fundamentally changing, resulting in the rise of novel hybrids such as the *minban* that can be free-standing or attach itself to prestigious universities such as Beida and Tsinghua. Though apparently novel institutions, they function within a broader public policy context in ways not so different from higher education institutions established in the past—such as those created through state industrial policies in various countries to produce science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) graduates. That is, they were publicly funded but designed to serve distinct private interests. Increasingly it would seem to us that translating the discourses of public and private within a higher education context may require asking other kinds of questions of an institution: Do the outcomes produced serve demonstrable interests of the public? Or, do they primarily serve private interests—outcomes that individuals and private capital can "take away" from institutional interactions to further capitalize?

## Conclusion

The changes we have observed and documented in higher education throughout the Asia Pacific must be seen as an admittedly small and selective sample of those taking place across the full range of institutions in the region. It is clear that to have a complete understanding of what constitutes a public or private institution in the future, we will need to ask extensive questions about how it is owned, managed, and operated, how it produces its outcomes, and with whom it accomplishes these things. And while these changes can be expressed and ordered by broader conceptualizations,

such as neoliberalism, it is further clear that ideology and political principle themselves play a relatively limited role in motivating and producing the specific kinds of institutional arrangements that result.

Rather, this entire process appears to be a massive, uncoordinated exercise in pragmatic adaptation. In country after country, higher education institutions have reacted to changes in national public policy articulated through their educational ministries and in response to signals broadcast through emergent market related institutions. The result has been an explosion of variety that has cut loose the conceptual anchors by which we customarily have understood the meaning of public and private.

Two research tasks emerge from this array of social transformation. One is to continue the process begun in this brief chapter: to further conceptualize and describe the range of institutional innovation. The second, perhaps more demanding, task is to ask how this panoply of institutional differentiation affects what these institutions do and what they should do to continue to be regarded as embodiments of the production and dissemination of knowledge.

In important ways the very nature of how social institutions are conceived and constructed at the interface between government and society, and between the historic public and private sectors, is rapidly changing. Our languages and perceptions of public and private do not keep pace with the rate of such changes. Consequently, we often are at a loss on how we should analyze and regard the resultant institutional inventions. Should, as is illustrated by the financial crisis of 2008, these new institutional forms and practices be subject to new forms of regulation or left to the market to work its ways? And, if they should be regulated, who should monitor such new institutions and practices and by which criteria? Given the massive governmental intervention in financial institutions in the fall of 2008, some of our most fundamental assumptions about public and private sectors may prove to be open to reassessment in ways that move far beyond the path that neoliberalism has taken us over the past three decades.

Our argument is that the coming decade is likely to witness more rather than fewer such changes—in economic institutions, in health care, in housing and transportation, and in education. In this sense we underscore that our received notions of public and private are subject to continual change and constantly demanding new tools to identify, describe, and analyze them.

## Note

1. A "deemed university," a term used almost exclusively for universities in India, is autonomous, can offer its own curriculum, and must do research. It cannot

be an "affiliate university," allowing others to affiliate with it, which is the dominant university model in India.

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# Chapter 4

# Increasing Privatization of U.S. Higher Education: Forerunner or Deviant Case?

*Terance W. Bigalke*

Higher education in the United States long has been viewed as a standard much of the world aspires to achieve in quality, breadth, depth, and access. It has grown and evolved over 350 years including its colonial antecedents, through alternating eras of florescence for private and public institutions. The deep and expansive roots of private, liberal education in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and heavy investment in public universities in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries helped the United States to achieve the rare if not unique position worldwide of having many high-quality *privately* and *publicly* funded institutions. The word "private" in most other higher education contexts tends to translate as "inferior quality," compared with publicly funded institutions. In the United States, particularly in relation to the nonprofit private colleges and universities, this connotation indisputably does not apply.

While South Korea's postwar expansion of higher education was built largely on the growth of private universities, the United States was the first country to move vigorously down the path of incrementally privatizing the financing of public universities. From the late 1960s on, the United States provides a clear case study of the search for private sources of funding to augment and replace public support, as what we now call neoliberal policies are applied to higher education. That experience, in turn, continues to influence policy and practice in the Asia Pacific region, as systems there

cope with a diverse set of challenges ranging from rapidly expanding access in some instances, to excess capacity and shrinking demand in others, to improving quality almost across the board.

Generating revenues by charging tuition and fees to students has been a constant feature of public higher education in the United States since the founding of the first publicly financed institutions in the late eighteenth century, such as the University of North Carolina in 1789. Previously virtually all higher education had been provided by private tutoring or private colleges for the privileged segment of the society with educational aspirations and the ability to pay. The founding of publicly supported institutions grew out of a democratizing impulse, but practical realities and limited access continued to put higher education beyond the reach of the vast majority in society.

The federal Land Grant Acts of 1862 and 1890 designed to endow and finance a new system of state colleges and universities through the sale of public lands embodied a vision of greater access. Initiated to generate graduates for the rapidly growing agricultural and industrial economy, these institutions also invigorated the principle of affordability for students. This ethic of government responsibility for promoting the growth of higher education was clearly tied to institutional responsibility to serve the public good. The ethic was subsequently extended through the Hatch Act in 1887 intended to promote the research mission of these new institutions (aimed at agriculture initially), and the Smith-Lever Act and a companion act of 1914, which funded community outreach through agricultural cooperative extension to the county level of states. All of this legislation demonstrated a strong federal government commitment and provision of funding mechanisms to promote higher education, even though this would be done through state, not federal, colleges and universities.

This combination of private and public higher education institutions formed a strong basis for quality education nation-wide, though it remained accessible to fewer than 2.66 million students per year as late as 1950. Transformation from elite to mass higher education access developed in the United States over the next two decades, reaching 3.64 million in 1960 and 8.58 million in 1970 (National Center for Education Statistics 2007). This structural change was driven by a response to the demographic implications of the baby-boom generation coming of age, and rising expectations for a growing middle class that a college education was within reach of their children.

Expanded higher education access was built on massive increases of state appropriations through the 1950s and 1960s, averaging annual increases of 10–15 percent. This major commitment of public funds still could not satisfy the financial demands of state-funded institutions, as they struggled

with surging enrollments and improving quality. Indeed on a per capita basis, funding through the 1960s remained fairly static, and even dropped slightly in the case of Indiana. Colleges and universities increasingly voiced concern over their budgetary limitations, arguing they needed 10 percent annual increases just to hold parity. Though the principle of maintaining affordable costs for students was not widely questioned, public universities doubled the tuition and fees they charged in the 1960s, an increase four times faster than the rate of inflation (Chambers 1971, iii). By the late 1960s, states from Ohio, to South Dakota, to California were enacting stiff increases in tuition and fees to address the affordability issue for their state budgets.

If this practice demonstrated one potential way out of double-digit funding increases to higher education in the 1970s, justification for it was reinforced through the 1973 report of the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, chaired by Clark Kerr, who had presided over the recent expansion of the University of California system. The Commission report advocated moving the burden of support from higher education institutions to students through annual tuition increases of 10 percent to 12 percent over the decade ahead. The Committee for Economic Development report, representing 200 of the largest corporations in the United States, during the same period envisioned tuition covering half the operating expenses of universities within five years—up from approximately one-tenth. To cushion the blow of higher tuition, states were urged to expand availability of grants in aid to needy students.

The extraordinary level of state investment in higher education in the 1970s could not be sustained through the 1980s when annual increases dropped to the 5–10 percent level, falling to below 5 percent in the 1990s, and averaging 3 percent into the new millennium through 2007. Periodic shocks to the economy (such as double-digit inflation in the 1970s, recessionary cycles in the 1980s and 1990s, the credit crisis of 2008) presented conditions that reinforced a declining public will for sustaining a high level of investment in higher education. The result was up and down spending. A 25-year longitudinal study of state universities funding to 2006 found that generous increases in years of prosperity almost never succeed in helping institutions overcome the cumulative effects of lean years of investment (Center for the Study of Education Policy 2006).

From 1980 to 2005, the portion of state financial support to public higher education has steadily declined to an average of only 24 percent of their total revenues, and is as low as 14 percent in Colorado. During that period, rising student tuitions were increasingly the largest contributor toward filling the gap in public support. Yet a closer look at the period of most rapid tuition increases—1980 to the present—when tuition rose 275 percent in constant dollars, reveals that the percentage of *total institutional*

*income* generated from tuition rose only 3 percent (from about 13 percent to 16 percent). Thus, though actual tuition costs escalated sharply, as a portion of institutional income they are far from offsetting the proportionate decline in state appropriations. Revenue differences are being made up by contracts and grants with corporations and federal government agencies, ramped up fund-raising from alumni and other private contributors, and reducing the cost of campus operations through outsourcing such segments as residence halls and food service.

As the funding transformation of U.S. higher education was under way, new or newly prominent types of institutions began to proliferate, both public and private. Community colleges and vocationally oriented providers grew as a new feature of postsecondary education, slowing the pace of enrollment increases in bachelor degree programs. Educational demographics also changed as these programs and institutions appealed to nontraditional students with evening and weekend classes, and part-time programs designed for full-time workers. Proliferation of private, for-profit institutions was boosted after 1996 when the U.S. Department of Education made them eligible for federal financial aid programs. In just over 10 years they have more than doubled in number to 1,347, 28 percent of the 4,861 of the total degree-granting higher education institutions. They are part of the environment of educational and social change that has resulted in a large number of part-time students, extending their study over longer periods of time, moving in and out of formal education, with an average age of enrollment around 29 years (Ruch 2001, 60–62; Knapp, Kelly-Reid, and Ginder 2008).

Prudently, in its 1996 inclusion of for-profit institutions eligible for federal scholarship support the U.S. Department of Education limited access to only degree-granting institutions. In contrast when seeking to expand access and create new programs in 1998, New Zealand provided much broader access to postsecondary institutions, including nondegree institutions. Assistance was provided using a formula based on the number of enrolled full-time equivalent students. Enrollments in these programs more than quadrupled, absorbing half of all government funding to higher education by 2003 and seriously impacting the financing of degree-granting institutions (Davies 2006).

Looking back and looking forward, what has been lost and what is being gained in this process of systemic transformation?

## Spectacular Gains in Access

In the space of two generations U.S. higher education has gone from a comparatively closed system serving a relatively privileged elite of the

population to a wide-open system where some 60 percent of college age students enter higher education, and nearly 40 percent of adults age 25–64 hold higher education degrees (Wagner 2005, 12, 20). In the comparative absence of structural obstacles to moving up, across, and through the system, and the flexibility to drop out and reenter regardless of age, U.S. tertiary education is forgiving, embracing, and nearly all-encompassing. As an inclusive system of higher education, it is exemplary.

The injection of public and private funds into tertiary education has increased the number and variety of institutions, building capacity, and opening opportunities for segments of populations formerly excluded. The growth of community colleges, satellite campuses of state colleges and universities, and private, including for-profit, institutions ranging from specialty providers of vocational education to mega-universities has created options and multiple pathways to tertiary achievement, assuring that virtually no one with the will to attend will be passed over. This has diluted the influence of rationing mechanisms such as standardized tests though they remain status markers in the admissions process and help to determine institutional hierarchies in such ranking systems as the annual *U.S. News and World Report Best Colleges and Universities.*

The capacity to secure entry based upon the ability to pay (or borrow) private tuition provides a pathway to circumvent elite systems of higher education. In Korea, Taiwan (and to a lesser extent Japan), private universities became the vehicle to achieve universal higher education, growing to 75 percent of enrollment capacity between World War II and the present. Ironically, the growth of private, tuition-charging institutions leads to a democratization of higher education opportunity, particularly in societies where highly subsidized public education has disproportionately been the preserve of the privileged segments of society.

## Rising Stratification

The flip side of access to a highly diversified system is growing institutional and social inequity. Billion, even multibillion dollar capital campaigns are no longer an anomaly limited to one or two of the superwealthy private universities, such as Harvard and Stanford. To remain competitive over the past decade, more than 50 public universities have followed suit in mounting campaigns with goals exceeding US$1 billion, including state universities with enrollments under 20,000 such as the University of Arkansas and the University of Kentucky (*Chronicle of Higher Education* 2008). The capacity to raise sums for university endowments larger than the GDPs of many countries underscores the institutional power of U.S.

higher education. At the same time it reveals the growing stratification within that system and the tendency of wealthy institutions to become wealthier, and well-defined tiers of the better-resourced universities to become highly visible. Even the ability to raise significant funds has not insulated top-tier state institutions from struggling to maintain their excellence in the face of faculty raiding by better endowed private institutions (June 2008). The negative consequences of discrete hierarchies include the potential for rising status consciousness in student selection of institution and employer selection of graduates, at its extreme hardening social class distinctions, in ways that have characterized higher education in Japan and Korea.

Social inequities include the growing indebtedness of students and families as they finance their higher education. As tuition costs rose steeply from 1970 onward, state and federal financial aid programs grew in response to expressions of public concern, and large numbers of students came to depend on such support to finance their educations. In the following decade the Reagan administration favored programs offering student loans rather than grant aid. This policy went further in the 1990s when rather than expanding the Pell Grant program that targets lower-income students, the Clinton administration promoted modest tax credits for college tuition payments that benefited middle class families. The result is that 65 percent of bachelor degree graduates in 1999–2000 had incurred loans to pay for their education, averaging US$19,300 (National Center for Education Statistics 2004).

Apart from the sheer burden of such indebtedness, career choices become severely skewed by the need to generate earning power high enough to pay off such debt. Choosing less lucrative but socially beneficial career paths in teaching or social services is no longer a viable option. In New Zealand, where a similar pattern of indebtedness has emerged in this decade, such graduates reportedly are immigrating to Australia where higher salaries could help them to become financially solvent (Davies 2006).

## Is Inequity Eroding Quality of Access?

While U.S. higher education since 1970 has demonstrated that it could increase enrollments even as the proportion of state and federal budgetary support was declining, the percentage of high school graduates completing a college education has stagnated. Though the reasons for this development are no doubt varied, the increasing need for students to engage in full- or part-time work to pay educational costs has slowed the trajectory

toward achieving universal higher education the United States appeared to be taking since World War II. Goldin and Katz argue that this educational stagnation, caused by this and other reasons including declining quality of K-12 education, has eroded the quality of the labor pool leading increasing socioeconomic inequality (Goldin and Katz 2008).

## Competition for Resources and Institutional Responsiveness

As the responsibility for financing higher education has shifted to individuals, a corresponding shift has taken place in the relationship between the student and institution. The growing importance of tuition payments in the financial mix of public institutions is elevating the economic aspect of the relationship, empowering students and parents in new ways. As they have had to behave more like private institutions, public institutions are learning to embrace the notion of students as consumers in the ways they solicit student opinion and feedback for everything from classroom evaluations to participation in search committees for faculty and administrative hires, to design of residence hall facilities and food service provisions. Arcane bureaucratic processes, poor faculty performance, and substandard facilities all are considered fair game for scrutiny by students and families, and employees of higher education institutions ignore legitimate expressions of concern at their peril. In large part this brings about healthy changes in institutional cultures, pushing against rigidity and indifference toward greater responsiveness and flexibility.

Institutions also have responded by strengthening career-placement services to better prepare students for their eventual job search, and have embraced the value of helping their students find internships that serve as a bridge of practical experience to the world of work. While these services are not new to public higher education, they have come to occupy a more central place in what colleges and universities are expected to provide. This is a healthy development toward better aligning educational institutions and employer needs influenced by the proactive service orientation of private institutions.

The transformation extends to the student-faculty learning and teaching relationship. It has resulted in a movement toward pedagogies that more actively engage the student, and place more responsibility on his or her shoulders as a partner in learning, but also seek to hold the institution more accountable for facilitating favorable learning outcomes, thereby demonstrating educational quality. This has driven meaningful innovation

including, for example, student involvement in faculty research at the undergraduate level benefiting both faculty and students (Smith 2000, 121–122).

The transformation of student to academic consumer is by no means a solely positive development. It encourages among some students a sense of entitlement to outcomes not commensurate with their level of effort and performance, and excessive focus on individual benefits that may erode an appreciation of participating as a member of a wider community. It also drives a careerist orientation that undermines the broader appreciation of reasons for learning that emphasize developing interest and capacity for engagement as a global citizen (Kezar 2005, 32, 34).

## Privatization of Intellectual Capital

As discussed above, for at least 150 years public policy has pushed universities toward addressing the practical needs of American society, and contributing to economic development. However, university research findings and discoveries rarely were commercialized until the mid-1970s, when university research discoveries on DNA coupled with emergence of a biotech industry awakened higher education institutions to the lucrative potential of commercial relationships from academic patents and commercial licensing agreements.

The federal government played a key role in promoting a closer working relationship between universities and industry through the Bayh-Dole University and Small Business Patent Act in 1980, which removed previous restrictions on universities profiting from federally funded research. This spawned a rapidly expanding growth industry within universities, through arms-length research foundations on their campuses, which worked with faculty to patent their discoveries and market them to firms desiring to transform these into commercially products. Academic patents grew from about 250 in 1979 to nearly 3000 by 2005, and revenue generating licenses to more than 10,250, contributing net royalties of nearly US$1.6 billion to universities that year (Science and Engineering Indicators 2008; Powers 2006, 130–136).

The potential value of this process has led universities to be more guarded and secretive about sharing of research findings, sometimes because of restrictions imposed by the commercial partner. Academic entrepreneurship has led to a more closed institutional culture focused on the potential to gain proprietary control over commercial products. Being a key linkage in the knowledge economy, these relationships also mark a

fundamental change in the university's historic public focus, and present new challenges for determining the boundaries between public and private goods, maintaining objectivity, and avoiding conflicts of interest (Powers 2006, 146–147; Kezar 2005, 28–31).

## Finances, Efficiency, and Entrepreneurship

The shift toward growing reliance on private sources has fostered more efficient use of existing financial resources and encouraged a culture of institutional entrepreneurship. Universities may outsource the delivery and management of food service, book and convenience stores, and residence halls, among other services. Many have created cost centers within their institutions responsible for generating their means of support from outside sources, and in other ways granted more budgetary autonomy. And it has encouraged institutions, administrators, and faculty to operate within an environment driven less by a sense of dependency on public forms of support, and more on innovation and generating new sources of revenues. When these decisions have been made with sufficient appreciation of institutional fabric and culture, and long-term mission rather than short-term gain, they often result in substantial benefits (Priest, Jacobs, and Dykstra Boon 2006, 199–201).

The logic of privatization over the past two decades has led beyond finding efficiencies in new technologies, outsourcing, or creating cost-centers within institutions. Increasingly it pits entrepreneurial university administrators against state regulations regarded as obstacles that prevent universities from fully meeting the challenges of declining state support. As one public university president expressed his frustration with this environment,

> Somewhat schizophrenically, . . . presidents must operate like *private* university presidents as far as fund raising is concerned while, simultaneously, continuing to employ outdated business practices that, though appropriate to true State agencies, are totally out of touch with the needs of agile and increasingly privatized public universities today. (Armati, Jr., 2008, italics in original)

The logic of privatization has moved Colorado, South Carolina, Virginia, and other states to consider capitalizing professional colleges, flagship institutions, and even entire public university systems, turning over physical assets and the land they occupy in exchange for ending state

support. In recognition of the historical investments made by state taxpayers, in-state students typically receive some favorable treatment, such as lower tuition rates.

Does the answer for public institutions lie, to paraphrase a former president from Cornell University, in "just giving public institutions the tools" to fully privatize? (Rhodes 2006).

An appropriate model for a profit-driven business may have serious limitations for a comprehensive university, founded to serve the broader public good. Professional schools of law, medicine, management, and engineering can develop income-generating activities and products that enable them to adapt quite easily to a cost-centered model. Arts and humanities, and to a large extent the social sciences, find it much more difficult to sustain their departments through contract work beyond a certain level of grant funding. Moreover, external funding is typically provided program activities and limited administrative support but rarely for faculty salaries and core institutional costs. Within comprehensive institutions, the "soft" side of academe erodes while professional schools prosper. For upper administrators, it becomes a question of how much income can be transferred from profit centers to deficit centers, and how long it can be justified.

Further, funds generated through research contracts and grants, purpose-specific endowment funds, and other external sources cannot be easily transferred to support activities central to the institutional mission, such as teaching (St. John 2006, 260). With faculty service becoming a valuable commodity not to be traded lightly, voluntary service is giving way to paid consulting. The struggle for resources significantly impacts the core missions of institutions, and the balance of the tripartite responsibility of teaching, research, and service, as teaching is least easily commodified.

## Community Engagement

While the pressures of contracts and grants pull institutions toward making a commodity of providing service, Sylvia Hurtado points to recent initiatives indicating "that institutions are becoming more intentional about public service goals and activities." She points to both individual campus and consortial efforts to develop civic engagement and public service, through such initiatives at the college president level as Campus Contact and the American Democracy project of the American Association of Colleges and Universities (Hurtado 2008, 276). These efforts dovetail with a strongly growing student impulse to engage in service-learning and

other forms of community volunteering, including paid or unpaid internships. In addition to demonstrating genuine altruistic motivations, students are motivated by the desire to connect theory to practice, and gain pragmatic experience that translates better to potential employers than a mere transcript of courses taken.

## Conclusion

The evolution of each higher education system, including the United States, is a product of a unique interplay of economic, social, and political forces over time. The historically decentralized nature of U.S. higher education, under the purview of state governments, is unusual throughout the Asia Pacific region and around the world. However, the federal government has been far from absent, particularly in its role of stimulating the development of a strong public state university sector. Indeed, the federal role has strengthened as that of the states has declined in supporting higher education, both financially through research grants and student aid and through its influence on policy issues, particularly related to quality assurance. The debates over the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act in 2008 evinced the strong policy agenda established by the U.S. Secretary of Education when she insisted that institutional accreditation bodies accept a greater responsibility for the preparedness of university graduates.

The growth of private investment in higher education, most notably through tuition paid by students, is at least as ubiquitous. For public and private higher education as a whole, tuition and fees accounted for 43 percent of revenues received between 1980 and 2000 compared to 28 percent in the four decades before. Combined with the rapidly escalating costs of gaining a higher education, this shift of responsibility means that students bear an increasingly heavy burden of tuition, and more often through taking loans (Heller 2006, 14–15).

While one can argue the U.S. higher education system is unique, and responded early to changes in the global system, it is likely that other nations will take a similar path. Many are facing similar demands for increasing access and improving quality, amid accelerating and unforgiving global competition. And they are trying to balance the demands of higher education with other claims on government revenues including basic education, health care, and security. Few countries in the Asia Pacific will have the relative wealth the United States experienced in the post–World War II period to underwrite its massive investments in higher education, whether from state or national governments. Therefore, they

increasingly will rely on private expenditure along with more carefully targeted—if limited—government investment.

What lessons or implications gleaned from the U.S. experience are likely to be relevant to that of Asian/Pacific Higher Education?

Strong public support for higher education is built through the ability of the public to access that system. Access is strengthened through diversifying the points of entry into the system, and promoting vertical and horizontal mobility through it in a manner that is well articulated, and does not create blind alleys and dead-ends for aspiring students. The University of California system long has presented an exemplary model for this access and mobility, as it more successfully than most endeavored to limit unnecessary duplication or redundancy in the level of degrees and types of programs offered throughout the diverse system.

Transferability of educational credit has been a major feature of American higher education promoting articulation across the system, and complementing the overall patterns of mobility within the society as a whole, whether geographic, social, or class-based. Parochial interests of institutions, departments, and individual faculty or administrators—including some genuine concerns over comparable academic quality—create inefficiencies in the transfer process that create higher costs for students, erode public confidence in the fairness and transparency of the system, and raise the doubt whether degrees fulfill a public good.

Though higher education in the United States long has been viewed as a combination of private and public good, steeply rising costs of tuition amid widening social access and achievement gaps seem to reinforce perceptions of the private as opposed to the public nature of the good. This makes provision of a strong system of financial aid critical to equitable and affordable access to educational opportunity. A sizeable component of grant aid will be essential to assist low-income students and families to gain access and bridge social gaps. But to aspire to universal access to higher education will also require building a broad and secure system of student loans. That system should include public or public-private mechanisms designed to not overburden graduates with debt, whether through incremental long-term pay back at low rates of interest over their working career or by providing avenues of national service to pay down the loan.

The decentralized character of U.S. higher education has allowed for complex patterns of innovation to develop in virtually every aspect, from curriculum to research to administrative processes to student recruitment and retention. In general, its overall complexity, heterogeneity, and diversity has contributed to a commensurate adaptation to a rapidly changing society. This is most notable in undergraduate education in which students have increasingly been on average older and "nontraditional," and in the

capacity of the system to provide access and suitability to individuals who in rapidly changing job markets find they need to return to higher education on an almost regular basis. (Graduates from U.S. universities on average will change jobs approximately 13 times before the age of 38.) Changing demographics and economic demands in societies across the Asia Pacific region are likely to produce within them needs for similarly complex and diverse higher education systems to successfully adapt to the global demands of the twenty-first century.

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# Chapter 5

# Rankings and Quality—A European Perspective

*Gero Federkeil*

## Introduction

Quality assessment has become one of the most prominent issues in discussions about higher education, both within the academic world and in higher education policy circles. While those issues have gained particular attention in recent years due to some structural changes in higher education, we have to keep in mind that higher education and science have always had an intrinsic relationship to quality and excellence (Brown 2004, x). The search for scientific knowledge and discovery in higher education is a striving for excellence, characterized by a long tradition of evaluation and peer review in various forms.

At the same time developments and changes in the world of higher education have put even more stress on issues of quality in a system that by the 1980s had already been described as an "evaluative state" (Naeve 1988) or part of an "audit society" (Power 1997). Some factors leading to the current context include

- Significant increase in competition among universities, both on a national and an international scale. Universities are competing for students, staff, funding, and reputation. Global rankings such as the "World Class Universities" undertaken by the Shanghai Jiaotong

University or the World Rankings of the *Times Higher Education Supplement* have made their contribution to the worldwide comparison of universities.

- Expansion of higher education and the diversification of universities, creating an incredibly rich and varied array of courses, programs, and diplomas, again on a national and an international scale. Therefore, "consumers" have become more dependent on instruments that can create transparency for comparing higher education institutions and programs. Germany, for example, has about 10,000 undergraduate degree programs in higher education institutions.
- An international trend toward increased autonomy for individual higher education institutions. A higher degree of freedom and self-governance has created a new need for accountability for administration and the public in general. This is an issue particularly in European higher education systems that are largely shaped by publicly financed universities.
- Major changes are being imposed on many European higher education systems by the "Bologna process," where 33 countries endeavor to create a "European higher education area" and implement joint degree structures across disparate systems. The mobility of students and teachers, the recognition of degrees and quality assurance of study programs are all to be improved. Furthermore, a compatible structure based on two main education cycles (undergraduate/graduate) and a process of transferable credits such as the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) are to be established.

With regard to quality, European ministers of higher education have accepted "common standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area as proposed by the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) in the 'Barcelona Declaration.' They have committed themselves "to introducing the proposed model for peer review of quality assurance agencies on a national basis, while respecting the commonly accepted guidelines and criteria." And they "welcome the principle of a European register of quality assurance agencies based on national review." Yet the very notion of quality assurance and the instruments as well as the dynamics of quality assurance still vary considerably among European higher education systems.

These changes taking place in Europe relate closely to basic trends in the higher education quality discussions in other regions of the world. An overview of different instruments of quality assessment, followed by an elaboration on rankings and their relationship to quality and quality assessment, will highlight distinctive aspects of the European perspective.

## Instruments of Quality Assessment

Despite recent activities of the European Commission and various stakeholders (like ENQA) no coherent European system of quality assurance in higher education yet exists. Rather, one finds a variety of national systems with some tendencies toward convergence. Consequently, Europeans experience a variety of instruments of quality assurance with varying impacts. A study by ENQA identified eight main types of evaluation across ENQA member states (ENQA 2003).

Analytically, the existing instruments of quality assurance can be ordered along two lines: One is the level of reference (institution versus system); the other line indicates the main aims of the instruments, marking the distinction between *enhancement* and *accountability*. In practice while these instruments can be used for different purposes and in different ways, typical or empirically predominant types of implementation allow a positioning of the instruments in this analytical field (cf., figure 5.1).

A set of instruments can unambiguously be placed into the cell representing "institutional enhancement," including the various approaches of

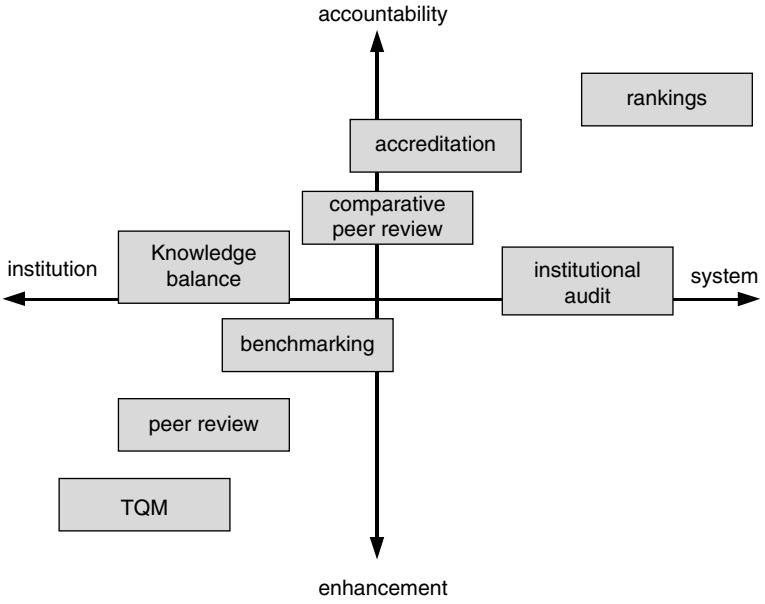


**Figure 5.1** Instruments of quality assurance

*Source*: Created by author.

institutional quality *management* such as Total Quality Management, models advanced by the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) and approaches adopted by DIN ISO 9000f. In Europe these approaches, imported from business, are not yet common in higher education but interest in them has grown. A recent survey by the German rectors' conference showed that less than 10 percent of German universities are applying such quality management instruments. Benchmarking, another instrument of institutional quality assurance, originated in business and industry. Benchmarking compares processes and outputs with other, comparable institutions and learning from good or best practices. Numerous cooperative benchmarking initiatives exist among higher education institutions. Such networks involve the exchange of data and information that allow deep insights into the processes and working of the institutions involved. Even while often competitors, their work, and results in most cases are kept confidential; normally results are not published and when published it is done only in an anonymous form, as in the case of the benchmarking exercises carried out by the European Center for Strategic Management of Universities (ESMU).

Many European countries have implemented systems of *peer review*, which, of course, has a long tradition in higher education and science, for refereed scientific journals and reviews of project proposals. Peer review can be used either by single institutions for an external view of their own structures, processes, and performance, or it can be used comparatively to focus more on issues of accountability. The British systems of Teaching Quality Assurance and Research Assessment Exercise are based on peer review. In Germany peer review is among the most frequent methods of quality assessment including several regional systems of comparative peer reviews of teaching and learning (with only one focused on research). They are used politically to structure the regional higher education systems and hence their main purpose is not enhancement of individual programs and departments.

In some European countries higher education systems of *accreditation* have recently been introduced (e.g., Germany, Austria), usually in the context of the Bologna process and the introduction of new degree systems. According to Harvey, Europe is "rushing precipitously into accreditation and . . . the approach taken is based on naïve views of what accreditation is and what can be achieved" (2004, 5). In some countries institutional accreditation has been introduced, primarily by national bodies (either governmental or public/private agencies). One example is the accreditation of private higher education institutions in Germany and Austria. Other systems focus on program accreditation. As in the United States, European program accreditation is, in most cases, linked to providing a license to practice but is separate from it. Many systems provide academic rather than professional accreditation. This is true for the accreditation systems in Eastern European countries (e.g., Hungary, Czech Republic) but also for program accreditation

of the new Bologna programs in Germany. But in any case accreditation is "more about minimum standards than about quality" (7).

Finally, *rankings* and league tables are instruments to create transparency in what one might be tempted to call the "university jungle." This means rankings follow a market perspective. They are a way of compiling information and assessment of universities, programs and research as well as teaching activities in order to provide orientation to specific target groups—be they school-leavers who want to go to university, students who want to change their subject or their university, or members of a department or university management who want to assess their strengths and weaknesses in order to stay competitive. Today, throughout Europe and the world, we find different kinds of university rankings with different methodologies, scopes, and target groups—and of different quality, too (Institute for Higher Education Policy 2007). The extent that rankings can be used for institutional quality assurance will be discussed later on.

If we examine all these different instruments of quality assessment/assurance and their implementation in different higher education systems, we find that one main feature of the discussion about quality assurance in Europe is a mixture of analytical levels. Most actors and writers in the quality business do not distinguish between quality assurance on the *system* level, that is, the level of the whole higher education system (national or international) and the *institutional* level, that of the individual higher education institution. They only speak of quality assurance and quality assurance instruments (e.g., ENQA in its 2003 study). One consequence of this analytical flaw is that there is no concept of which actors should be involved at which level. In particular this lack of differentiation fails to distinguish between the responsibilities for quality assurance on the institutional and the system levels. As a result, external responsibilities are formulated for assessing institutional quality assurance that are opposed to the notion of institutional autonomy. An example is accreditation in Germany, which was introduced as a tool to assure quality in the context of the introduction of the Bologna scheme. It is widely seen—in particular by the accreditation agencies—as a tool for institutional quality assurance. As a consequence, accreditation goes beyond the assurance of minimal standards, which was the original aim, and formulates detailed recommendations on the organization of institutions and programs.

## Rankings

In this section I discuss some general aspects of ranking and quality. These are then illustrated for both national and international rankings. The two

influential international rankings are those for World Class Universities by the Shanghai Jiaotong University and the World Rankings compiled by the *Times Higher Education Supplement* (THES).

In the course of the past two decades, higher education rankings have emerged in countries all over the world. Despite their long tradition (the first ranking by *U.S. News & World Report* was published in 1983), rankings are still very controversial, particularly within higher education institutions: "Wherever rankings have appeared, they have been met with a mixture of public enthusiasm and institutional unease" (Usher and Savino 2007, 3). Rankings were originally established to create transparency about the higher education system in a competitive system for market actors—prospective students, their parents, and employers. Rankings are simultaneously the medium and the outcome of competition. They can be conceived as an imperative of the knowledge society (Sadlak and Liu 2007, 77), in the sense that reproduce the competitive structures they are trying to measure. Because rankings are constructing—with high public visibility—hierarchies of higher education institutions that might impact their individual competitiveness in the market place (cf., Clarke 2007), they are followed closely and with suspicion by those very institutions.

There is no single concept or model of ranking or "league tables." Rankings vary in their aims and target groups as well as what they measure, how they measure it, and how they implicitly define quality (cf., the comparative analysis of different ranking systems by Dill and Soo 2005; Usher and Savino 2007). And, as universities differ, rankings differ in their quality, too.

Most rankings do not have an explicit concept of quality, although implicit concepts are implied in their specific indicators and measures. A first distinction can be made according to the aspects and "functions" to which the rankings refer. Some focus exclusively on indicators of teaching and learning while others also include measurements of research activity. Generally, as Dill and Soo observe, "input measures have a prominent role" in all five national rankings they analyzed whereas "process and output measures are much more diverse and tend to be less influential." Their analysis of the indicators and the weights attributed to them suggests that "one of the leading determinants of a good university is the quality of its incoming students" (2005, 499). Other factors are staff qualifications and the ability to attract research grants. According to Dill and Soo, there is "less consensus on relevant measures of output" (503). The primary output measures in many rankings are graduation rates and—if available—graduate employment rates.

## International Rankings

Among the rankings attracting most public attention are those provided by Jiaotong University and the *Times.* Despite being widely criticized, both rankings have drawn attention throughout the world that is a sign of the growing worldwide competition in higher education. Both follow a similar approach despite applying different indicators. Both are rankings primarily of entire institutions although in more recent versions they now offer some additional differentiation by fields. Both follow the league table approach, which-like soccer-calculates individual rank positions. This approach suggests that number 5 is better than number 8 or 10.

The clear focus on research in both rankings is strongest in the Shanghai ranking. In calculating the overall score, the THES ranking heavily relies on reputation among academics and employers, which accounts for 50 percent of the total score. In addition, THES offers some indicators on the internationalization of institutions with regard to students and staff and student-staff ratios, with a weight of 20 percent. The Jiaotong ranking exclusively refers to research; 60 percent of the total score depends on publications and citations, 30 percent on Nobel Prize and Field Medal (mathematics) winners (table 5.1). Implicitly, this ranking suggests that "world class" quality derives only from research.

Both global rankings include bibliometric indicators. Controlling for size, citations in the THES ranking count for 20 percent; in the Jiaotong ranking, three bibliometric indicators make up 60 percent of the overall score. In their bibliometric analysis, both rankings use the web of science,

**Table 5.1** Indicators in world rankings

| **Shanghai Jiaotong Ranking** | | **THES World Rankings** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Indicator** | **Weight (%)** | **Indicator** | **Weight (%)** |
| Academic reputation | 40 | SCI publications | 20 |
| Citations | 20 | Publications in Science & Nature | 20 |
| Student-staff-ratio | 20 | Highly cited authors | 20 |
| Reputation among employers | 10 | Nobel & Field medal price winners | 20 |
| International students | 5 | Alumni with Nobel price | 10 |
| International staff | 5 | Size of the institution | 10 |

*Source*: Created by author.

meaning the Science and Social Science citation indexes. This database leads to certain biases in the rankings.

First, the index is biased in favor of the sciences and in particular, to biomedical research. Different fields of science have different cultures and types of publications. The Science Citation Index (SCI) only counts journal articles, which are indeed valued as the most relevant kind of publication in the sciences. However, in the social sciences, humanities, and engineering, other types of publications, such as monographs and edited volumes, are regarded as at least of equal importance. In the humanities books play a very important role, while in engineering invited conference papers are most important. None of these are covered by the SCI. Consequently, universities with a focus on disciplines other than sciences and medicine are clearly disadvantaged in rankings based on the citation index. In the Jiaotong ranking this bias is even stronger as publications in *Nature* and *Science* are counted double (each with their own indicator).

Second, the SCI is biased toward English language publications. Whereas this is less of a concern in the sciences and mathematics, where international discourse in English is common, it is highly problematic for other fields. It also disadvantages Europe countries like France and Germany, which have their own long-standing traditions as countries active in science (Einstein wrote in German) and disregards one of the major and vital characteristics of Europe, its cultural and language diversity. In the social sciences, many publications deal with national social and cultural issues that are then published in the national languages. Whereas the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) includes many second level or even minor American journals, it includes only a very few high impact non-English speaking journals. These characteristics create a clear bias in disfavor of non-English speaking countries.

Another important measurement in the Jiaotong ranking is the number of Nobel prizes and field medals held by given institutions. Nobel prizes are only awarded in four fields: physics, chemistry, medicine, and economics (plus the Field Medal for mathematics). Therefore, universities with high performing departments of engineering or humanities will be undervalued in the ranking. It is debateable whether including Nobel prizes says anything about the current performance of a university, particularly if prizes dating back as far as 1911 are counted. And it is unclear where the prizes should be credited when the winner has moved on to another institution. The Jiaotong ranking counts them in favor of the institutions where the award winners made their findings. In many cases, years and even decades pass between the point of discovery and that of recognition. And given that the number of prizes is by definition low, the indicator does not differentiate very much, and one case may make a huge difference. Reputation[1] is the

most important indicator for the THES ranking with a total weight of 50 percent. To gather its data, a number of scientists and employment recruiters throughout the world were asked about the reputation of certain institutions. With no transparency in the samples for these two reputation surveys,[2] one does not really know who was being asked, where and in which fields of higher education, and yet, the structure of the sample is crucial for determining the reputation of universities. We know that reputation is highly varied from field to field, by social groups and by region or nationality. To give an example of our own Center for Higher Education Development (CHE) national ranking, we asked professors about the leading universities in their field. Humboldt University in Berlin, for instance, ranks very differently in different fields. Our data clearly demonstrate that a reputation indicator for a whole university depends heavily on the structure of the sample. The more professors of medicine included in the sample, the higher the reputation of Humboldt University would be.

Reputation should not be confused with actual performance. Many venerable universities are living on their past glory just as many newer universities have yet to develop a reputation commensurate with their good performance (Federkeil 2008).

The THES ranking includes indicators on internationalization by counting the number of international students and staff at an institution, and on the quality of teaching by comparing student-staff ratios across countries. Experiences suggest that, with international comparative data collection on higher education institutions by organizations such as the OECD as well as CHE's own experiences in ranking, there are serious—and to a large extent unsolved—problems with internationally comparable definitions and acceptable definitions "international" students and staff. Hence, doubt persists over the reliability and comparability of the THES measures of internationalization. For example, a result of German citizenship laws, many young Turkish students who were born in Germany and attend school in Germany but nevertheless do not have German citizenship. They are probably counted as international students in the THES ranking. The opposite situation exists in France where the majority of students with an Arab immigration background hold French citizenship and are counted as national students.

Furthermore, no valid concept for a global ranking of teaching quality has been developed yet. Comparable measures of student-staff ratios across countries are notoriously unreliable, and even at their best, they are a weak proxy for determining teaching quality.

To sum up, international—or even global—rankings

> have a restricted range of possible indicators because of the absence of available cross-national comparative data. To the extent that international

> ranking schemes are taking on a quality assessment role, this is a matter of no small importance and suggests that the global higher education community needs to begin to look at how best to collect and report data on institutions so as to permit thoughtful and responsible inter-institutional comparisons. (Usher and Savino 2007, 38)

For this reason, the validity and reliability of the existing world rankings are subject to question. The only fields where valid international indicators exist are research in the natural and life sciences. Those fields are highly international (including English as the lingua franca) and a widely accepted database is employed for registering important publications as an output indicator of scientific productivity. For all other academic fields, the existing databases are heavily biased with regard to both disciplinary and regional (language) aspects.

## Issues of Ranking Methodology

In this section, I address three methodological issues relating national and international rankings to quality: the level of reference (whole institutions or programs/departments); the use of an aggregated overall score; and the method of comparison (league tables or groups). These issues can be discussed in terms of their implicit assumptions about the overall quality of higher education institutions as well as the quality aspects of the rankings themselves.

*(1) Level of Ranking: Institution versus Program/Department* The *U.S. News & World Report*, THES "World Rankings," Shanghai Jiaotong "World Class Universities," and most other rankings compare entire institutions. This model implies that institutional-level comparisons are adequate measures of the quality and performance of their constituent parts. However, evidence from the CHE ranking shows that universities can be very heterogeneous in the performance of individual departments. A university might perform well and be ranked high in physics and at the same time perform poorly and be ranked low in history. Academics usually have a strong commitment to the academic community in their own field, and reputational attributions are made mainly by peers within specific academic fields. In a pilot study CHE sought to establish a field-specific ranking of European top universities in mathematics and natural sciences (physics, chemistry, and biology). It made a preselection of the top institutions in each field by bibliometric analysis as the basis for a broader ranking, and included additional indicators and perspectives. One of the study's

most interesting findings is that very few were among the top universities in all four fields, and the majority of institutions was preselected in only one or two disciplines. Hence an institutional ranking that compares whole universities inevitably misses such within category differences in performance, differences that in many cases result from explicit strategic decisions made by universities themselves concerning their priorities and development of specific strong fields.

One important consequence of institution-wide rankings is their unwitting misuse by prospective students and their parents. The rankings are intended to give objective information and orientation to these specific target groups. However, this instrument is poorly suited for the European situation. Specific subject matter qualities of an institution are far more important in influencing future academic and labor career paths than the quality of bachelor degrees in the aggregate. Prospective students, therefore, are much more interested in information about a specific field or program within a university than in its overall institutional ranking. The finding that a particular university as a whole is ranked in the middle of the distribution is of no use to such prospective students interested in physics if that program is ranked low.

*(2) Overall Score versus Multidimensional Ranking* While the number of indicators used differs among the major rankings, most calculate an aggregated overall score by giving particular weights to certain indicators. By selecting a particular set of indicators and assigning specific weights to each indicator, rankings impose a specific definition of quality. According to the U.S. National Opinion Research Center, neither a theoretical nor an empirical basis is employed in developing such weighting procedures. When considering their use for prospective students, it is important to consider the heterogeneity of decision preferences within that target group as well as other target groups or stakeholders. Some students are looking for a university with high research activities as measured by research grants, publications, and the like while other students may look for a university with close contacts between students and teachers, good mentoring and shorter study duration. Calculating an overall score thus takes the capacity for the target group to be more discerning in their selection.

Furthermore, institutional-level scoring levels out differences between particular aspects of a program or university's performance. This is most evident in rankings that include indicators for both teaching and research. A university with good research performance does not necessarily provide good teaching and learning experiences to its students and vice versa. However, a belief in the traditional Humboldtian ideal of the university is still held by some academics in Europe. Multidimensional rankings can provide a differentiated insight into the strengths and weaknesses of a

university. This is the only way to take multiple perspectives into account in determining quality. This view leads Usher and Savino (2007, 23) to conclude from their analysis of ranking systems that "one of the main reasons of institutional unease [with rankings] is the tendency of institutional ranking schemes to use weighted aggregates of indicators to arrive at a single, all-encompassing quality score."

*(3) League Tables* In the tradition of the *U.S. News & World Report*, most rankings order universities in league tables with individual rank positions. This approach suggests that each difference in the numeric value of an indicator marks a difference in quality and performance between the entities ranked. League table comparison inevitably involves the danger of misinterpreting small differences in the numeric value of an indicator as indicative of differences in performance or in quality. For example, in the 2001 edition of the *U.S. News & World Report* ranking of national universities, the difference between the rank 13 and rank 22 is only 6 on a 100-point scale. In many cases, data are insufficiently precise to establish clear-cut and unambiguous table positions in a reliable way. Or, to put it in statistical terms, such a procedure ignores the existence of standard errors in data.

The CHE ranking has been developed as an explicit alternative approach to the described institutional aggregate league table approach.

## The CHE Higher Education Ranking

As with other instruments and procedures of quality assessment and evaluation, Germany was a latecomer to rankings. For decades the German higher education system cultivated the myth that all universities are of equal quality. Coupled with a strong notion of university autonomy, this belief served to delay the adoption of quality assessment in higher education. While other countries could already be characterized as "evaluative states" (Naeve 1988), evaluation was still new territory in Germany. Up to the 1980s, notions of competition and quality assessment were opposed by many stakeholders within the higher education sector. However, as the period of tighter resources developed, issues of accountability, higher education competition, and quality control gained more public attention. At the same time, a growing sense of differences in quality between German universities began to emerge, which in the beginning was discussed in terms of "profiles." Not until 1989 did the weekly magazine *Der Spiegel* ask, "Which university is the best?" During the 1990s, a number of other

magazines started rankings of higher education institutions, some for single academic subjects only. The Centre for Higher Education Development (CHE) started its ranking after a two-year period of preparation in 1998, in cooperation with the "Stiftung Warentest," a national foundation for testing goods and services (Müller-Böling and Federkeil 2007). From 1999 to 2004 the ranking was published in cooperation with the weekly magazine *Stern*. Since 2005 it has been published in cooperation with the weekly newspaper *Die Zeit*. The division of labor is strictly separated between partners: the CHE is exclusively responsible for the concept and the data, whereas the *Stern* holds responsibility for marketing and distribution.

The CHE ranking focuses on about 35 selected subject areas offered by a substantial number of universities, which are updated in groups within a three-year cycle. Starting with economics and chemistry in 1998 and extending finally to media programs in 2005, the ranking covers the fields of almost 80 percent of all entrants to German universities. In addition to a print version of selected results, all results and all indicators are presented in the Internet version of the ranking, which is freely accessible at www.che-ranking.de.[3] Here the interactive possibilities of the medium can be used to make a personal ranking by selecting and weighting indicators according to individual priorities and preferences. Since the 2002 edition, comparisons over time can be made.

## Methodological Principles of the CHE Ranking

One of the first decisions in designing a ranking is to obtain clarity about its main target group. This decision has immense implications for the ranking design and the way of presenting results. Normally the main target group of rankings is university entrants, most commonly school-leavers seeking to decide on a university. Transfer students are in a similar situation, with possibly different factors influencing their decisions. And, of course, universities themselves come to be users, if not a target group of the ranking. However, while universities are interested in detailed and highly sophisticated information, particularly on research, it is university entrants confronted with some 9,000 courses in more than 300 universities—as in the German case—who are most in need of a reduction in complexity. Rankings must find a balance between these diverse expectations. The orientation toward university entrants has implications with regard to the concept of a ranking, the indicators employed, and the presentation of results.

Three central methodological principles of the CHE ranking distinguish it from many other ranking approaches.

- As suggested, the main target group of the rankings are school-leavers. They focus on the purported value of a specific subject or program at a university rather than that for the university as a whole. The ranking, correspondingly, does not embrace whole universities, but only single subjects.
- Moreover, even within a single subject, the CHE ranking does not calculate an overall value out of single (weighted) indicators. Instead, it provides a multidimensional ranking in which each indicator is presented separately. Decisions about the relevance (or "weights") of indicators are left to the users. The Internet with its interactive features offers new opportunities for the presentation of ranking results. In the CHE-ranking, users develop personal rankings by choosing and weighting indicators according to their own needs and preferences.
- As an alternative to constructing league tables, the CHE ranking orders universities in three groups. The best universities are clustered into the top group, the worst into the bottom group, with the rest constituting an intermediate middle group. The grouping procedure varies according to two kinds of indicators. Factual data (e.g., staff-student ratios, number of publications) are grouped according to quartiles. The upper quartile and the lowest quartile are ranked respectively the top and the bottom, and the middle two quartiles are ranked intermediate. Subjective indicators, based on survey data such as judgments by students and professors, are grouped by a procedure that takes into account the diversity of judgments within universities compared to the overall score. A university is ranked in the top if the confidence interval of the mean (we use a scale from 1—"very good"—to 6—"very bad"—corresponding to German school marks) is completely below the overall mean of all universities (in a particular subject). At the other extreme, a university is ranked at the bottom if its confidence interval is completely above the overall mean. Accordingly, a university is ranked in the middle group if either the mean is intermediate or if judgments are controversial with dispersion so high that the confidence interval is large and hence neither completely below nor completely above the overall mean.

## Conclusions

Among the different instruments of quality assessment in higher education, rankings probably get the most public attention. They are a growing phenomenon in higher education and are published in many countries

throughout the world. Despite their controversial nature, they are here to stay as they correspond to a need for transparency about higher education in an increasingly competitive world of comparisons. The primary aim of rankings is to create transparency about higher education from an external and comparative perspective. Institutional enhancement is, at best, a secondary aspect of rankings. Nevertheless, their results are taken seriously by the institutions ranked in marketing strategies they pursue to ascend in league tables, as well as in the ways that universities seek to cope with weaknesses identified by rankings. While uncritical use of rankings can produce unintended or even dysfunctional consequences in institutional behavior, proper use of rankings also can contribute to institutional quality assurance. They can be a starting point for institutions to analyze their strengths and weaknesses compared to their competitors.

The analysis of existing rankings shows that the vast majority of rankings do not have an explicit and grounded concept of quality. They develop a specific set of indicators according to their aims and target groups—often simply on the basis of availability rather than suitability of data—that results in constructing an implicit model of quality or excellence of higher education institutions. Comparative analysis of existing rankings (Dill and Soo 2005; Usher and Savino 2007; van Dyke 2007) suggest that there are "vast differences between university league tables . . . in terms of how they implicitly define 'Quality'" (Usher and Savino 2007, 32). Nevertheless, in most rankings quality is predominantly constructed by measures of input. In an international context only a few valid, reliable and really comparable indicators of outputs exist. They are restricted to the measurement of research activities in the field of the natural sciences. However, there is still neither a valid concept for international or worldwide ranking of research activities in academic fields other than the sciences (such as engineering, social sciences, humanities, or arts), nor a well-developed concept for a worldwide ranking of teaching and learning.

## Notes

1. The fact that THES is speaking of peer review is very misleading: the notion of peer review as a well-accepted instrument of evaluation in higher education implies a process of evaluation (in most cases including site visits) by a small group of informed peers while the THES simply asked a sample of what they call "peers" about the reputation of institutions.
2. Now there is some—informed—hearsay that the response rate of their academic reputation survey was only 1 percent with strong regional biases.
3. An English language version of the ranking is hosted by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD): www.universityranking.de.

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# Chapter 6

# Future Directions for U.S. Higher Education Accreditation

*Ralph A. Wolff*

*Accreditation operates as a central component of the quality assurance system for higher education in the United States. Formed as voluntary nongovernmental associations in the 1890s, accreditation agencies have gone through many stages of development over the years. The most dramatic changes have occurred in the past 20 years, as these agencies have adapted to significant changes in higher education, governmental regulation, and public expectations for higher education. Today, accreditation is both stronger and more necessary than ever; yet it is under increasing pressure to adapt to demands for public accountability and to establish greater independence from the institutions it accredits.*

Institutions value and support accreditation as a nongovernmental peer review process for establishing minimum standards for new and marginal institutions, and for improving quality at well-established ones. It is seen as a bulwark against the creation of a federal ministry of education and any form of federal or national regulation of higher education. The United States Department of Education (USDE) along with some state higher education officers and policymakers have, however, been challenging accreditation agencies to hold institutions more accountable in areas they have defined as important for the public interest. This is especially true in relation to assessing student learning outcomes and providing greater information to the public about institutional quality. In balancing these competing interests, accreditation has made significant changes, and in the future will need to maintain both the consent of institutions and meet

demands for clearer external benchmarks of institutional performance. Accrediting agencies have begun to reframe what quality means and how it will be evaluated in the accrediting process. This will most likely be the most enduring and powerful result of the changes that are taking place.

I begin with the evolution of accreditation, reviewed in relation to fundamental changes taking place in higher education and governmental regulation, and follow with an analysis of the underlying assumptions by which quality in higher education has traditionally been defined, and examine emerging definitions of quality that are already having significant impact. The chapter concludes by identifying several key issues currently facing accreditation in the coming decade.

## The Growing Diversity of U.S. Higher Education

U.S. higher education originated in the development of private colleges. Public universities developed with subsequent national expansion, and grew significantly with the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890, which gave federal support to create land grant universities throughout the United States. The influx of veterans and the growing economy following World War II led to significant expansion of the size, number, and types of colleges and universities. Today, over 4,300 institutions of higher education serve nearly 18 million students. The United States possesses perhaps the greatest diversity of higher education institutions (HEIs) of any country, for it includes major world-class research universities, comprehensive public and private universities, faith-based and religious denominational colleges and universities, liberal arts colleges, community colleges, highly specialized professional schools, vocational colleges, and an increasing number of online institutions. This diversity is further reflected in the growing number of proprietary institutions, which now have transitioned from vocational certificate programs to awarding bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees. Indeed, the largest higher education institution in the United States, the University of Phoenix, is proprietary, with its shares publicly traded on the stock market.

This has been accompanied by major changes in the student population—in terms of gender, race and ethnicity, national origin, and age. From the 2005 census data, we find that 57 percent of today's students are women, nearly 40 percent are studying part time, over 30 percent are from minority populations, and over 30 percent are over 24 years of age (Chronicle of Higher Education, 2008). To serve these student populations, a number of part-time, evening, off-campus and online programs have been started.

Accreditation has adapted to these significant changes through major expansion in the number and type of accrediting agencies, significant changes to the content of accreditation standards, and by innovative approaches to accreditation reviews.

## Background, Early Development, and Recent Expansion of Accreditation

Accreditation in the United States grew out of regional associations formed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in response to the need for colleges to know which high schools prepared students well for admission. The success of these activities led eventually to such associations at the level of high schools, colleges, and universities, covering the entire United States. Today, six regional associations operate with separate commissions that accredit high schools, colleges, and universities.[1] These *regional* accrediting associations are the best known and most respected within and outside the United States, accrediting over 3,000 institutions including all major academic institutions. Recently, additional types of accrediting bodies have responded to the growing number and diversity of institutions and programs. *National* accrediting associations formed to address growing numbers of vocational and career programs, faith-based institutions and nondegree postsecondary schools. Seven career and vocational national associations accredit over 3,400 institutions (typically proprietary career and vocational schools); and four faith-based commissions accredit 415 institutions (mainly seminaries and strict doctrinally based institutions). Also now more than 60 *specialized* or program-based agencies accredit over 18,000 programs in various disciplines as law, medicine, engineering, computer science, and so on.

Accreditation is viewed as an important symbol of quality and integrity for students, employers, and the general public. Two processes exist within the United States to evaluate and recognize accrediting agencies as reliable authorities of institutional quality and integrity. Primary recognition is provided by the USDE for agencies that certify institution and program eligibility for federal financial aid, or for professions meeting specified licensure requirements. Thus, not all accrediting agencies may be eligible for federal recognition. The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) organizes a nongovernmental recognition process for agencies that have a majority of degree granting institutions as their members. Together, these processes cover the main accrediting agencies and subject them to periodic review.

Over the past 20 years, both recognition processes have changed in response to increasing calls for accountability and transparency[2]—focusing more on the effectiveness of institutions and the availability of public information about the institution. Because nearly every institution in the United States undergoes some form of periodic accreditation review, and changing accreditation standards and processes has a powerful effect on higher education. This has led to increased visibility and influence of accreditation, and pressures to ensure that accreditation reviews address issues of greatest concern to policymakers.

## The Growing Influence of Federal Regulations Affecting Accreditation

Until the 1950s, accreditation was a nongovernmental activity, supported by HEIs themselves with little interest or interference by state or federal governments, or even the general public. The massification of higher education after World War II led to the need for greater quality assurance to set minimum standards for both new institutions and to evaluate the rapid growth of existing ones.

The so-called GI Bill, enacted by Congress in 1944, provided financial support for returning veterans to attend college. Federal financial aid was extended to nonveteran low-income students through the National Defense Education Act of 1958, and has expanded significantly since then into a complex array of grants and loans. Since funding for education is largely reserved for the states under the U.S. Constitution, the federal government relies on nongovernmental accreditation as the basis for determining eligibility for federal funds.[3] The Office of Education[4] has established criteria for determining which accrediting agencies were reliable authorities of quality of higher education institutions, and designed a formal recognition process to assure that agencies would provide eligibility for the distribution of federal institutional and student aid. From the 1950s through the mid-1980s the criteria government employed to recognize accrediting agencies emphasized traditional "process and input" characteristics. Agency standards needed to assure that institutions had a clear mission, appropriate admissions procedures, a qualified faculty, stable finances, and so on. In the mid-1980s, however, the Department of Education added a new criterion requiring standards that assured "success with respect to student achievement." When initially adopted, this requirement was the last in a list of areas needed to be covered by accrediting agency standards. In 1998, Congress moved this criterion to the first of 10 such areas, signaling the increasing importance of this one criterion.[5] As a result, "student academic

achievement" has become *the* central focus of a national debate on the meaning and importance of student learning outcomes assessment.

The student achievement requirement occurred simultaneously with movements within the higher education community and a number of state higher education agencies to emphasize assessment of both institutional effectiveness and of student learning. All the major accrediting commissions developed formal standards addressing assessment in the 1980s and early 1990s, and these standards have been expanded and have taken on increasing centrality ever since. Originally assessment referred to *all areas* of institutional effectiveness. With increasing public attention on student achievement, emphasis has shifted heavily to the assessment of student learning outcomes. Emphasis on learning outcomes was reflected in a 2003 joint statement of the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC), subsequently adopted by all the regional accrediting commissions, that "evaluation of an institution's success in achieving student learning is central to each Commission's function and public charter" (C-RAC 2003, 2).

The coupling of federal (and often state) aid to accreditation has made accreditation a powerful agent of both quality assurance and governmental interest. Today, over US$80 billion of governmental aid flows to accredited institutions, and government regulation has both increased and tightened, assuring that accreditors oversee institutions more effectively in this area. Further, over the past decade, various national reports have called for increased accountability of U.S. higher education—to state and federal governments, and to the public—reflecting mounting concerns about the quality and effectiveness of higher education. Such reports have come from higher education groups (e.g., *Measuring Up* 2000 and 2005 from the National Center for Public Policy on Higher Education), from the Business Higher Education Forum (2004), from the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (2005), and most recently from a Commission on the Future of Higher Education, appointed by U.S. Secretary of Education Spellings (2006). Recognizing the primary role that accreditation plays in quality assurance, each report called on accreditation to focus more on public accountability, especially through greater emphasis (and greater public information) on student learning outcomes.

## Student Learning Outcomes, Accreditation Reform, and the Redefinition of Quality

This increased emphasis on student learning outcomes has challenged traditional conceptions of quality embedded in institutional accreditation reviews. Each new version of accrediting standards (typically revised every

five–seven years), the focus has shifted from the use of key input and resource indicators to gaining evidence of effectiveness, especially in relation to student learning. When first adopted, assessment was seen primarily as an "add-on" to traditional accreditation standards. For example, in the WASC Senior standards introduced in 1988 this was a single subsection of one of nine standards. Over time, student learning assessment has become more central to the accreditation process, and in several regional associations, it is the primary organizing principle of both the standards and the review process. The C-RAC Statement on Regional Accreditation and Student Learning expresses this shift:

> Years ago the assessment of institutional quality was a relatively straightforward matter, focusing on such tangible characteristics as fiscal solvency, library resources and faculty credentials. While capacities such as these continue to be important in accreditation, today there is wide recognition that "capacity" is simply insufficient as evidence of institutional effectiveness. Having abundant resources does not guarantee effective student learning. As college costs have skyrocketed, and demands for nearly-universal student access to higher education have become more pronounced, the questions asked of colleges by consumers and lawmakers have become more strident: "What are students learning? Is it the right kind of learning? What difference are you making in their lives? What evidence do you have that you're worth our investment?" (C-RAC 2003, 1)

## Accreditation Reform

Beginning in 2001, this shift has been embodied in fundamental revisions to the accrediting process by three regional commissions: the Senior College Commission of WASC ("WASC Senior") with its three-stage learning centered model, the Accreditation Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) of the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association, and the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) of the Southern Association. All have drawn heavily on quality systems practices, such as the Baldrige Award and continuous quality improvement efforts, and were supported by major grants from the Pew Charitable Trusts. The WASC process requires all institutions to submit a proposal detailing how it will use the accrediting process to improve institutional attention to assessment of student learning, collect learning results, and improve learning among its students. The proposal is peer reviewed and submitted two years in advance of the site visits, to allow the institution time to implement the proposal, and to gather and analyze qualitative and quantitative evidence of student learning. It further separates out the typical, single on-site review

into two site visits, the first focusing on institutional capacity (including the capacity to assess student learning effectively), and the second, 18 months later, focusing on educational effectiveness.

The AQIP model is based heavily on the Baldrige model of quality systems, and focuses on the development of institutional systems and indicators of quality and effectiveness. Instead of a single site review every decade, the AQIP process requires extensive institutional training, the selection of key projects and metrics, and annual off-site reviews by an unnamed evaluator to assess institutional progress, followed by a site visit in the seventh year.

The Southern Association QEP model similarly requires every institution to develop an institution-wide quality enhancement plan with a special focus on areas where student learning can be improved. An extensive off-site document review is conducted one semester before an on-site visit, reviewing the institution's compliance with the SACS standards of accreditation and identifying topics to be addressed in the site review along with evaluation of the QEP.

## Redefining Quality

Each of these models represents a fundamental change in accreditation from minimum compliance with existing standings to promoting, even requiring, that institutions demonstrate ongoing systems for self-assessment and data analysis, especially with respect to student learning, and the development of action plans for improvement. Each of these models is heavily evidence-driven as well, leading to what WASC refers to as a "culture of evidence." The expectations established by these new standards of accreditation also represent a further shift from an emphasis on teaching to an emphasis on learning. While all institutions profess to promote teaching and learning, moving the focus to learning is significant and affects nearly all aspects of institutional and accrediting agency culture and practice. One of the clearest expressions of this shift is stated in the seminal article by Barr and Tag: "In the briefest form, the paradigm that has governed our colleges has been this: A college is an institution that exists *to provide instruction.* Subtly but profoundly we are shifting to a new paradigm: a college is an institution that exists *to produce learning.* It is a shift that changes everything" (Barr and Tagg 1995, 13, italics in original).

Viewing higher education through the lens of a paradigm organized around learning, defining traditional elements of quality can become quite different, even transformed. Three primary dimensions of quality are reflected in figure 6.1 (Wolff 2004, 92).

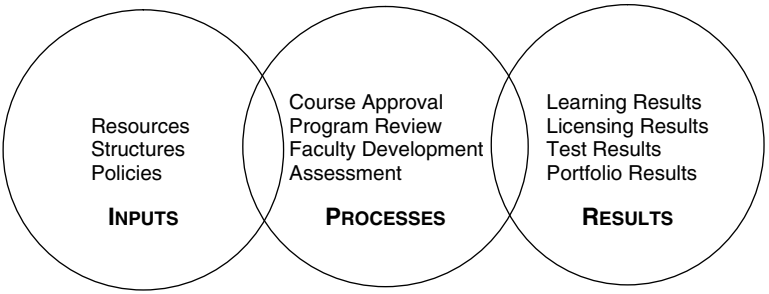


**Figure 6.1** Dimensions of quality

*Source*: Created by author.

## Inputs

Accreditation has largely focused on the *quantum* of resources and *existence* of structures of policies, presuming that once these are in place quality would follow; using the lens of learning-centeredness shifts the focus to whether resources, structures, and policies are *aligned* with and support student learning. This way a completely different approach to inputs and resources occurs. For example, an institution may find that even though it is experiencing a high attrition rate, few resources are being allocated to improve student success; or a teaching centered institution may choose to allocate funds to support faculty research rather than for a faculty development center to promote effective teaching and assessment practices.

## Processes

Similarly, accreditation reviews have traditionally looked for processes such as course approval and periodic program review. A learning-centered approach would inquire whether the course approval process requires syllabi that include clear learning outcomes, assignments, and assessments aligned with those outcomes, and clear linkage to program and institutional outcomes. Traditionally program reviews have focused on curricular and resource (faculty, library, or budget) needs. A learning-centered approach would seek clear and rigorous learning outcomes for the program, a "curriculum map" showing where each outcome is incorporated into specific courses at the entry, intermediate, and advanced levels. Such assessments would be undertaken to review the level of achievement of each outcome individually and in the aggregate, and to determine whether

faculty dialogue leads to improvement. Faculty development is also connected to learning-centeredness. A learning-oriented model may inquire whether faculty are given support and training to develop learning outcomes, assess learning, use and analyze learning data, and develop course and program assessment strategies.

## Results

Traditional accreditation reviews have not focused significantly on learning results reflecting the fact that institutions had little useful data available to them. Typically, one might find survey results of student satisfaction, student evaluations of instruction, and alumni surveys, but little direct assessment of student work, in the aggregate, to reflect achievement of institutional and program outcomes. Similarly, even where licensing results may be available (such as accounting, law, counseling, nursing programs, etc.), the results tend to exist within a program or school, but are collectively maintained and analyzed over a multiyear period. Increased attention to evidence of effectiveness by all accreditors assures that these issues are now being addressed. This process constitutes a steep learning curve for institutions (faculty and administrators alike) regarding appropriate forms of assessment, how to analyze assessment data over time, how to use qualitative and quantitative results to set standards of performance, and how to embed assessment within the institutional culture. Many institutions rely on capstone courses and portfolios as ways to undertake reviews of student capacities upon graduation. Even in such cases, institutional processes need to move beyond individual projects to a periodic assessment of samples of student work to determine whether intended learning outcomes are being achieved.

WASC Senior has developed pilot rubrics to assist teams in their assessment of learning outcomes, capstone courses, portfolios, and learning-centered program reviews. These rubrics are now being widely used by institutions to help faculty improve their assessment efforts (WASC 2008).

As learning and other outcomes-based data are collected, nearly all institutions experience the need to improve their capacity to analyze, reflect on, and use qualitative and quantitative data in a system of continuous improvement. The Senior College Commission of WASC has even made the creation of a "learning organization" one of its standards in an effort to embed continuous improvement within institutions and its learning-centered model (Standard 4: Creating an Organization Committed to Learning and Improvement). Every institution working with this standard has found itself to be in need of major improvement to assure that

assessment results are more effectively disseminated, discussed, and used at all levels, such as in strategic planning (creating as a strategic goal the improvement of student learning), academic planning, program review, program development/approval processes, and so on.

## The New Terrain: Public Accountability–Centered Accreditation

One foundational cornerstone of U.S. higher education is the deep and abiding principle of institutional autonomy and distinctiveness. This has led to a "mission-centered" approach to quality in which each institution is responsible for defining its own distinctive mission and purposes, which, become the basis for determining quality and effectiveness. This tradition has resulted in variation of missions within the broader higher education framework, even among similar types of institutions. The willingness to embrace, or even encourage, mission distinctiveness has led to the great diversity in U.S. higher education, widely held to be one of its greatest hallmarks.

Historically, regional accreditation has reflected a mission-centered approach to quality as well, evaluating each institution according to its own mission and context. A key framework for review under this model asks "is the institution's mission clear and is there evidence of its achievement?" Thus, a research university would be evaluated within that mission framework, and indicators of quality would flow from that mission (e.g., faculty characteristics and qualifications, library support, student selectivity, promotion and tenure requirements, etc.). A faith-based institution, on the other hand, might emphasize spiritual and character formation, set curricular requirements dealing with church doctrine, and select faculty and students on religious grounds. This mission-centered approach is also reflected in the criteria for recognition by the USDE. For example, even as accrediting agencies are intended to address student achievement, they are to do so "in relation to the institution's mission" (Section 602.16 (a) (1) (i)).

With more formal standards and greater emphasis on learning outcomes, the question arises whether the performance expectations of graduates in writing, math, biology, or other fields would be changed because of the institution's particular mission. Or, should there be common expectations regardless of mission? Some commentators have proposed a form of national or cross-institutional assessments, such as tests like the recently developed Collegiate Learning Assessment, which could be used for this purpose (*Inside Higher Ed* 2006). This proposal was strongly opposed by

the higher education community, and most test providers, as inappropriate given the wide range of institutional types and missions, and efforts to impose a national assessment have largely been repudiated.

As a result, accreditation standards, especially those dealing with learning results, are increasingly applied to balance common cross-institutional expectations with an individual institution's mission. With this approach, each institution is responsible for demonstrating that it meets accrediting standards within its particular context. Support for an institution-centered approach to assessment is reflected in new language added in the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 to Section 601.16, cited above, regarding "success with respect to student achievement." The new language is designed to assure that each institution can demonstrate that it addresses accrediting standards on student achievement within the framework of its mission, "which may include different standards for different institutions or programs, as established by the institution."

Significant efforts have also been made to move beyond the institution-centered approach of accreditation by calling for more information about institutions to be made public in comparison to one another. In 2004, the Business Higher Education Forum distinguished between performance measures used *within* institutions to foster improvement, and measures publicly reported *between* institutions to demonstrate accountability and stimulate policy awareness. The BHEF report stated:

> Generally speaking, the growing interest in student learning outcomes has been focused on ways to connect learning assessment with institutional improvements, not with broad public goals for higher education. The internal focus has been motivated by the conviction that improvement in performance should, after all, be the primary purpose of any system for public accountability, because accountability is about results and performance. But the inward focus means that there may be weaknesses in an institution's public communication about performance, as well as in the tools that root out performance problems occurring *between* rather than inside institutions. (BHEF 2004, 22, italics in original)

Similarly, the report of the Commission on the Future of Higher Education called for accreditation to provide more data that would allow for cross-institutional comparisons. It stated:

> Accreditation, the large and complex public-private system of federal, state and private regulators, has significant shortcomings. Accreditation agencies play a gatekeeper role in determining the eligibility of institutions and programs to receive federal and state grants and loans. However, despite increased attention by accreditors to learning assessments, they continue to

> play largely an internal role. Accreditation reviews are typically kept private, and those that are made public still focus on process reviews more than bottom-line results for learning or costs. The growing public demand for increased accountability, quality and transparency coupled with the changing structure and globalization of higher education requires a transformation of accreditation. (U.S. Department of Education 2006b, 15)

Quality concerns across the field of higher education are also raised by questions of whether the institution-by-institution approach of accreditation, while focusing on improvement of individual institutions, serves to improve the system of higher education nationally. The National Assessment of Adult Literacy, conducted every 10 years, found in 2003 that while the performance of college graduates (including those with graduate degrees) was greater than the population as a whole, performance had declined significantly in the past decade for proficiency in prose and document reading and applications. The survey found that less than a third of college graduates could read complex texts and make complicated inferences (U.S. Department of Education, 2006a). A similar test of college seniors discovered serious deficiencies in prose and mathematical literacy. Test results did not differ significantly among public institutions, regardless of their missions or types (Baer, Cook, and Baldi 2006).

The *Measuring Up* reports reviewed each state's higher education system and issued a report card on five indicator categories—preparation, participation, completion, affordability, and benefits. These reports provide comprehensive overviews of state performance and state-by-state grades. They attempted to apply a sixth indicator—learning—but until 2004 gave every state a grade of incomplete report because of the lack of common data for comparison among states and institutions on undergraduate learning. In the 2004 report of *Measuring Up*, five states participated in a pilot program that led, for the first time, to a public effort to evaluate the level of student learning and achievement against a number of publicly reported and compared indicators to measure quality. In this pilot, small statewide samples of students in public colleges and universities took tests that were designed to measure writing, critical thinking, and workforce preparation.

Following the issuance of these reports, the Secretary of Education attempted to impose comparisons of student learning outcomes through the issuance of new regulations. This controversial effort led to strong congressional opposition, and the new language cited above and a provision inserted into the 2008 Higher Education Opportunity Act limits the secretary's ability to issue any new regulations on the achievement of student success.

In the midst of strong opposition to a federally imposed system of inter-institutional comparisons (or the adoption of any single approach or test for such purposes), various efforts have been promoted for institutions to voluntarily provide information to the public in a readily understandable format that would allow each institution to present information about its effectiveness within its own context and mission. The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC) have developed a Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) being piloted in 2008 by various U.S. universities. The National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU) has developed the University and College Accountability Network (U-CAN), which also provides basic information about independent institutions on the Internet in a common format. U-CAN launched in 2008 is being piloted by various institutions. Both of these formats provide basic information about institutional size, student characteristics, costs, graduation rates, and placement of graduates. The VSA goes farther and requires that institutions pilot for three years the performance of a small sample of students on one of several nationally normed tests. While the institution is required to administer the test, as a pilot, however, the institution is not required to publish test results.

The Senior College Commission of WASC has responded to these public accountability concerns, revising its Standards in 2008 to provide this:

> The institution develops indicators for the achievement of its purposes and educational objectives at the institutional, program, and course levels. The institution has a system of measuring student achievement, in terms of retention, completion, and student learning. The institution makes public data on student achievement at the institutional and degree level, in a manner determined by the institution. (Standard 1.2)

Other WASC standards call for the use of "comparative data from external sources" for validating quality assurance processes (Standard 4.4) and conducting periodic reviews of all programs to gather evidence of program effectiveness from "external constituencies such as employers and professional organizations" (Standard 2.7).

Underlying calls for greater accountability and transparency is the belief that with more information about key areas of institutional performance known, the public, including policymakers, will be able to make more informed judgments about the institution. It is also believed that better public information will create an impetus for improvement when results can be compared across institutions of like type. HEIs are concerned that unfair comparisons may result from comparing two completely different institutions

with the same data element. For example, completion rates are entirely different for highly selective residential institutions than for urban institutions with a largely working adult commuter student population that attends part time. It is too early to know if these new efforts will lead to the intended results. Earlier efforts to make all accreditation documents public in order to increase transparency (Wolff 2004, 99–101) have given way to increasing public information organized around key data elements such as institutional costs, time to degree, success of graduates, and other information.

The additional information made available to the public through new Web sites and additional sources may be used in a meaningful way that may increase awareness and understanding of institutional performance. However, a *surfeit* of information may actually overwhelm users, leading to confusion and misunderstanding about the meaning the data presented. Most of the new Web sites providing common information elements are pilot projects and will no doubt be revised amidst campaigns to make data more user-friendly and useful.

## Additional Challenges for the Future

Accreditation has proven itself to be resilient and adaptive to the many changes that have occurred in higher education over the past century, and especially in the past 25 years. As accrediting agencies continue their transition (or transformation) toward greater learning-centeredness and public accountability, a number of challenges emerge.

### Engaging Faculty

Faculty receive little training or support for the new emphasis on student learning outcomes and evidence-centered accreditation processes. Most doctoral programs emphasize research with some attention to teaching, so faculty enter higher education with little knowledge of learning theory, pedagogy and learning design, or methods of learning assessment at the course and program levels. The most common concern is that faculty are resistant to both learning outcomes assessment and the public dissemination of outcomes results—a concern that the methods of assessment are not yet well developed and/or that their public use will lead to distortion. Experience shows, however, that when faculty become familiar with the extensive literature, research, and practice on student learning and assessment, these concerns dissipate. Faculty who engage in assessment

tend to find it rewarding and important. New materials such as rubics are now used to guide and assist faculty in implementing assessment.

## Addressing Reward Structures

Most institutions, irrespective of their missions, still reward research and publication as the primary basis for promotion and tenure. Where teaching effectiveness is considered it is primarily based on student end-of-class evaluations. Typically, no linkage exists between improving student learning and faculty promotion and reward structures. Participation on assessment committees is considered part of service to the institution, which rates low in the hierarchy of reward systems. For assessing and improving student learning to be made a priority, a way must be found for it to be rewarded as prominently as publishing an article, obtaining a grant, or getting a teaching award. The WASC Community College Commission Standard on this issue states: "Faculty and others directly responsible for student progress toward achieving stated student learning outcomes have, as a component of their evaluation, effectiveness in producing those learning outcomes" (ACCJC, Standard III(A) (1) (c)). The Senior College Commission of WASC, dealing with a broader range of institutional types, has also recently adopted a guideline to its Standards that promotes engagement with assessment and the scholarship of teaching and learning in the promotion process, but still leaves the final determination (and criteria) to the institution. It states: "Where appropriate, the institution includes in its policies for faculty promotion and tenure recognition of scholarship related to teaching, learning, assessment, and co-curricular learning."

## Improving Peer Reviewer Training

Accreditation has become far more complex with the shift toward learning-centeredness and public accountability. Just as faculty and staff need more training within institutions, so too do peer reviewers conducting institutional evaluations since they are drawn from institutions that are also attempting to address the new accrediting standards and visit approaches. It is important for evaluators to understand learning outcomes assessment, the relative benefits and challenges of different types of assessment, and a range of best practices. Accrediting agencies have, as a result, started to expand training sessions for site reviewers, and much more needs to be done. WASC has developed a variety of forms to guide and train evaluators as they conduct their on-site reviews, such as the rubrics cited earlier and a Framework for Evaluating Educational Effectiveness.

## Balancing the Accreditation Evaluation Function with Education

Accreditation's core mission is to evaluate programs and institutions. A great deal of education is needed to inform and orient faculty and staff of the major changes that have occurred over the past 20 years. This has led to several accrediting agencies offering educational seminars and workshops for institutional teams, especially faculty, such as the Assessment Academy of the Higher Learning Commission of North Central and a series of Educational Seminars of the WASC Commissions. The annual meetings of accrediting associations have also turned into major academic conferences on assessment and accountability. These activities are proving to be well attended and highly effective; yet, at the same time, accrediting agencies will need to evaluate the same institutions that are attending these workshops and training sessions. It is important that a firewall be established between the two activities: evaluation and education.

## Internationalizing Quality Assurance

As higher education is becoming understood as a major driver of economic development, governments all over the world are investing heavily in higher education and also strengthening national approaches to quality assurance. These approaches take two primary forms—either establishing or strengthening governmental agencies responsible for quality assurance, often linked to institutional funding, or developing nongovernmental entities to evaluate institutions. U.S. accreditation stands as a model of how nongovernmental accreditation can be effective in assuring quality without governmental oversight of curricula and institutional functioning and has been used for this purpose by many countries. The process of peer review developed through the accreditation process is utilized by nearly all accrediting processes internationally, reflecting the influence of U.S. accreditation methods.

At the same time, several quality assurance agencies, notably those of Britain, Australia, and New Zealand, have developed an "institutional audit" approach focusing more directly on the quality assurance systems of the institutions evaluated. Student achievement is increasingly becoming an important focus of these audit approaches, and of quality assurance agencies in Europe, as part of the agency review process of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). As elements of institutional capacity stabilize and mature, there would appear to be an emerging shift among quality assurance agencies to emphasize

assuring student learning outcomes and periodic program review, as has been the growing focus of U.S. accreditation for the past 20 years.

## Impact of the 2008 Reauthorization Act

As the 2008 Higher Education Opportunity Act was being developed and moved through Congress over the past five years, a number of concerns were raised about accreditation. Each had to be addressed in turn, and in the end, only a few significant changes were made in the new law. The most important of these relate to the locus of responsibility for defining, setting standards for, and evaluating student achievement. Congress clearly placed the responsibility for defining and setting standards for student achievement, especially in relation to student learning outcomes, on the institutions themselves. This was a direct rebuttal to Education Secretary Spellings' efforts to impose a federal requirement for accreditors to set such standards and for the Department of Education to review them as part of the agency recognition process.[6] Notwithstanding this limitation, it is expected that the emphasis on accountability will continue as accreditors focus more heavily on student achievement at the institutional level. This will occur through greater attention to student learning outcomes and improving retention and graduation rates.

## Conclusion

Accreditation remains vibrant and at the center of the U.S. quality assurance system. In the past 20 years, regional accrediting agencies have significantly increased their focus on student learning, with several leading agencies undertaking a fundamental transformation of their standards and site visit processes to become learning-centered. Ultimately, the goal of these changes is to move beyond decennial reviews focused mainly on capacity issues to stimulating institutional development of embedded, ongoing institutional systems of quality assurance and improvement with a deliberate and comprehensive approach to evaluating and improving student learning. This would be a major cultural change for higher education, which has traditionally viewed quality as a function of resources, reputation, and inputs. The change will not occur without faculty shifting from teaching toward a greater focus on learning, with institutional processes and rewards recognizing and supporting this shift.

Public concerns about higher education accountability are likely to continue, if not increase, in coming years. It is likely that the shift to an outcomes and learning-centered model of accreditation will endure and, over time, change or at least significantly expand the definition of quality in higher education.

## Notes

1. See the Appendix for information on the six regional associations. Typically these associations have a commission for K-12 schools and a commission for higher education. The Western Association is unique in having a commission for community colleges and one for senior colleges and universities. While not the focus of this chapter, several of the associations have separated out the schools and postsecondary commissions into separate corporations and no longer operate as a single association.
2. While all accrediting agencies publish their accrediting actions, especially when a sanction is imposed, institutional and program self-study and team reports are not made public by any of the regional accrediting bodies and nearly all of the programmatic accrediting agencies. Many states have "sunshine laws" requiring access to these documents at public institutions, but they do not apply to private or independent institutions.
3. Nearly all states have similarly required institutional accreditation as a precondition for eligibility for state financial aid to students and institutions.
4. The Office of Education had been a part of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and was separated out into a separate, cabinet level department in 1979.
5. Section 602.16 of the U.S. Department of Education recognition regulations provide

   > (1) The agency's accreditation standards effectively address the quality of the institution or program in the following areas: (i) Success with respect to student achievement in relation to the institution's mission, including, as appropriate, consideration of course completion, State licensing examination, and job placement rates. (ii) Curricula. (iii) Faculty. (iv) Facilities, equipment, and supplies. (v) Fiscal and administrative capacity as appropriate to the specified scale of operations. (vi) Student support services. (vii) Recruiting and admissions practices, academic calendars, catalogs, publications, grading, and advertising. (viii) Measures of program length and the objectives of the degrees or credentials offered. (ix) Record of student complaints received by, or available to, the agency. (x) Record of compliance with the institution's program responsibilities under Title IV of the Act, based on the most recent student loan default rate data provided by the Secretary, the

results of financial or compliance audits, program reviews, and any other information that the Secretary may provide to the agency;

6. The modification to Section 495 (g) of the Higher Education Opportunity Act provides "Nothing in this section shall be construed to permit the Secretary to establish any criteria that specifies, defines, or prescribes the standards that accrediting agencies or associations shall use to assess any institution's success with respect to student achievement."

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# Chapter 7

# The Transformation of Quality Assurance in Higher Education in China

*Jinghuan Shi*

## Quality Assurance in a Global Context: Focus on China

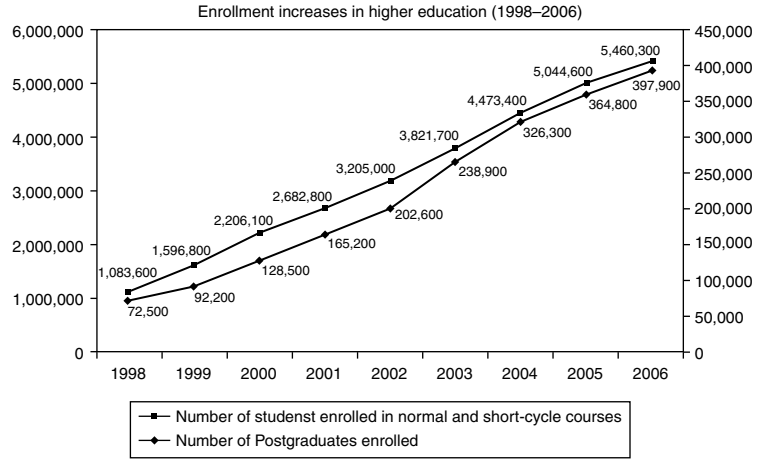
The quality of higher education, as the Commission II of UNESCO pointed out in its final report in 2003, "is a complex, dynamic, historically constructed and multifaceted concept" and usually "reflects national, regional, and global socio-economic, cultural and political visions" (UNESCO 2003). Generally speaking, the worldwide movement of quality assurance (QA) in higher education is associated with increasing expansion and the extension of market forces in the context of the growing trend of globalization. For example, in China, any discussion of QA in higher education must be conducted in the context of China's rapid economic development and social transformation.

Increasing expansion in higher education (hereafter HE) can be depicted by the following data. According to UNESCO, the number of students in tertiary education worldwide has continued to increase rapidly, from 90 million in 1998 to 121 million in 2002, an average growth of more than 7 percent per year. Growth rates for tertiary education in developing countries are, on average, more than twice those observed in developed countries.

China's growth of 24 percent annually accounts for one-third of the global increase (UNESCO 2006, 54). This rapid increase in enrollment in various settings has brought not only increases in total numbers of students but also expansion of HEI size and complexity in the proportion of the relevant age group enrolled. More importantly, these trends raise critical questions about the nature and functions of HE. In some cases, competing forces of egalitarianism have challenged the linkage between quality and meritocracy. With the expansion of higher education systems beyond traditional elite universities and the consequent rise of a variety of additional HEIs, the concept of excellence has to be redefined (OECD 2004). Table 7.1 depicts the increase in HE enrollment in China from 1998 to 2006. During that same period the national average of higher education students increased 131 percent; the average numbers at bachelor degree institutions increased 207 percent, and the average number for vocational institutions increased by 88.7 percent. As the annual enrollment in HE has expanded four times within these eight years, it is not surprising to see changes in college life in general, and changes in the standards used to measure the quality of teaching and learning in particular (table 7.1).

The rise of neoliberalism and its associated market economic measures has gone beyond the strictly for-profit business realm and has penetrated to sectors such as higher education. Market principles represent a form of

**Table 7.1** Increase in enrollment of higher education institutions in Mainland China, 1998–2006

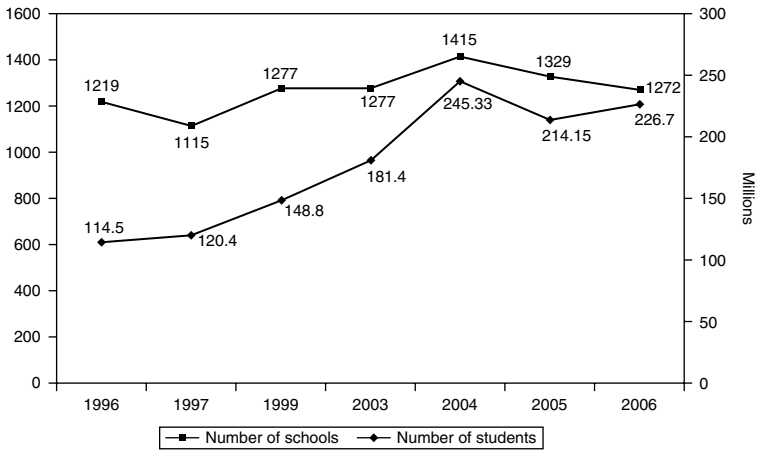



*Source*: Created by author.

social coordination that is noncoercive and proceeds largely through mutual adaptation. Parallel with this trend are the processes of decentralization, privatization, and diversification in the forms and structures of higher education. These in turn challenge not only a unitary view of what constitutes excellence, but also the practice and systems of QA methods. Table 7.2 shows the increase of private HEIs and their enrollments in China from 1996 to 2006. While over 1,000 private HEIs have emerged in China, only about two dozens have been officially recognized and authorized to grant the undergraduate degree. The remaining institutions are only authorized to provide vocational training or prepare students for taking higher education entrance exams. Students enrolled in these "non-university" institutions rightly question their quality and legitimacy, as well as the definition of what constitutes "quality."

Finally, in the knowledge-based world in which we live, globalization and economic integration create competition among HEIs. "Without more and better higher education, developing countries will find it increasingly difficult to benefit from the global knowledge-based economy" (World Bank 2002). But as latecomers in the process, developing countries have to face concurrently the dual challenges of quantitative expansion and qualitative enhancement in higher education. Equally problematic for QA are the worldwide growing demands for accountability, and the rising costs and pressures to find more cost-effective approaches to HE.

**Table 7.2** Increase of private higher education institutions and students, 1996–2006




*Source*: Created by author.

Generally speaking, discussing QA issues in HE in a changing society requires a broader view of the functions of higher education, a better understanding of the diversity of the system, and more suitable ways to evaluate the effectiveness of QA implementation.

## The Development of Quality Evaluation and Assurance Systems in China

During the past two decades of higher education reform, China has gone through tremendous changes, especially in the following areas: quantitative expansion, quality improvement, structural rearrangement, and efficiency improvement. The four aspects are not synchronized, however, with quantitative expansion and structural rearrangement taking the lead. For example, in 1990, only 3.4 percent of the age cohort population between 18 and 22 benefited from higher education, while this percentage grew to over 23 in 2007. Now China not only has the world's largest population, but also the largest higher education system in terms of gross enrollment. A total of 23 million students were studying in various higher educational institutions in 2007, which was four times more than the number 10 years ago. Based on the principle of providing students with a more general education and broadening their specialist training, according to MOE data, undergraduate programs decreased from 1,343 in 1982 to 249 in 1998. In recent years, there has been a shift from quantitative expansion to quality improvement as the central government has made it clear through its policy that the core issue in higher education is quality enhancement.

Along with the rapid development of higher education, efforts to establish an officially recognized QA system have also come into being. It is useful to briefly review critical events in the development of China's QA system since the late 1980s, as illustrated by figure 7.1.

The current QA evaluation endeavor began in the late 1980s in the field of engineering. This trial experience led to the initial establishment of an accreditation system jointly designed by the Chinese Academy of Engineering (CAE), the Association of Science and Technology, and the Ministry of Education (MOE). Currently China is preparing to join the Washington Accord, which is an internationally recognized association of engineering accreditation organizations, and several flagship engineering universities in China have been actively involved in reforming curricula, teaching methods, and assessment processes to reach the international accreditation standard.

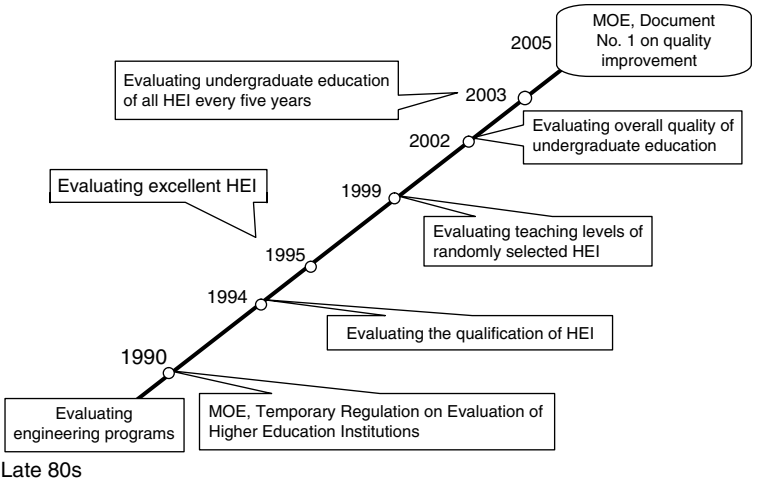



**Figure 7.1** Development of higher education evaluation in China, 1980–2005

*Source*: Created by author.

The MOE issued the Temporary Regulation on Evaluation of Higher Education Institutions in 1990 and established a basic structure for HE evaluation. By 1993 these efforts resulted in an evaluation of "excellent" HEIs, and in 1994 an evaluation of the qualifications of HEIs. These evaluations were superseded in 2002 by the newly designed national evaluation for all regular full-time undergraduate institutions randomly selected with a five-year institutional cycle. The numbers of evaluations conducted has been uneven, varying from a low of 8 in 1994 and 1996 to 133 in 2007 and 198 in 2008.

In the process of developing its evaluation system, China employs a governmental regulatory model as its primary mechanism in which the central government works as the major agency to develop and enforce regulatory rules. Subsequently, these state-led agencies for quality assessment organize the implementation of these rules and regulations. The Higher Education Division under the MOE works as the major administrative agency to develop policy and indicators for evaluations. It also organizes the National Expert Commission, which acts in the role of a consultancy body. The Higher Education Evaluation Center directed by the MOE is the major institution for implementing the evaluation through the National Expert Panel, which works as the primary task force on individual institutional evaluations.

The indicators of Overall Quality of Undergraduate Education were revised in 2004 and include seven major aspects with unified standards,

plus distinguishing features displayed individually. The seven primary indicators are: guiding ideologies, faculty, teaching conditions, discipline construction and teaching reform, teaching management, learning engagement and atmosphere, and teaching and learning achievements. Nineteen secondary indicators are used to produce a four-level evaluation finding of excellent, good, qualified, and unqualified. Forty-three points need to be observed and calculated in developing the scores.

In practice, the current national evaluation system for HE focuses much more on basic conditions and standards (so-called input factors) in such areas as facilities, equipment, funding, teacher qualification, and management. It provides more of a framework to evaluate government input efforts and the "stated intentions" of the institutions. This is understandable in the sense that in the early stages of mass higher education, when colleges and universities are suffering from resource constraints and striving for better material conditions, the focus is on utilizing evaluation to highlight such conditions in order to stimulate public attention and attract more supportive actions. Evaluation can work as a tool for HEIs to apply for more resources and support from both government and society, while the latter may increase pressure on the HEIs to improve overall quality based on infrastructure improvement.

Judging by the results from overall resource increases and total input expansion, we should applaud the achievement: the total amount of the budget for higher education in 2005 was 255 billion Chinese Yuan, 3.6 times more than the amount in 1998, with the annual increase of the budget averaging 24.5 percent. The total campus land available for the full-time regular HEIs in 2006, compared with the year of 1998, was 2.6 times more, the space for teaching and administration of these institutions increased 3.7 times, teaching equipment and facilities increased 4.7 times (Chen 2007). But if we view such data from the resource allocation on a per student basis, problems appear, for the average expenses per student in the educational budget decreased in the period 2001–2005, from 3 to 9 percent annually. The highest drop was 9.36 percent in 2002 (MOE 2006). The expansion of higher education in China since 1999 has created situations where even increased budgets could not compete with the growth of students. The constraints on resources were even more severe in local HEIs, which experienced the largest expansion.

By 2008, the national evaluation on Overall Quality of Undergraduate Education had gone through its first round based on the original design and has moved into the period of summarization. In a recent survey of 27 randomly selected HEIs, three groups of students, teachers and administrators were asked to give their personal judgment on overall quality of higher education. Students as consumers gave the lowest points, while

administrators gave the highest (Wang 2008). Teachers, especially those who have done research on teaching/learning or quality issues, had more to say. Generally speaking, there appears to be consensus on the value and necessity of national evaluation but there is little agreement on how to do it, who should be given the authority to do it, and what are to be its purpose, content, and methods of evaluation.

After the rapid expansion of higher education, quality has become the major concern in China, not only in the area of education, but also in the whole of society. We have reasons to believe that the first round of national evaluations has already provided valuable lessons and we will be able to create better instruments by learning from them.

## Projects "211" and "985" in the 1990s: Joint Government and HEIs Efforts to Improve Quality

Because of limited resources and the high demand for quality higher learning institutions, the Chinese government has had a policy since the mid-1950s of building up so-called key universities with more government resources and policy support than that provided to other institutions. The number of key higher education institutions increased from 6 in 1954 to 96 in 1976 with the largest increase taking place from 16 in 1959 to 64 in 1960.

Project 211 begun in 1995 was the largest key construction project supported by the central government since the 1950s. From 1995 to 2000 the overall investment in this project totalled 10.894 billion Chinese Yuan, with the number of institutions increasing from 2 in 1996 to 107 in 2005. Of this amount, 2.755 billion came from the central government, 3.172 billion came from affiliated government agencies, 2.489 billion came form local governments, 2.363 billion came from institutional fund-raising efforts and 115 million from miscellaneous channels. An additional 7.472 billion came from affiliated and local governments, specifically for improving the infrastructure of key HEIs. Project 211 institutions have made significant progress during these years on several levels. With respect to student expansion, undergraduate students increased 61 percent, master degree students and doctoral candidates increased 108 and 101 percent respectively. Faculty improvement as represented by doctoral degree holders increased 109 percent (China Education and Research Network 2001).

Project 985 commenced in 1998 when Jiang Zemin, the former chairman of the PRC, gave a speech celebrating the 100th anniversary of Peking

University, and declared that China would build up a few world-class universities through national efforts. The central government committed special resources or the Project 985 institutions. The number of such institutions increased from 2 in 1998 to 38 in 2006. Among the total number of 1908 regular HEIs in China, Project 985 institutions made up less than 3 percent in 2007, but they account for more than 50 percent of the total doctoral candidates, the national key discipline programs and key laboratories. More than half of the academicians in the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Chinese Academy of Engineering are also from the 38 Project 985 institutions.

The main indicators of academic output of universities at the present time are the number of published journal articles (on basic research), and patent applications (on the applied and experimental development side). Although these bibliometric indicators are imperfect, the number of journal articles and authorized patents are still used to identify the output and knowledge generation of universities. Within 10 years from 1997 to 2006, the total number of academic publications produced by the research universities in China tripled with the Science Citation Index (SCI) papers published by the 985 Project universities accounting for 50 percent of the total. The number of patent applications by the top 985 Project universities increased, from 40 to 500 annually per institution (Zhang 2007). (The data for the top nine universities in the program are now referred to as 2+7.)

The efforts represented by Projects 211 and 985 were not simply top-down, centralized programs imposed by the central government, but joint efforts from government (central and local) and the HEIs themselves. They combined the strategy of choosing traditionally recognized excellent HEIs with market oriented incentive policies to raise standards even further. The rationale behind this strategy was to use scarce resources most efficiently by providing them to the best universities, already well established and widely recognized as being efficient, accountable, and productive. The goal has been to stimulate the QA movement at the best institutions first, and then disseminate elements of proven quality improvement to other HEIs. Since there had not been a well-developed QA mechanism in China, these initial efforts using the well-established institutions as a basis may work as a trial to stimulate the efforts throughout the wider system of higher education.

Recent case studies have demonstrated that as HEIs began to expand, those institutions with better resource bases and higher market demand were most likely to take the initiative in addressing quality concerns in such areas as pedagogical innovation, curriculum design (and implementation), and improved teaching and learning. This is particularly true in Tsinghua and Peking Universities as well as the other 985 Project institutions. For example, Tsinghua University began in the late 1980s to

discuss the goal of developing into a "world-class" university and by 1994 had crafted a three-phase strategic development plan geared to the year 2020. The first phase from 1994 to 2002 saw the major task as reforming the university structure and laying the foundation for a comprehensive, research-intensive university. The second stage from 2003 to 2011 established the major work as achieving a breakthrough in some strong subjects and taking a leap forward in various key fields. The third phase from the year 2012 to 2020 and after will focus on major efforts to achieve overall improvement and by coordinative efforts reaching the world standard.

Coming with the expansion of postgraduate education and the goal of becoming a world class university, a crucial decision was made in the mid-1990s to retain its undergraduate programs at their current levels. Thus all its future growth will take place in the development of new and expansion of existing graduate programs. In 1981 the total number of graduate students was 435. In 2005 the number was 18,443. As a result, Tsinghua's ranking in terms of the number of undergraduate students in China dropped from the first to the twentieth. Only the top one per thousand applicants with the highest scores in national entrance exams are enrolled, meaning that they come with great intellectual ambitions, potential and high expectations for fulfilling their dreams that in turn challenge their teachers and the university administration. The new strategy for dealing with the challenge is to raise the quality of undergraduate education in general and specifically to strengthen undergraduate research while developing a research-oriented undergraduate training model. This endeavor has influenced curriculum (program) design, teaching/learning methods, and has led to reform in school organization, assessment, and evaluation. The success of the experiment earned Tsinghua a national award in 2005.

Innovative actions aimed at quality improvement worth mentioning at Tsinghua include the following:

1. Establishing a seminar series for undergraduate students that includes the Freshman Seminar (professor + less than 15 freshmen), the Senior Seminar (professor + less than 15 senior students), and the Seminar on Specific Topics (professor + less than 15 undergraduates from different grades but with the same interests in the selected topic). Through the seminars, undergraduate students not only gain knowledge from prominent scholars in various fields, but also acquire research skills and develop attitudes and the ability to use and explore knowledge creatively. Quite a number of undergraduates establish interest in certain topics through the interactive seminar discussions that lead to research commitments that eventuate in postgraduate studies.

2. Establishing Student Research Training (SRT) as extracurricular activities. Research-based learning and knowledge inquiries are not just happening in classrooms or labs following traditional disciplinary divisions and process. Established in 1996, the SRT program has become an active part of undergraduate education in the university. This program has spread to the extent that other top research universities in China now all have their own research training programs. Tsinghua's SRT model is an extracurricular inquiry-based activity initiated by students who usually work in teams with invited professors functioning as supervisors. Inter- or multidisciplinary efforts are particularly encouraged. Recently a special fund called the "Seed Fund" was set up as a part of the SRT specifically to support innovative projects initiated by students. This model follows the procedures of other university research projects, which have competitive applications, reliable assessment of the progress, and the presentation of final demonstrations of research findings to a committee composed of relevant scholars and experts. The Seed Fund not only supports students in natural sciences and engineering, but also those in social sciences and the humanities. During the years 2002–2006, 4600 SRT projects have been implemented in Tsinghua with over 10,000 undergraduates involved. Some of the research products received national awards and quite a number of them were published in international refereed journals or received patents with high market value.

3. Reforming the evaluation system and involving students in assessments.

4. Tsinghua's long tradition of pursuing excellence, marked by an achievement-oriented campus culture. For high quality teaching and learning, the university has formed a five-dimensional teaching evaluation system that includes an instructor's self-report, peer observation, expert evaluation, student assessment, and graduate feedback. Among the five elements, students' opinions have the major weight. Over 1 million teaching evaluation sheets have been filled out by students since 1998 and more than 20,000 teachers/teaching tasks have been evaluated in all courses at Tsinghua. All teachers receive feedback from the University Evaluation Center for Teaching and Learning at the end of the semester with a score for their teaching, along with the average score in the institute. Student comments and suggestions for improving teaching are also included. If a teacher gets a crying face on the sheet, which means the lowest 5 percent on his/her evaluation, he or she cannot apply for promotion in that year and the University Teaching Improving Center will send an expert to work with the person for the purpose of improvement.

In sum, the 211 and 985 Projects initiated by the central government in cooperation with key HEIs have strongly affected individual institutions in improving the quality of their teaching.

## National "Quality Raising" Project in the Early Twenty-First Century

As the twenty-first century began, China initiated a nationwide endeavor in "capacity building" with the major focus in higher education on quality enhancement.[1] The "quality raising project" launched in 2005 was the centerpiece of this effort. From the "Document No. 1" issued by the MOE in 2005, we find that there are six major objectives and working fields in this project: the first is to rearrange the disciplinary structure and to promote the establishment of an accreditation system to assure quality in higher education; the second is to develop new curriculum and textbooks and to encourage the sharing of teaching and learning resources for lifelong education; the third is to strengthen practical learning and hands-on activities and to promote student innovations in the learning process; the fourth is to develop a high quality teaching workforce and to motivate teachers to work in teams in order to improve their teaching performance; the fifth is to collect and publish basic data on teaching and learning in different HEIs and to promote third party evaluation and assessment; and, the sixth is to strengthen partnerships among higher education institutions, and to facilitate the harmonious development of higher education in the eastern and western regions of the country. In each of the six aspects, both central and local governments have detailed plans with special funds and policies available to guarantee their implementation.[2] The "quality raising project" does not just refer to the general issue of quality improvement, but focuses on changing basic principles of education as well as ideological positions regarding education. It is a parallel development to the expansion of HE from an elite to a mass system. While the movement toward a mass HE system was largely initiated by the central government, market forces and internationalization were very much a part of these more recent reforms, especially with respect to resource allocation, redefining QA, and management reform. Whereas Projects 211 and 985 concentrated on key institutions, the quality raising projects have a much broader application in HE and are more sensitive to the diversity and differentiation within the system. These current reforms represent a shift from material and infrastructural change to those more focused on the human element in teaching and learning.

It is much too early to judge what may come from these projects, but improving quality as the core objective of higher education in China is part of the MOE's strategic plan for educational development for the next 20 years. We have reason to believe that more attention will be given and efforts will be made to enhance quality in Chinese HE in the near future.

## Notes

1. In the early twenty-first century, the Ministry of Education in China organized a group of scholars from different fields to prepare an overall analysis and a strategic plan for China's education development in the future 50 years. The team worked out an important report "Education and Human Resources in China" published in 2002. It proposed a nationwide "capacity-building." The Action Plan for Invigorating Education 2003–2007 issued by the Ministry of Education started the project of "Quality Education in the New Century" and the focus is on strengthening students' innovation and raises their practice competence.
2. The full text of the document can be found in http://www.moe.edu.cn/edoas/website18/info8078.htm.

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# Chapter 8

# Quality Assurance and Higher Education in Japan

*Shinichi Yamamoto*

## Introduction: The Development of Higher Education in Japan

The modern higher education system of Japan was introduced in the late nineteenth century when the first university, the "Imperial University," was established in Tokyo in 1887. This university aimed at modernizing Japan by importing the most advanced knowledge from overseas for the training of future elites. The number of universities in Japan gradually increased to 46 in the 1940s. In addition to these universities, various other kinds of higher education institutions emerged with different missions and enjoyed different levels of prestige. Although the role of these institutions was to nurture talented students, people realized that higher education was valuable in other ways for their future life—a fact that would lead in time to the so-called examination hell problem I discuss below.

The higher education system in Japan was completely changed and reformed after World War II. The most important change in the new system was that various kinds of higher education institutions were merged into a single "university" system composed of four-year undergraduate programs and, for some universities, selected graduate programs. This merger caused problems, primarily with the quality of teaching and research because a majority of the new institutions designated as universities had been nonuniversity level institutions in the prewar period. This meant that

they had lower admission standards, allowing large numbers of applicants to gain admission. During the subsequent period of rapid higher education growth, some small institutional innovations were made in the system, including the creation of a two-year junior college system and two–three-year technical colleges. However, the main structure of a four-year university system was maintained. By 2005, the Japanese higher education system had grown enormously to encompass 726 universities and 488 junior colleges with overall enrollment of approximately 3 million students. In addition to these, there are also 63 colleges of technology and 3,439 technical schools, both of which are regarded as a part of the higher education system. Fifty-five percent of Japan's young people enroll in universities and colleges after graduation from senior high schools.

With such an interest in and access to higher education, the Ministry of Education has tried in various ways to reform the higher education system. Since the 1970s numerous reform policies have been implemented including the Higher Education Plan. This plan was designed to control the establishment of new educational institutions and schools, to provide financial aid for existing private institutions, to reform the entrance examination system through the establishment of the National Center for University Entrance Examinations, and to establish a new type of national university such as the University of Tsukuba. The aim of these policies was to maintain the quality of university education while controlling its expansion. The reforms of the 1970s, however, were not fully successful. In addition to the strong tradition of university autonomy, it was difficult for many in higher education to accept the premise that universities should be subject to reform. Therefore, fundamental changes did not occur until the early 1990s.

Reform difficulties primarily surrounded the general assumption that the main role of higher education in Japan was to focus on the entrance examination as the matter of primary importance, rather than the education and training of students for future careers. People were not as interested in higher education quality as in the "entrance examination hell" problem. Also, university management had been much easier before the 1990s because universities did not suffer from a shortage of applicants as long as they ensured the existence of "fair" entrance examination policies, which generally meant that students were accepted mainly on the basis of academic achievement.

## The 15-Year University Reform in Japan

In the 1990s, the environment surrounding the Japanese higher education system dramatically changed, resulting from several causes. First, the Cold War ended, and this dramatically impacted Japanese society; academia was

no exception. During the Cold War period, strong political opposition to the ruling Liberal Democratic Party had come from both the political right and the left. Therefore, if the government attempted to implement new higher education reforms, more than a few university professors tended to oppose them by arguing in favor of university autonomy and against governmental intervention in university affairs. With the end of the Cold War, however, the opposition parties grew weaker and professors shifted their attention from maintaining university autonomy to gaining resources for research and teaching. Under these changed circumstances in the 1990s, university reform became much easier for the government to implement.

Second, with the collapse of the bubble economy in the late 1980s, the government realized that Japan needed to reconstruct its economy more along the lines of a knowledge-based society. Thus, universities were regarded more as a place for teaching and research than as the place for screening young talent for corporate placement or for merely enjoying the benefits of a university student life. People started to demand accountability in higher education, not only for the society at large but also for students, who increasingly came to be viewed as consumers of higher education.

Third, as illustrated by figure 8.1 the 18-year-old population has declined from 2,050,000 in 1992 to an estimated 1,200,000 in the decade 2010–2020. It was the first time that universities had to confront a situation of declining enrollments and to face a shortage of students. The specter of high school students competing for university entrance was replaced by universities competing for students. Universities had to increase their attractiveness in order to market themselves to students. A kind of

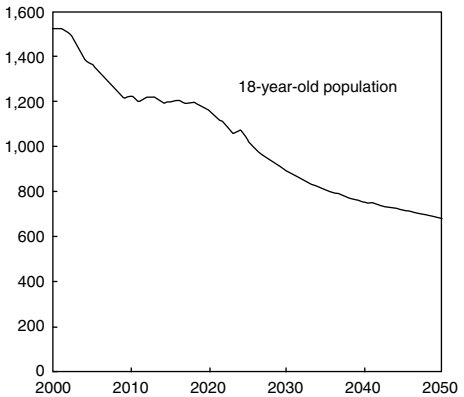


**Figure 8.1** Population of 18 years of age

*Source*: The National Institute of Population and Social Security, 2005.

market-driven reform has, correspondingly, gradually changed university education. According to a study by the National Institute of Population and Social Security (NIPSS), the population of 18 year olds is estimated to fall to around 700,000 in the 2050s (NIPSS, 2005). This long-term decline is a serious problem for the Japanese higher education system.

Fourth, not only in Japan but also in other countries, science and technology have been given a high priority in national policy debates because science is seen as the primary engine for economic growth and international competitiveness. This notion has resulted in universities becoming more involved in the "science system," composed of universities, government, and private industry. How to perform strategic research and how to train future scientists and engineers are the main problems that universities are now asked to address. One of the most critical policies to emerge from this period is the Science and Technology Basic Plan initiated in 1996. In that plan, universities are regarded as important players for the promotion of science and technology through research in their graduate schools.

Fifth, the higher education system became more globalized in the 1990s. Universities and colleges became more involved in international competition for students and scholars as well as academic outputs and outcomes. This ensures that issues of gaining and maintaining international-level quality are crucial for institutions that were accustomed to think only about their role in the domestic market. It is quite natural that the system of international quality assurance has become increasingly important as a result.

## From Self-Evaluation to External Review

In 1991, the University Council, an advisory organization to the Minister of Education, recommended that a system of self-review and self-evaluation activities at each university and college should be introduced for the purpose of improving university education and research. Why self-review and self-evaluation? Principally, because universities had been reluctant to be evaluated by external parties, that is, by the government, industry, or even by external peers. It was believed that self-evaluation was politically the most acceptable form of introducing systematic review and change. As indicated earlier, the notion of university autonomy was very strong. Thus, the Ministry of Education proceeded cautiously in implementing a policy of review and evaluation so that it would not be perceived as threatening such autonomy.

This system of self-review and evaluation rapidly spread among universities and colleges, especially at national universities. The national universities knew that the environment of higher education was changing

quickly and that they needed more government financial resources. Conducting a self-review and evaluation was believed, by them, to be a prerequisite for negotiating with the Ministry for additional resources. Massive volumes of self-evaluation reports were published in the 1990s as a result.

Seeing this success, the Ministry of Education initiated an external or third-party review system on the recommendation of the National University Council. In 2000, the National Institute for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation (NIAD-UE) was established. The mission and purpose of the Institute were (1) to evaluate the adherence of university education and research programs to formal academic standards, and (2) to award degrees to individuals who have studied at nonuniversity higher education institutions. The NIAD-UE began to evaluate the activities of national universities in 2001 in order to improve the quality of education and research, and to provide the results of these evaluations to the universities, their stakeholders, and the public.

## The National University Corporation and Its Evaluation

Universities and colleges are evaluated both for the promotion of academic standards and for their managerial performance. In 2004, all the national universities, which were formerly regarded as a part of the government, were incorporated. The aim of incorporation was to promote university reform by giving higher educational institutions more autonomous status and letting them manage their institutions through their own efforts and as part of their own responsibility. The involvement of the president and the central administration of universities was strongly emphasized as a means to achieve these results.

Incorporation was also closely related to a government-wide movement toward administrative and financial reform. The central government had already sought to reduce its role in several areas and the national university system was one of these areas. After a prolonged and serious battle between the Ministry of Education and the Administrative and Financial authorities in the government, the incorporation of the national universities was finally achieved. Under this scheme, every national university was given a six-year goal for achieving certain standards, and was expected to accomplish more things with fewer resources. Increasing efficiency was one of the underlying goals and each university was to be evaluated every six years for the efficiency of its management as well an annual evaluation of its performance.

## Introducing a New Accreditation System

In 2001, the Council for Regulatory Reform, which was established in the cabinet office of the central government, published a report on the regulatory reform of the government. The report included matters related to proposed changes in the higher education system, such as development of free competitive environments for higher education, minimization of common rules in regulating the establishment of universities and faculties, and so on. In exchange for deregulation, the council proposed the introduction of a continuous accreditation system by third-party organizations. The council report states:

> With a view to maintaining and improving the level of university education and research activities, a continuous accreditation system should be introduced by which all authorized universities are required to acquire accreditation by third-party organizations and report the results regularly. When any violation of laws and regulations is exposed in the evaluation results, the MEXT should be able to take corrective measures.The continuous accreditation system by a third-party organization is an evaluation and approval mechanism to ensure quality education and research activities at universities, in which universities are to acquire accreditation from a specialized organization based on whether they satisfy requirements for universities, once every 5 or 10 years. (Council for Regulatory Reform 2001)

The impact of this report was quite large and the Ministry of Education gradually started to introduce the new accreditation system, until it was finally fully established in 2004. Under the new accreditation system, all universities and colleges must be evaluated every seven years or less by a quality assurance agency authorized by the Minister of Education. This system is expected to promote both quality assurance and quality enhancement of universities and colleges, while the chartering system (where all universities and colleges must be approved by the Minister of Education when they are established) was made more flexible than in the past.

By 2005–2006, four accrediting agencies had been authorized and they began to evaluate and accredit a selected number of universities and colleges. The four authorized agencies are as follows;

1. National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation (NIAD-UE);
2. Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA);
3. Japan Institution for Higher Education Evaluation (JIHEE);
4. Japan Association for College Accreditation.

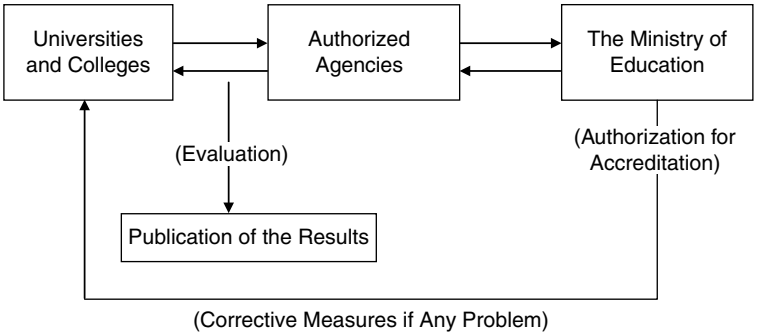


**Figure 8.2** Evaluation and accreditation system in Japan

*Source*: Created by author.

These authorized agencies differ from each other in terms of historical background and institutional affiliation. In Japan, national institutions and private institutions do not necessarily share common interests. A similar problem exists between prestigious institutions and others of lesser standing. In the past, institutions would attempt to choose an accreditation agency that would hold them to less demanding standards. Under the revised provisions this was no longer possible. Figure 8.2 presents the nature and flow of the current process of accreditation, which is now similar among all HEIs. Institutions first submit a self-evaluation. Then, a committee of peers is established for the formal accreditation. This committee analyzes the self-evaluation report according to criteria established by the authorizing agency, and the committee compiles the evaluation results based on the analysis of the report and a site visit. Finally, institutions have the chance to send their responses to the authorized agencies before a final decision of accreditation is made.

The criteria for university accreditation by the NIAD-UE examine the following aspects of the institution:

1. mission of the university;
2. organization of education and research;
3. faculty staff and educational assistants;
4. student admission;
5. curriculum and method for education:
   (a) undergraduate degree programs;
   (b) postgraduate degree programs;
   (c) professional degree programs;
6. achievement of education;

7. student services;
8. facilities and equipment;
9. system for improving quality of education;
10. finance;
11. management:
    (d) option A: research achievements;
    (e) option B: public educational services.

## The Impact of the New Accreditation System

In 2005, a large number of accreditation activities was implemented. The four authorized accreditation agencies released their results to the general public on March 2006. According to these reports, all institutions that applied for accreditation were evaluated and accredited by one of these agencies; the NIAD-UE evaluated and accredited 4 universities, 2 junior colleges, and 18 colleges of technology; the JUAA evaluated and accredited 25 universities; the JIHEE evaluated and accredited 4 universities, and finally the Japan Association for College Accreditation evaluated and accredited 30 junior colleges.

By the end of 2007, 268 universities, 36 percent of the total number, had applied for evaluation and accreditation. Among the junior colleges, 134 institutions (or 34 percent) had done so. As the number of application increased, some institutions were not accredited. In 2007, one university among 38 institutions was given a reserved judgment by the JIHEE and four universities among 52 institutions were given a reserved judgment, one university was not accredited by JUAA, and all institutions reviewed by the NIAD-UE were accredited. These facts imply that all the institutions may not be accredited when they apply. It may damage their institutional reputation if they fail to be accredited, although it is not necessarily connected directly to the original approval for establishment by the government.

Of the more than one thousand universities and colleges in Japan, those that have been accredited are still small in number. The majority of those remaining, however, must apply for accreditation by 2011. The experience of four years of accreditation shows how difficult it will be to conduct hundreds of assessments over the next seven-year period. It is very expensive and resource-intensive for both the educational institutions and the accrediting agencies. The resource issue has not been seriously considered up to this point. Universities and colleges in Japan have been historically socialized to the lack of formal, external evaluation, and to a significant degree continue to see it as a threat to university autonomy. But even in

such an environment, evaluation was done by various stakeholders, such as students and their parents. The government also evaluated national universities in a specific and limited way when the university budgets were allocated each year. Diversification of higher education is partly the result of the evaluation by students and government.

In the future, however, higher education institutions must respond to this more formal system of external evaluation and accreditation because the result of accreditation will inevitably affect their reputation and as a result, the management of their institutions. Once the reputation of an institution is damaged, it is very difficult for it to recover. Thus, an imperative exists for a culture of evaluation and accreditation to be introduced and accepted by the management of institutions.

As a result of higher education massification, and the decline of the 18-year-old applicant cohort, universities and colleges are becoming increasingly diversified in today's global and competitive environment. Thus, their quality assurance and quality enhancement have become more important matters for several constituencies. Protecting learners, maintaining the international validity of academic degrees, and elevating the level of education and research activities at universities and colleges through evaluation are of benefit to the whole society and is becoming part of the knowledge-based economy.

Finally, figure 8.3 shows two axes and four dimensions for the understanding of the causes and impacts of quality assurance in Japan. The first axis represents the international-domestic continuum. In Japan, people

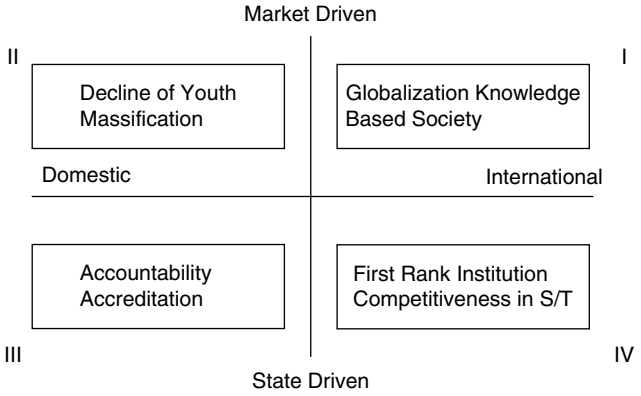


**Figure 8.3** Driving forces for improving HE quality in Japan

*Source*: Created by author.

care little for international matters when it comes to higher education quality because it seems too large and complicated a matter, and furthermore, domestic considerations seem to be a sufficient focus for higher education institutions. However, the international aspects of higher education have recently become more important, especially since the recruitment of students from abroad has become an important economic issue for Japanese universities. The second axis represents market-driven/state-driven dynamics. In Japan, the power and role of the government have traditionally been strong, and higher education institutions have tended to rely on the guidance and leadership of the government. Thus, affecting change in higher education seems to be dependent on government initiatives. However, after the 1990s, various types of reforms have been focused much more on market-driven dimensions.

These two axes make four dimensions, that is, international-market driven, domestic-market driven, domestic-state driven, and international-state driven. In each dimension, I identify important factors that contribute to the improvement of the quality of higher education in Japan, as shown in figure 8.3. Which dimension is the most important for us to think about with respect to the future system of quality assurance? This should be identified through a careful observation of the higher education system in the past and the present of Japan.

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# Chapter 9

# Quality Assurance in Higher Education: A Developing Country Perspective and Experience

*V. S. Prasad*

## Introduction

In developing countries, education resides primarily within the public domain and public policies are expected to play a catalytic role in quality assurance. In today's world of interdependence, quality assurance policies and practices of developing countries are also markedly influenced by global trends. The Indian higher education system is characterized by a long history, large volume, and mind-boggling diversity. This chapter focuses on the features of education policy in India as related to quality assurance. In this background, the Indian experience of assessment and accreditation of higher education institutions is analyzed, to explore the features of a sustainable model for quality assurance in developing countries. The central theme of the chapter is to interrogate the experiences hitherto and to develop a perspective model for the future.

## Developing Countries Context

While the geopolitical conditions of developing countries vary to a large extent, one can easily identify the similarity in certain features that

distinguishes the higher education setup in these countries. A common feature in developing countries is a steadily increasing population in general and a relatively fast growing number of students searching for higher education opportunities. In countries like India, Pakistan, South Africa, and China, this has resulted in a demand for massification of higher education. This growth is associated with huge diversity and different levels of development. The obvious sequel of population growth and demand for higher education is the focus of higher education on access and equity rather than quality. This has also resulted in a shortage of human capital, which is the key requirement to fuel sustainable development. It is in this context of grounded realities that the higher education systems in developing countries are now facing a new challenge of cross-border higher education and are trying to raise the quality of HE to globally acceptable levels.

With the growing student population and open door policy being advocated through GATS, the developing countries are being looked upon as "education markets" by the developed countries. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) as well as the governments in countries like the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia are engaged in active promotion and marketing of their higher education offerings to student populations in developing countries. While this trend has some positive aspects such as increased access and opportunities, there are certain gray areas that require a cautious approach for policymakers in developing countries.

## The Indian Context

We should note four distinct features of the Indian higher education context that have implications for the policies and practices of quality assurance. First, India has a long and glorious history of advanced education. Hindu *Gurukulas*, Buddhist *Viharas,* and Quranic *Madarasas* have a long tradition of advanced education. The era of modern higher education institutions started with the establishment of three universities in Colonial India in Bombay (Mumbai), Madras (Chennai), and Calcutta (Kolkata) in 1857. Pride in the past glory of education is a reference point of discussion on the current state of quality in Indian higher education. Second, the large size of higher education in terms of the number of institutions and total enrollment is a factor that influences the systems and processes of quality assurance. Around 350 university-level institutions, 20,000 colleges, and 11 million students is a huge system to be addressed by quality assurance agencies. This is in spite of a very low percentage enrollment in higher education, around 10 percent of the relevant age group. Third, there

is a huge diversity in the higher education system. Such diversity is evident in the types of institutions, size of the institutions, resources, systems of governance, and ownership. Mind-boggling diversity is a challenge to the development and standardization of systems and processes of quality assurance. Fourth, Indian general higher education is largely in the public domain. In recent years, however, the private sector has become the dominant player in the provision of higher technical and professional education. The private funding of higher education is mostly made by Trusts, which are believed to be engaged in education as a service activity. The government is expected to play an important role in the maintenance of standards and quality in all educational institutions. These contextual features need to be kept in view while discussing the appropriateness of quality assurance methods and practices.

Expansion, inclusion, and excellence are the three major concerns of Indian higher education. In view of the huge demand for higher education, the government's efforts have been directed toward providing more access by establishing large numbers of higher education institutions without giving enough importance to equity and quality. Demands of a democratic polity and increasing assertion by weaker sections of the society for more educational opportunities have resulted in inclusion—a process of providing higher education to every one qualified irrespective of affordability—which has become one of the major concerns of policymakers in education. Massification of education, increasing global competition, and requirements of social and market needs have now resulted in increasing the focus on quality, making it the defining element of higher education. There is a need to synergize these three concerns, that is, expansion, inclusion and excellence of higher education, to make them relevant to national development.

## External Quality Assurance Agencies

Traditionally, quality has been an internal concern of institutions and academics. The external systems of licensing and regulations have been more concerned about ensuring that the minimum requirements are met and system aberrations are addressed. Providing quality education is considered the domain of academics and institutions, and any external agency activities have been looked upon as interference in the academic autonomy of institutions. In the 1980s and 1990s, there was an increasing realization of the limitations of this attitude. It was realized that the quality of education is a serious concern of the society as a whole and cannot be totally left

**Table 9.1** External quality assurance agencies

| Agency and Year of Establishment | Domain of Activities |
|---|---|
| 1. National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), 1994 (Established by UGC) | All categories of higher education institutions (Institutional and/or program accreditation) |
| 2. National Board of Accreditation (NBA), 1994 (Established by AICTE) | Technical Education (program accreditation) |
| 3. Accreditation Board (AB), 1996 (Established by ICAR) | Agricultural Education (Program and institutional accreditation) |
| 4. Distance Education Council (DEC), 1992 (Established by IGNOU) | Distance Education (Program and institutional accreditation) |

*Note*: UGC—University Grants Commission; AICTE—All India Council for Technical Education; ICAR—Indian Council of Agricultural Research; IGNOU—Indira Gandhi National Open University.

*Source*: Created by author.

to the whims and fancies of academics and educational institutions. Employability has also become an important outcome parameter of education. Public accountability of educational institutions has drawn the attention of all the stakeholders in education.

With this as background, in the late 1980s and into the 1990s, many initiatives were taken in India for putting in place systems of external quality assurance for assessment and accreditation of higher education institutions. Table 9.1 describes the present status of External Quality Assurance agencies (EQA), established by different national agencies for the different sectors of higher education. All these EQA agencies are autonomous agencies established in the public domain.

## Assessment Methodologies

Quality is defined as "fitness of purpose" and "fitness for purpose" or to put it differently, quality is "doing right things right." Two aspects—purposes of education and methods of education used to achieve those goals—are equally important. The NAAC has identified a broad value framework of higher education institutions as benchmarks for assessing the fitness of purpose that identified values and goals to be assessed for higher education institutions. These include contribution to national development; fostering global competencies among students; inculcating a value system in students; promoting the use of technology, and pursuing a quest for

excellence. Each value or goal is amplified by suggested parameters and activities that represent progress toward the goal.

## The Four Stage Approach

All the EQA agencies in India broadly follow a four-stage approach in the assessment of higher education institutions and programs:

1. identifying predetermined criteria for assessment;
2. preparation and submission of a Self-Study Report (SSR) by the institution;
3. "on-site" visit by the Peer Team for validation of the SSR and for recommending the assessment outcome;
4. the final decision on accreditation by the Governing Body of the EQA agencies.

## The NAAC Grading System

The NAAC is the only EQA in India that is following a grading system in accrediting institutions. The other three agencies provide judgments that an institution is either "accredited" or "not accredited." The NAAC is engaged in institutional accreditation whereas the three other specialized agencies are engaged more in program accreditation. The NAAC system of criteria and their weights in the process are given in table 9.2.

In 2007 the NAAC moved to adopt grading as a guide to institutions, so that they may understand their levels of performance and the measures to be adopted for quality improvement. Grades range from A (Very good—accredited), B (Good—accredited), C (Satisfactory—accredited), to D (unsatisfactory—unaccredited). The NAAC relationship with higher education institutions is based on the following four central recognitions:

- that quality and quality assurance are primarily the responsibility of the higher education institutions themselves;
- that the academic autonomy, identity, and integrity of the institution are to be respected;
- that the assessment standards are subject to consultation with stakeholders; and
- that the aim is to contribute both to quality improvement and accountability.

**Table 9.2** NAAC criteria

| Criteria | University | Autonomous College | Affiliated/ Constituent College |
|---|---|---|---|
| Curricular Aspects | 150 (15%) | 100 (10%) | 50 (5%) |
| Teaching-Learning and Evaluation | 250 (25%) | 350 (35%) | 450 (45%) |
| Research, Consultancy and Extension | 200 (20%) | 150 (15%) | 100 (10%) |
| Infrastructure and Learning Resources | 100 (10%) | 100 (10%) | 100 (10%) |
| Student Support and Progression | 100 (10%) | 100 (10%) | 100 (10%) |
| Governance and Leadership | 150 (15%) | 150 (15%) | 150 (15%) |
| Innovative practices | 50 (5%) | 50 (5%) | 50 (5%) |
| Total Score | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 |

*Source*: Created by author.

## The Impact of External Quality Assurance Agencies

A critical review of the history of operations of External Quality Assurance agencies in India shows that they have passed through the initial phase of resistance, and there is now increasing acceptance of EQA activities. However, in spite of acceptance of the EQA system by many, there are a few institutions, including some very prestigious institutions that are reluctant to opt for external assessment. Some of them suffer from the complex of "we are the best, who can judge us"; others may feel uncomfortable about their performance and are afraid of subjecting themselves to external scrutiny. Institutional accreditation by NAAC is presently voluntary and there are proposals to make it mandatory. NAAC has during the past 10 years accredited approximately 4,000 institutions, which constitutes about 20 percent of higher education institutions in the country.

The EQA agency activities have created a positive impact on the higher education system. It is clear that they have generated more interest and concerns about quality assurance among the stakeholders of higher

education and have created a better understanding of quality assurance among HEIs. The EQA actions have triggered quality assurance activities in many of the Higher Education Institutions and through them have helped in the creation of an institutional database of accredited higher education institutions. One important and positive effect has been the assistance provided to other funding and regulatory agencies to take some of their decisions based on the assessment outcomes. And overall, the work of EQA agencies has provided useful policy inputs to different agencies on quality aspects of higher education institutions.

## The Concerns

The EQA systems in India are simultaneously passing through the phases of resistance, indifference, acceptance, and high expectations. These varied responses are based on perceived threats and/or opportunities as fits the individual case. There is a need to gain a broader understanding and to address the concerns of EQAs in Indian higher education context.

For example, the assessment of a large number of higher education institutions and programs is a daunting task for Indian EQAs. In terms of the absolute number of institutions assessed (around 4,000 institutions as of June 1, 2008), the NAAC performance may be a world record. But in terms of the percentage of the total numbers, it comes to only 20 percent of all higher education institutions in the country. The present method may not meet the requirement of assessment of such large numbers. The establishment of more EQAs, the association of specialized professional public and private agencies, and the use of e-assessment are some of the alternatives actively under consideration.

The identification of "right things" and "right ways" to assess quality is critical to establishing the reliability and validity of EQAs. Translating the many intangible aspects of the teaching-learning process into measurable quality parameters is a challenging task. As we are aware, academic ambience greatly contributes to the quality of educational provision. But how do we measure academic ambience that is highly context specific and value-driven? The NAAC is grading institutional levels of performance based on the Cumulative Grade Point Average. This is the most contentious issue associated with NAAC activity. Highly divergent views exist within the academic community on the desirability and methodology of grading. This may be the reason why most EQAs shy away from grading institutions. During the past 10 years, the NAAC has changed its grading system four times. This only shows the unsettled nature of quality

measurement methodology. The NAAC is continuously engaged in dialogue and discussion with academic and other stakeholders to develop an appropriate methodology for quality assessment.

The Peer Team plays a critical role in the Indian Quality Assessment System. The identification of the right type of persons and then properly orienting them to the task is a serious concern. The NAAC experience with the constitution of Peer Teams shows that a good academic will not necessarily be a good assessor. Large numbers of persons want to be members of the Peer Team for various reasons, some of which are not honorable. Some distinguished academics don't consider it a preferable academic pursuit. The selection of reputable academics of unimpeachable credentials, with broad understanding of educational processes and assessment capabilities is a challenging task. The NAAC jealously guards the autonomy of Peer Teams to ensure the credibility of their process. The NAAC is also organizing orientation programs for members of Peer Teams to make the Peer Team activity more and more a professional activity.

Why we should opt for external assessment is a frequently debated question in the academic world in India. Self-improvement and academic recognition may not be sufficient motivation for all institutions to voluntarily opt for external assessment. Large numbers of institutions are not enthusiastic about external assessment. The University Grants Commission, the apex higher education body in India, is contemplating making external assessment mandatory. This approach has its own limitations. It may be that positive recognition in terms of financial, academic, and social incentives for accreditation is a more effective strategy to ensure the voluntary option for assessment by all institutions.

## The Lessons of Experience

We may broadly draw some lessons from the experience of Indian EQA agencies and their activities.

In India, the government plays a critical role in regulating the higher education system. All the EQAs in India are in the public domain. The role of private players in regulation is still looked on with suspicion. That may be one of the reasons for the relative paucity of private agencies engaged in external assessment of quality in the education sector. Professional associations are not very active in quality assessment. In this context, the government-sponsored autonomous agencies play an important role in quality assessment. Government oversight and involvement are also required to make assessment a consequential activity. The reach of the external

assessment agency mostly depends on public policies in education. At present the external assessment in India is mostly a state-driven activity.

The involvement of academia is critical to the acceptance of external assessment activity. There is some apprehension within the academy about the effects of external assessment. The EQA is perceived as a threat to the autonomy of educational institutions. Some even consider the "quality hype" as a part of developed countries' strategies to establish hegemony over the education systems of developing countries. Academics are generally uncomfortable with the managerial perspectives and market language of quality. Much of the conflict and confusion in discussion about EQA relates to the built-in-tension between accountability concerns and the improvement agenda. The NAAC, realizing the importance of active involvement of academia, has taken measures to create an intensive dialogue with academics on different perspectives of quality and to also actively engage them in operationalizing the external quality system. This has created a positive image of NAAC and the external quality assessment system over time.

The existence of internal quality assurance systems and processes within the higher education institution is a precondition for the successful operation of an external quality assurance system. Institutions identified as "A" Grade institutions by NAAC have a common feature of having well-developed internal systems of quality assurance. The one-time external assessment activity will be of relevance only in a situation of well-developed internal quality mechanisms. The NAAC activity has also triggered the establishment of internal systems of quality assurance in institutions in which they were absent. The NAAC clearly demonstrates the two-way relationship of internal and external quality assessment system, that is, one strengthening the other.

The credibility of the operations of EQA is crucial to the effectiveness of external assessment. The EQA operations and management system, as a role model of quality, is critical to the legitimacy of its operations. The transparency of the process brings more accountability and reliability to its operations. The NAAC puts all its systems, processes, and decisions on the Web for public information; it also collects Web-based feedback on its operations.

## The Agenda for the Future

Improving quality across the board and sustaining it are the two main objectives of the future agenda of quality assurance in India. There is no

denying the fact that the quality of education provided by Indian academic institutions is highly variable. There is no doubt that there are a few institutions that are highly rated internationally and provide education comparable to the best available in developed countries. However, it is also true that the quality of education imparted by many Indian universities and colleges borders on mediocrity, and in a few cases it can at best be described as subviable. The situation has been described as that of "islands of excellence, in a sea of mediocrity." For a well-developed and mature education system, as available in India, quality is not to be described in terms of excellence of a few but in terms of uniformly good performance across the board. A median quality of education is more critical and constitutes the real challenge of Indian higher education.

Several steps toward action are available and constitute a substantive agenda to achieve quality goals.

An effective synergy of external and internal quality assurance systems and processes is necessary to sustain and improve the quality of education. No quality assurance system can be transplanted from one institution to another across organizational, social, and/or cultural boundaries. The development must be home-grown, recognizing its context. We should recognize that "one size does not fit all."

An appropriate mandatory system of external quality assessment needs to be developed that meets the diversity of the context. Capacity building of EQA agencies is equally important to enable them to play their role effectively. Leadership plays a critical role in putting in place appropriate governance systems. Selection of the right type of educational leaders and their professional development greatly contributes to quality assurance. The provision of more public resources, partnership with private agencies, and optimum utilization of resources is essential for the creation of necessary infrastructure for quality. And, transparency in the governance system and educational processes helps stakeholders to play an important role in building necessary public pressure, and to ensure the accountability of the system. In a way, quality *is* accountability. Finally, internal mechanisms should be put in place for students, the primary stakeholders, to play an effective role in quality assurance.

## Concluding Observations

There is an increasing engagement with the question of quality education. In the knowledge society, quality education is a critical factor for the survival of human civilization. Arnold Toynbee perceptively observed that

"Civilizations die from suicide, not by murder." Our challenge is to make all stakeholders of higher education realize the suicidal effect of a lack of quality education. In the discussion on the lack of quality in higher education, the "not me" syndrome is very popular among the stakeholders in higher education. Everybody thinks that others are responsible for the situation. The only way to address this problem is to remember Mahatma Gandhi's observation that "We must be the change that we wish to see in the world."

# Chapter 10

# Quality Assurance in Higher Education: The Taiwan Experience

*(Kent) Sheng Yao Cheng*

## Introduction

In 1953, Taiwan had only one university, three colleges, and three junior colleges. The sole university was National Taiwan University; the three colleges were Taiwan Provincial Teachers College,[1] Taiwan Provincial College of Agriculture,[2] and Taiwan Provincial Junior College of Technology,[3] and the three junior colleges were Provincial Taipei Institute of Technology,[4] Tamkang Junior College of English,[5] and Provincial Taiwan Maritime Technology College.[6] Over time, these would all mature into other kinds of higher education institutions (HEIs).

By 2007, Taiwan had 147 universities/colleges and 16 junior colleges (MOE 2007), a growth of 40 times their previous level (see table 10.1). The period between 1961 and 1971 deserves special mention because the number of HEIs grew explosively from 30 to 96. Similarly, between 1991 and 2007, the number of universities/colleges increased from 50 to 147. By 2008 high school graduates could find a space in one of the HEIs in Taiwan even when they scored zero on the college entrance exam (Yang and Cheng 2008).

Throughout this growth period, a substantial imbalance occurred in the numbers of public and private HEIs with 55 institutions in the public sector and 108 in the private (see table 10.2). Unlike the United States, public HEIs in Taiwan are almost uniformly of higher quality than private

**Table 10.1** Numbers of higher educational institutions in Taiwan, 1949–2007

| | 1949 | 1953 | 1956 | 1961 | 1971 | 1981 | 1986 | 1991 | 1996 | 2007 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Universities/ Colleges | 1 | 4 | 11 | 16 | 23 | 27 | 28 | 50 | 67 | 147 |
| Junior colleges | 2 | 3 | 6 | 14 | 73 | 77 | 77 | 73 | 70 | 16 |
| Total | 3 | 7 | 17 | 30 | 96 | 104 | 105 | 123 | 137 | 163 |

*Sources*: Chen (2005, 4) and MOE (2007). Created by author with data as indicated above.

**Table 10.2** Summary of universities, colleges, and junior colleges in Taiwan, 2006–2007

| | Universities | Colleges | Junior Colleges | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Public | 42 | 10 | 3 | 55 |
| Private | 55 | 40 | 13 | 108 |
| Total | 97 | 50 | 16 | 163 |

*Source*: MOE (2007). Created by author.

institutions, which are characterized by higher tuition fees, lower quality learning environments, and lesser reputations. To compound the imbalance, the birth rate declined to 1.12 in 2007 from previous levels of 2.455 in 1981, 1.72 in 1991, and 1.4 in 2001 (Ministry of Health 2007). The trajectory of increasing numbers of private universities and colleges and decreasing enrollments during the past two decades has raised the critical issue of how to assure the quality of HEIs in the face of these conflicting dynamics.

It is convenient to view the 1960s as a time of equality and the 1980s and 1990s as the era of quality. Quality stands at the center of interest to all sectors of society, including education (Ton 1992, 110). Schwarz and Westerheijden underscore that "quality assurance in higher education" accompanies the appearance of massification in higher education and is framed by policy issues of central government control over the numbers of HEIs, neoliberalism and deregulation, and the tension that arises between budget crises and quality assurance. Taiwan is currently facing this conflict in higher education (2004, 5).

Following this line of inquiry, I first introduce the history of higher educational policies in Taiwan and then analyze the concepts used in higher education quality assurance. I outline current quality assurance

endeavors in Taiwan higher education, which fall within the rhetoric of "pursuing excellence," and then develop a critique of the quality assurance movement in Taiwan and generalize it to other sites by examining how notions of academic capitalism and the McDonaldization of education overall affect quality. I conclude with some reflections on higher educational polices related to quality assurance and hope to provide some lessons for other counties in the world.

## History of Higher Educational Policies in Taiwan

Pochang Chen has pointed to five important periods in the development of higher educational policies in Taiwan (2005, 4–9).

### Controlling Numbers of HEIs: 1949–1953

Only seven HEIs existed during the 1949–1953 period, four university/colleges and three junior colleges (Chen 1993). The Kuomintang government had just moved to Taiwan from Mainland China, and for it, the most important policies focused on creating and maintaining a stable society. Higher educational policies were aimed at improving the curriculum of higher education and establishing a connection between intellectual resources and the military.

### Economic Development and Growth of Private Junior Colleges: 1954–1971

After 1954, the number of HEIs grew dramatically, spurred by the general rapid economic development of Taiwan. By 1961, the number of universities/colleges had grown fourfold from 4 to 16. Because of extended budget crises that made it difficult for the Taiwan government to expand further, private higher education institutions, especially private junior colleges, were encouraged, leading to their rapid growth from 3 in 1953 to 73 in 1971.

### Regulation and Control: 1972–1986

Following the overexpansion of junior colleges during the period 1954–1971, the government withdrew support for new applications. The major thematic incentive during the 1972–1986 period focused on establishing

initial quality control of HEIs and developing the first *Higher Education Act*. The overall development of higher education lagged largely because of the poor quality of the newly established private colleges. In 1966, the Ministry of Education set a five-year prohibition on new junior colleges.[7] In 1972, Taiwan's Executive Yuan established a further restriction on private HEIs for 13 years. At the same time, the Ministry of Education also established a principle for higher education expansion that limited enrollment to less than 3 percent of the college age cohort and set a ceiling of 3,000 students for all private HEIs (Wang 1996).

### Lifting of Martial Law and Increase of Social Needs: 1987–1993

The establishment of *Martial Law* in 1949 played a very important role in dictating that higher education be coordinated with economic development and political control. When Martial Law was lifted in 1987, people criticized the policies that had linked higher education almost exclusively to economic development. The revised view was that HEIs should be more plentiful and diverse. The number of universities and colleges quickly rose from 28 in 1986 to 50 in 1991. And, in the post–Martial Law political and social atmosphere, the central government no longer solely dictated the direction of higher education.

### Quality and Quantity: 1994–Present

Prior to the implementation of the *University Law* in 1994, the Ministry of Education (MOE) had sole authority to decide the setup, program design, budget allocation, curriculum, and accreditation of HEIs. After the amendment of the *University Law* in 2005, the MOE relinquished some control over HEIs as each HEI was allowed to create its own special features. Furthermore, the MOE discontinued the universally mandated curriculum, repealed the enrollment quota, and deregulated the budget limitations.

## Quality Assurance in Higher Education

The concept of quality assurance migrated from its development and employment in business and industry during the decades of the 1980s and

1990s into higher education quality discourse. As Frazer indicates, in industry, commerce, government circles, and now in higher education, the word "quality" is on everyone's lips: "quality control," "quality circles," "total quality management," "quality assurance," have all developed a positive valence (Frazer 1992, 9).

Among the popular techniques and concepts intended to improve the quality of services and products are Statistic Process Control (SPC), Zero Defect, Six Sigma, Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, quality circles, TQM, theory of constraints (TOC), quality management systems (ISO 9000 and others), and continuous improvement (Al-Quraini 2001; Dunkerley and Wong 2001).

For Harvey and Green, definitions of higher education quality focus on five generalized meanings: (1) to produce perfection through continuous improvement by adopting TQM; (2) as performance that is exceptional, attainable only in limited circumstances and only when very able students are admitted; (3) the ability to transform students on an ongoing basis and add value to their knowledge and personal development; (4) the ability to provide value for money and to be publicly accountable; and (5) as something that fits the purpose of the product or service, once the purpose has been decided (Harvey and Green 1993).

Quality is notoriously elusive of prescription, and no easier to describe and discuss than deliver in practice (Gibson 1986). Generally speaking, two core definitions prevail. The first relates to the embodiment of the essential nature of a person, collective, object, action, process, or organization. The second points to a high grade or high status in a quality performance (Harvey 1995). In short, quality has been regarded as a pragmatic interpretation of the noninferiority, superiority, or usefulness of something.

Ideas of quality control are developed from the establishment of a group of controllers or inspectors who are independent of the main workforce, and who have the power to reject substandard products or services (Rhoades and Sporn 2002). Prior to the establishment of this role, most employees involved in large-scale production were likely to believe and act as if they were not responsible for the quality of the product or service, and that it did not matter if a substandard product was passed to the controllers—improving quality was not their major concern. The higher education quality control movement sought to inculcate the idea that the overall quality of a university must be the concern of everyone who works within it. This leads directly to quality assurance (van Vought and Westerheijden 1994; Westerheijden 1997).

Schwarz and Westerheijden use five kinds of categories to frame the meaning of quality assurance (Schwarz and Westerheijden 2004). (1) Accreditation schemes include all institutionalized and systematically

implemented evaluation programs of higher education institutions, degree type, and programs that end in a formal summary judgment that leads to a formal approval process regarding the respective institution, degree type, and/or program. (2) Approval of institutions, degree types, and programs encompass granting the "right to exist within the system" (or, respectively, to reject the "right to exist") to an institution, degree type program (for instance, charter, license, and accreditation). Approval can be granted by several organizations or one organization and is legitimized by one or more organizations at the suprainstitutional level. (3) Approval outside of formal accreditation schemes. This form of quality assurance includes all major approval schemes of higher educational institutions, and degree types and programs that are not part of the accreditation scheme. (For instance, approval by the state ministry that does not involve accreditation.) (4) Evaluation schemes embrace all institutionalized and systematically implemented activities regarding the measurement, analysis, and/or development of quality for institutions, degree-type, and/or programs that are carried out at the suprainstitutional level. (5) Other evaluation schemes may include other types of rating/measurements of quality that do not fulfill the criteria of the definition of evaluation schemes, such as institution-based evaluation (e.g., program review).

The idea of quality assurance in higher education in the United States dates back to the formation of accrediting bodies in the pre–World War II period, based on the voluntary association model (Rhoades and Sporn 2002, 359). It has taken the form of a "four stage model of quality assurance," consisting of the independent organization of procedure, institutional self-evaluation, site visits, and public external evaluation reports (van Vought and Westerheijden 1994).

In the United States the meanings of quality assurance and of strategic management have been shaped by three dimensions of the higher education system. First, the regional accrediting bodies reflect the significance of regional considerations in higher education policies. Second, state level involvement in higher education policy has focused more on accountability than quality, demanding only a minimalist conception of quality, which is also consistent with activities of the accrediting associations. Third, given its interrelationship with various markets, and the political economic and cultural emphasis on the private sector, colleges and universities look to business for models of excellence and efficiency (Rhoades and Sporn 2002, 375–376). The so-called four stage model of quality assurance leaves out an important fifth step that is part of the system in the United States that links evaluation to resource allocation and strategic decision making (Rhoades and Sporn 2002, 379).

# Pursuing Excellence: Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Taiwan

University evaluation in Taiwan started in 1975, the same year as professional evaluation of technical colleges. At that time, the Department of Education in the Ministry of Education had no idea about how to implement quality assurance and conduct accreditation, so they just learned by doing. The first opportunity to conduct a private HEI's mid-term strategic plan and tie it to governmental financial support occurred in 1980.

"Pursuing Excellence" could be regarded as the most crucial public policy related to higher education in recent years. According to Dr. Mu-lin Lu (the Political Deputy Minister of Education in Taiwan), the MOE is directing special attention to policies regarding university assessment, promoting teaching, and pursuing university excellence (Lu 2006, 3–5).

## Implementation of Discipline/Field Assessment

Beginning in 2006, the MOE, convinced that quality assurance was the key to enhancing competitiveness of higher education, began placing strong emphasis on the implementation and promotion of Discipline/Field Assessment. The Ministry position was that by putting a systematic and cyclic assessment methodology into place, Taiwan's higher education institutions would be able to take their rightful place on the global stage.

Discipline/field assessments are conducted by the recently established Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan (HEEACT) that requests self-evaluation reports and conducts site visits. HEEACT closely reviews each institution's quality control mechanisms and assesses whether their set goals and objectives have been achieved. The discipline/field assessment has a five-year cycle, the first of which extends from January 2006 through December 2010. Assessments are conducted across five major categories of higher education evaluation: mission, specialty, and self-improvement; curriculum design and faculty teaching; student learning and student affairs; research and professional performance; and performance of graduates. Evaluation outcomes will not be related to ranking or interinstitutional comparison. HEEACT seeks to combine the concepts of accreditation and quality assurance through peer reviews to ensure the quality of departments and fields.

In 2006, 17 institutions, including universities of education, arts, and physical education were evaluated using the discipline/field assessment

methodology. Institutions were scored as "Approved," "Further Assessment Is Required," or "Not Approved." An institution receiving a score of "Further Assessment Is Required" is unable to increase its undergraduate enrollment quota and foregoes the right to apply to establish graduate programs. Institutions receiving a score of "Not Approved" will have their institution's undergraduate enrollment quota reduced. In both cases, a follow-up assessment will be conducted within a year. If the results continue to indicate "Not Approved," the institution will receive no enrollment quota and may even face suspension.

The first results of this nationwide university evaluation were released on May 15, 2007. Overall, 279 departments/institutes received scores of approved, 71 were informed that further assessment is required, and 11 were not accepted. The crucial reasons found in the categories of "further assessment is required" or "not approved" were lack of faculty, deficiencies in student learning spaces and resources, lack of proper curriculum design, lack of a self-improvement mechanism, and unclear mission statements of departments (HEEACT 2007).

Generally speaking, the discipline/field assessment assists institutions in improving current levels of instruction to enhance their academic strength, as well as providing a mechanism for total self-evaluation, which in turn supports the institution's continued commitment to quality, improvement, and excellence.

## Incentive for Teaching Excellence within Higher Education

The Ministry of Education has initiated an *Incentive for Teaching Excellence within Higher Education* program to stimulate overall enhancement of educational quality. This program is being promoted through competition among institutions with the purpose of emphasizing college teaching and instilling a development model of teaching excellence.

In recent years, the policy focus of higher education has emphasized raising standards for research. Therefore, many assessments focus more on research performance and less on university/college teaching. In 2005, the MOE established a one billion NT dollar budget for this proposed teaching incentive. Through a very strict review process, 13 institutions were awarded funds for their efforts. In 2006, the budget for the 2006 *Incentive for Teaching Excellence within Higher Education* was increased to five billion NT dollars. Because of its initial success, this incentive program has been expanded to accept incentive applications from colleges of teacher education and physical education, as well as vocational colleges.

## Developing Outstanding Universities and Research Centers

In seeking to develop insights into how it might develop its higher education system, Taiwan has given close attention to the various patterns of HE development pursued by countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Japan, and Germany. Of particular interest have been the strategies adopted by these countries to deal with the complex demands brought about by the rapid growth of higher education and the emerging needs of the knowledge society.

Currently Taiwan educational resources are insufficient to meet this rapid growth challenge, which in turn has affected the quality of education. The MOE is addressing this issue through the *Development of Outstanding University and Research Centers Project*. Through this project, the Ministry hopes to nurture and cultivate the academic talents of Taiwan and establish 10 distinguished and outstanding research centers within Asia in 5 years. A particular goal is to have at least one university ranked among the top 100 universities globally, within the next 10 years.

Years ago, many would have thought that these goals would be too difficult to reach. However, with the revision of the *Higher Education Ac*t of December 13, 2005, the country reached a significant education milestone. The Ministry is now able to take steps for ensuring assessment designed to result in the highest quality for higher education, research, and teaching. Through the implementation of these policies, MOE is moving forward with its intentions to carefully prepare and place Taiwan's institutions of higher education firmly on the international stage.

# Quality Assurance versus Academic Capitalism versus McDonaldization

Currently, creating a responsible and reliable system of quality assurance is regarded as one of the major steps to help Taiwan universities meet the challenges of global competition. Concerns arise, however, from many sources including those phenomena termed *Academic Capitalism* and *McDonaldization*.

Slaughter and Leslie (1997) use the term *Academic Capitalism* as sweepingly as that of globalization itself to which it has been a compulsory response. The term describes the tendency of universities and faculties to give increasing—and unwarranted—attention to market potential as the impetus for framing and executing research. For Slaughter and Leslie,

globalization has efficiently linked prestige to research funding to marketability in the dominant research equation. They also point out that in the United States federal research and development policies have, especially since World War II, emphasized technology as key for global competitiveness, with the result that academic capitalism is most visible in applied science and technology departments. A trickle-down effect exists for the humanities, with an increasing reliance on communication training, which is valuable in corporate settings. In other words, the humanities are useful only insofar as they support the most marketable research coming out of the university.

Slaughter and Leslie's argument shares its logic with others, both quantitative and polemical, that occupy a niche market in academic publishing and hiring. The logic that warrants these arguments frames possible responses as the "rage-or-resignation" dichotomy. Liberal rage at unconscionable conditions, they argue, is too often content to stop at politicizing people's thoughts, which, as Slaughter and Leslie amply demonstrate in their faculty interviews, ultimately matters little. Resignation at worst bears the mark of a conservatism that compels members of the academy to bow down before the market, and at best, the attitude reduces to the ontology of "the system just is what it is," while academics tiptoe around it. Slaughter and Leslie do valuable work for people interested in large-scale higher education movements by providing a quantitative partner to polemics, though I greet its logic with a great deal of skepticism. Slaughter and Leslie's idea of academic capitalism leads us toward several problems that quality assurance of higher education will face in the future including an emphasis on market values and ignoring traditional academic values; academic production following the models of Western academic cultural hegemony; and new academic strata formation (P. Chen 2005). Following these trends may also alert us to the tendency that central government increasingly controls academic economic interests; the bias of most evaluation methods and the roughness of evaluation indicators; the inflation of technology rationality; and the marginalization of human/social science disciplines.

George Ritzer uses the term "McDonaldization" to describe the process by which a society internalizes the format and characteristics of fast-food, as symbolized by McDonalds. Ritzer points to four key elements of McDonaldization—efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control. Furthermore, as he explores the manner in which such a model can permeate a society, Ritzer alerts us to the kind of irrationality of rationality that might put everybody in the same "iron cage" of organizing social behavior (Ritzer 2000).

In this usage, efficiency refers to the choosing of means to reach a specific end rapidly, with the least amount of cost or effort. The idea of

efficiency is geared toward the interests of an industry or business, but is typically advertised in terms of its benefit to the customer or consumer. Examples of social proliferation privileging this notion of efficiency are plentiful: the drive-up window, salad bars, fill your own cup, self-serve gasoline, ATMs, Voice Mail, microwave dinners and supermarkets (in contra-distinction to old-time groceries where one gave one's order directly to the grocer). The interesting element here is the replacement of labor involved: the customer often ends up doing the work that previously was done for them. And, the customer pays for the "privilege." As consumers of social innovations based on this concept of efficiency, he argues, we end up spending more time, being *forced* to learn new technologies, remember more numbers, and often pay higher prices in order for businesses to operate more efficiently (which for them translates into maintaining a higher profit margin).

Ritzer also suggests how McDonaldization involves a reductionist emphasis on things that can be calculated, counted, and quantified (Ritzer 2000, 142). Quantification's tendency to emphasize quantity over quality leads over time to a sense that quality is equal to certain, usually (but not always) large quantities of things—with the presumption that larger is better. Familiar examples include the "Big Mac," the Whopper," "Big Gulp," *Wendy's* "Biggie Meals," and food sold by weight, for example, *Taco Bell's* 8 ounce burrito. Another manifestation relates to time—if larger quantities of a product are better, smaller quantities of time gain this status: quicker is better. Again, familiar examples include appeals to "Lose weight fast," the suggestion that microwaving allows for "spending less time in the kitchen," and in bare bones news reporting—no details to slow one down. A further extension involves the credentialing process. Status, capability, and competence are assumed to be related to the number of initials one lists behind one's name or the number of pieces of paper we have hanging on our office wall, instances in which the acquisition of credentials is taken to imply commensurate increases in quality.

Predictability refers to attempts to structure our environment such that surprise and differences do not encroach upon our sensibilities. The critical presumption is that rational people need to know what to expect. They want to be sure that the fun, satisfaction, taste, and benefits they received last week in Cincinnati will be repeated next week in San Diego or wherever! A Big Mac is a Big Mac.

The end result, Ritzer argues, is a significant increase in the amount of social control exercised by those providing services through such standardized corporate structures. Specifically, the replacement of human by nonhuman technology is often oriented toward gaining greater control of the particular exchange process. In such systems, the greatest source of

uncertainty and unpredictability in providing such "rational" choices are people—either the people who work within those systems or the people who are served by them (Ritzer 2000, 148). Such systems seek to minimize human agency by maximizing variance through prepackaging, premeasurement, and automatic control. On the production side of the exchange, the human employee is required to think little, the emphasis being placed on following highly routinized instructions. When our homes become the sites for such behavior, he argues, a similar intolerance for variance is evident: our ovens and probes tell us when our food is done, seasoning is premixed, or the meal comes complete in one convenient package. The cumulative consequence of this activity is that human skills and capabilities are disvalued. Who we are and how we interact increasingly become defined by our dependence upon and subordination to the machine.

## Quality Assurance in the Context of "Leveling" Constructions

Interpreting the current development of quality assurance in higher education in Taiwan, one can readily find the links between the U.S. model and recent events in Taiwan. Rhoades and Sporn identify the fifth step of quality assurance as linking evaluation to resource allocation and strategic decision making (Rhoades and Sporn 2002, 379). In Taiwan this linkage can be readily identified in a series of current academic conflicts. What Slaughter and Leslie term academic capitalism (1997) identifies a broad set of structural changes taking place within the academy to bring it into closer alignment with the norms and structures of business capitalism, for instance, seeking to identify academic products in terms of their market value, the imposition of a business cultural hegemony, and the development of a new academic strata that is based on and represents such values.

Regarding market value, within the academy perhaps the first question to keep in mind is "whose knowledge is worthier than others? And why?" As a result of global competition, knowledge from different fields is rapidly coming to represent different levels of commodity values. Unlike business, biochemistry, and other scientific fields, some disciplines such as history, philosophy, and education have difficulty gaining external investments to augment existing institutional support. Further, one of the major indicators of academic capitalism, the Scientific Citation Index (SCI)/ Social Scientific Citation Index (SSCI)/Art and Humanity Citation Index (A&HCI), leads directly to a kind of reductionism that privileges this form of publication and research. The language biases represented in its publication stream have increasingly encouraged the Journal Citation

Report (JCR) produced by the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) to be regarded as a form of Western academic imperialism that promotes an approach and encourages the integration of universities into the model of the Western world (MacRoberts and MacRoberts 1996; Seglen 1998). In this vein, some Taiwan professors are worried about the new academic stratification being developed by this regime of academic capitalism (P. Chen 2005).

One can easily point to benefits and conveniences that are related to the process of McDonaldization: variety, round-the-clock banking and shopping, and often speedier service. Included within the phenomenon, however, is a certain sense that these rational systems tend to turn in on themselves and lead to irrational outcomes. Most specifically, this component of irrationality means that presumably rational systems produce unreasonable outcomes that may deny the basic humanity and human reason of the people who work within or are served by them (Ritzer 2000, 154). Ritzer, for example, focuses on how "efficacy" tends to measure accomplishment within the academic world with the scales of less cost and more benefit. Within the operational routines of the academy, "calculability" tends to be reduced to a tendency to measure and evaluate outcomes, and in the process may sacrifice the kinds of behaviors and engagements that do not submit readily to measurement. In the absence of a corrective culture, pressures are unleashed to increase the quantity of faculty publication and use SSCI/SCI/SI to accumulate the number of academic products, with less attention being paid to more comprehensive assessments of overall quality of publication. In this kind of operationally dominated organizational setting, the passion for "predictability" leads to a decrease in the surprise of knowledge discovery as learning, teaching, and research environments become overroutinized and directed away from the unfamiliar and new. The picture Ritzer paints for us is one in which increasingly more of higher education institutions are prepackaged, premeasured, and automatically "controlled."

## Conclusion

By 2008 all high school graduates in Taiwan could enroll at one of the 174 institutions of higher education, no matter what their scores were on entrance exams. People in Taiwan have begun to think about the issue of quality in higher education seriously and are pushing the government to play a key role as gatekeeper for the outcomes of higher education.

The 1990s may in retrospect become known as the "decade of quality," in the same way that efficiency was a major theme during the 1980s (Frazer

1992, 9). With the huge expansion of higher education in Taiwan during that decade, efforts to ensure the quality of higher education institutions became a primary objective of the Ministry of Education.

The current emphasis on quality and quality assurance that has grown in the wake of this probably too-rapid expansion of higher education in the country is anchored in the three sites of discipline/field assessment, incentives for teaching excellence, and the development of outstanding university/research centers. The tension that is presented to the newly developed agents of this quality movement, largely embodied in the Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan, is signaled in large part by the degree to which academic capitalism and McDonalization are reflected in the structures and practices of higher education as a system. Slaughter's, Leslie's, and Ritzer's cautions about the distortions that these movements have brought and will continue to bring to the higher education environment will both frame and constrain the work of those seeking to develop the new quality environment.

Along with Academic Capitalism and McDonalization, the New Managerialism has also become a major force in higher education, an extension of the continual neoliberal restructuring of society. Its emphases on performance, outcomes, and customer-oriented behavior have increasingly replaced the traditional "bureaucratic-professionalism" model particularly through the advocacy of the New Right. Furthermore, the three "Es" that represent economy, efficiency, and effectiveness are pillars of the new managerialism (Terry 1998). If we analyze the current development of quality assurance in higher education in Taiwan and other developing countries, we find that recently universities have followed their counterparts in developed countries and have adopted quality assurance to improve the quality of their universities. At the same time, self-evaluation/improvement has come to play an important role in ensuring that the quality of higher education is excellent. However, how faculty balance their time and energy between research and teaching, the role of Ministry of Education in the relationship between HEEACT and the Ministry, the gap between the regular budget and extra-mural research grants, and quality assurance through program or institutional levels all require further discussion to figure out the possible future of quality assurance in higher education in Taiwan.

## Notes

1. Taiwan Provincial Teachers College was founded in 1945, and promoted to the National Taiwan Normal University in 1967.

2. Taiwan Provincial College of Agriculture was founded in 1919, and promoted to the National Chung Hsing University in 1971.
3. Taiwan Provincial Junior College of Technology was founded in 1931, and promoted to National Cheng Kung University in 1971.
4. Provincial Taipei Institute of Technology was founded in 1912, and promoted to National Taipei University of Technology in 1997.
5. Tamkang Junior College of English was founded in 1950, and promoted to Tamkang University in 1980.
6. Provincial Taiwan Maritime Technology College was founded in 1953, and promoted to National Taiwan College of Marine Science and Technology in 1979.
7. Five-year junior colleges are the HEIs which include three-year high school and two-year community college.

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# Chapter 11

# Quality Assurance in Indonesian Higher Education

*M. K. Tadjudin*

## Introduction

We live in a globalized information society in which scrutiny of institutions, organizations, and businesses is routine. Increasingly such organizations are being asked to "come clean" and provide more information on their resources, how they operate, how they spend their money, and most importantly how they add value (Eaton 2004).

We also live in an age of increased demand for higher education, resulting in a commensurate demand for more information about higher education and its institutions. Providing information about higher education and higher education quality is now viewed as serving the public interest. Students and their families want to know more about the institutions, programs, the process of accreditation, and accrediting organizations. Political leaders engaged in the authorization of public funds for higher education also need and want more information. Among the public there is also a growing skepticism that universities are not preparing students adequately to face the demanding challenges of the future workplace.

## The Indonesian Higher Education System

Indonesian higher education occupies a binary system consisting of a vocational and an academic stream (figure 11.1). The vocational stream

includes polytechnics and the *Akademi*. Programs offered in this stream are one-year, two-year, three-year, and four-year diploma programs (D-1, D-2, D-3, and D-4), ranging from accountancy to engineering, information technology, languages, and nursing programs. D-4 programs, offered in only a very limited number of subjects, are a continuation of the D-3 programs. They last for a year and can only be entered by those holding a D-3 diploma. The practical components in the programs range from 80 percent in the D-1 programs to 20 percent in the D-4 programs. Most programs are D-3 programs. D-1–D-3 programs are terminal programs although some D-3 programs offer transfer to a D-4 program after matriculation.

The academic stream (*sarjana* programs) consists of four-year undergraduate (S-1), two-year master (S-2), and three-year doctoral (S-3) programs. This stream also includes the academic professions such as medicine, law, and accounting. For certain programs it is possible to matriculate from the vocational stream to the academic stream. The critical point is that D-4 programs serve as a gatekeeper for higher degree programs.

## Growth in Indonesian Higher Education

Indonesian higher education has experienced phenomenal growth since 2004, when regulations to establish higher education institutes were liberalized. In 2004 there were about 2,000 higher education institutions and 10,000 programs. By 2007 the number of higher education institutions had grown about 30 percent to 2,836 and study programs some 35 percent to 14,294 from 10,237. This increase has come largely through expansion of the private education sector, as tables 11.1 and 11.2 demonstrate.

**Table 11.1** Growth in the number of institutions and study programs

| | **State Universities** | | | | **Private Universities** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **2004** | **2007** | **Increase** | | **2004** | **2007** | **Increase** | |
| Institutions | 77 | 82 | 5 | 6.5% | around 2000 | 2,754 | 754 | 37.7% |
| Study Programs | 3,656 | 3,919 | 263 | 7.2% | 6,581 | 11,140 | 4,559 | 69.2% |

*Source*: Created by author.

**Table 11.2** Number of study programs of different types in state and private institutions

| Type of Program | Programs in State Institutions | | Programs in Private Institutions | | Total Programs | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2004 | 2007 | 2004 | 2007 | 2004 | 2007 |
| Diploma | 712 | 248 | 2,013 | 2,001 | 2,725 | 2,249 |
| Sarjana (Bachelor) S-1 | 2,463 | 3,102 | 4,432 | 8,943 | 6,895 | 12,045 |
| Magister S-2 | 378 | 466 | 136 | 192 | 514 | 658 |
| Doctoral S-3 | 103 | 103 | 0 | 4 | 103 | 107 |
| Total | 3,656 | 3,919 | 6,581 | 11,140 | 10,237 | 15,059 |

*Note*: 13 Magister S-2 programs in religious institutes are not included in this table.

## Quality in Higher Education

All countries must deal with the elusive character of quality in higher education, just as all of quality assurance must deal with the question of what quality is in higher education. The literature is replete with definitions and descriptions. For Ball (1985) it is primarily "fitness for purpose"; for Mc Clain et al. (1989) and Hasworth and Harvey (1994) it is added value; for Vroeijenstijn, quality exists when the expectations of the consumer or user are satisfied (1995); whereas Harvey and Green (1993) conclude that "quality means different things to different people" and is relative to processes or outcomes.

Often in higher education, quality is in the eyes of the beholder. A critical issue involves determining who is to be the client or consumer. For government, quality is usually framed in efficiency terms: "maximizing the numbers of students finishing the program in the scheduled time with a degree of international standard at the lowest possible costs." Employers, on the other hand, are often more concerned with the competencies gained by students during their studies. In this case the "product" tested by the consumer is the graduate.

For students, however, quality may be the contribution to their individual development and the preparation for a position in society. Academics tend to define quality as good academic training based on effective knowledge transfer and a good learning environment with a balance between

teaching and research. A dominant social view may see higher education as a means to produce qualified manpower in an efficient manner (Barnett 1992).

Efforts to develop higher education quality assurance tend to focus on how functions in control and assessment of quality are employed and how quality assurance processes can also stimulate enhancement of institutional programs.

Quality in higher education has two aspects. First, in providing services to the student body for academic and general administrative functions, it performs similar functions to other service environments. The processes involved are tangible and their constant monitoring through measurement can lead to quality improvement. The generic products involved are also of a narrow range with definable characteristics, which can easily be managed and controlled. These processes can reasonably be expected to be customer driven, as much as the total composite experiences of the student body can be determined. Second, with respect to the teaching and learning functions of a higher education institution the core processes involved are often too subtle to be quantitatively measured in any meaningful way. Teaching in higher education tends to be far too varied in its products, delivery modes, processes, and personnel to be managed and controlled in a uniform way. Similarly the learning processes of students are also varied. Since 2004 in Indonesia, for example, higher education programs were mandated to introduce a competence-based curriculum or a curriculum based on contextual learning and teaching. Since 2005 medical programs had to use a problem-based learning curriculum.

Quality assessment in a higher education context must take into account a variety of fundamental aspects of quality, including inputs, processes, and outputs, the latter increasingly expressed as outcomes. For most institutions the requirements of different stakeholders will be reflected in the mission statement, the goals, the objectives of a study program and demonstrate the achievement of differentiated goals and objectives—resulting in a sense of "quality for purpose." If this process of assessment is done properly, through studies or negotiations between all parties, one can then hold that a program has "quality" and in the end quality will be the distinguishing characteristic guiding students and higher education institutions.

## Approaches to Quality in Higher Education

Different approaches to quality assurance can be taken by educational systems and institutions at different stages of maturity (Woodhouse 1999). In

general, three approaches apply: audit, assessment, and accreditation. Each can be performed internally through a self-evaluation exercise or externally through an external quality assurance agency, so that the external process becomes a validation or rebuttal of an institution's own conclusions.

In this framework, *Audit* performs a check on an organization's explicit or implicit claims. By stating its objectives, an institution is implicitly laying a claim on what it will do. Quality audits check the extent to which the institution is achieving its own objectives, in principle asking "are your processes effective?" Typically, an audit's output is a descriptive report. *Direct audits* are conducted by external agencies to determine the effectiveness of institutional processes, whereas in *validation audits* institutions review their own processes and report the results in special documentation, which is then reviewed by an external review agency. In a *meta-audit*, an external agency reviews internal quality assurance processes already in place. *Assessment* creates a process in which the evaluation results in a grade. In principle assessment asks: "how good are your outputs?" *Accreditation* constitutes a process in which an institution is evaluated to determine whether it qualifies for a given status defined by explicit criteria. Accreditation implies consequences for the institution itself (e.g., permission to grant diplomas) and/or for students (e.g., eligibility for employment or further studies). Accreditation asks: "are you good enough to be approved?" Typically, results are classified in several categories across measures stratified by relative excellence. Accreditation can be institutional or programmatic.

## Quality Assurance in the Indonesian Higher Education System

The basis of quality assurance in the Indonesian higher education system is the basic law on the National Education System (Law no. 20/2003) and other government regulations derived from this law. One of the derivatives is the Higher Education Long Term Strategy 2003–2010 (HELTS). The goals of the HELTS are to improve national competitiveness, the quality of graduates, research and community/public service; and to measure institutional (organizational) health.

Three strategic goals were set to carry out the HELTS: (1) improvement of the relevance, quality, and academic atmosphere of HEIs; (2) establishing geographical and social equity; and (3) improvement of higher education management (leadership, efficiency, effectivity, sustainability).

To carry out HELTS, a new paradigm of higher education management was introduced consisting of four elements. (1) Institutions would experience

increased autonomy along with greater public accountability; (2) these changes would take place simultaneously with the establishment of internal quality assurance systems by the institutions; (3) this would interface with a new external quality assurance/accreditation system; and (4) that would result in public accountability of higher education institutions.

In the context of the new paradigm, accreditation performs the function of external quality assurance as part of public accountability by assessing higher education institutions. The results of accreditation are used for public certification of the quality for higher education institutions, eligibility for public funding, and as input for meta-evaluations of the higher education system. Because these kinds of reviews constitute a relatively new concept for the academic community and for informing the attitudes of society on quality education in general, a number of problems still exist in the process. Many people still seek tertiary education primarily for degree certification with relative indifference to the broader goals of the quality of various institutions in providing knowledge and competence.

## Accreditation in Indonesia

Figure 11.1 outlines the process of accreditation in Indonesia. It is managed by the National Accreditation Board for Higher Education (NAB), which

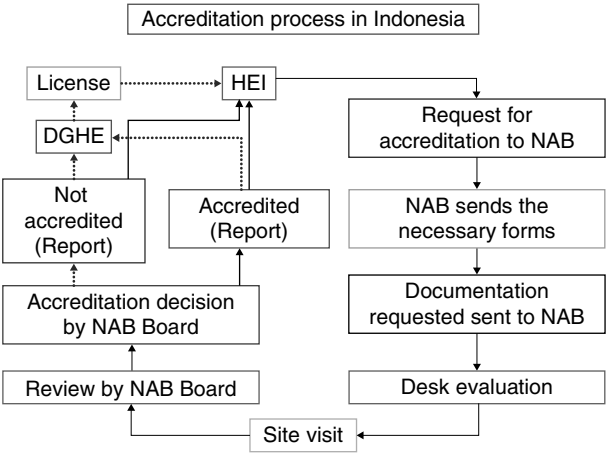


**Figure 11.1** The Accreditation process in Indonesia

*Source*: Created by author

consists of nine members appointed by the Minister for National Education for a four-year period with the possibility of one reappointment. The NAB organizes the process, formulates technical directives, establishes evaluation criteria and the nature of accreditation statuses, and collects data. It further performs the actual evaluations and assessments, publicizes accreditation results, and issues accreditation certificates. In the effort to improve institutional performance, it also provides recommendations for improvement, and assistance to institutions for helping institutions perform self-evaluations. Importantly, the board reports periodically to the minister.

The paradigm of management of the NAB is designed to obtain accurate results through peer review, accountability, transparency, and cooperation. The methodology employed is quantitative using structured instruments (Lenn 2004), which are reviewed every two years. The number of programs reviewed is high as many programs have been reaccredited because their initial accreditation periods have expired and many other programs have applied for reaccreditation to improve their level of accreditation. It should also be noted that during 2001–2002 a different method and instrument were used to review S-2 programs. In 2003, a new method was introduced, and continues to be used. The older instrument, which was more qualitative, did not discriminate sufficiently to differentiate the quality of programs because the assessors did not have experience in doing qualitative assessment without a structured instrument. During this period, only about 10 percent of the programs reviewed got excellent marks or an "A" and 40 percent got only just passing marks or a "C." A three-level passing grade, that is, "A," "B," and "C" was used to distinguish between excellent and mediocre programs, as the agency is aware that the quality of programs varies from institution to institution and even within institutions. If a "pass" or "fail" gradation system were used, no distinction might be made between excellent and mediocre programs.

## Assessment

The assessment process identifies key areas, components that contribute to assessment, and establishes standards. The key areas include inputs (environmental, instrumental, and raw input), processes (general management and educational management), and output/outcomes (quality of education, research, public service, and competence of graduates) of the educational process. The results are classified into four categories that seek to convey the complexity associated within programs and institutions with differentiated quality. Institutions and programs may be graded as (1) equal

to international/regional standards; (2) equal to national standards; (3) equal to minimum standards set by the Directorate General of Higher Education; or (4) failing to achieve accreditation.

Standards and indicators used in the assessment process are developed in cooperation with peer groups and professional associations and benchmarked by local, national, regional, and international standards. Benchmarking to regional and international standards is especially important for professional programs and done in multiple ways depending on the behavior of professional associations in the assessment process. Often, associations work cooperatively for mutual benefit. For example, many programs in medicine have been accredited by the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA), so that graduates of those programs can work in Malaysia. Accreditation by the MMA makes the programs more attractive for Malaysian students to study in Indonesia. The standards are grouped to include components of leadership and institutional development, and seek to determine components of quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of a program.

To illustrate, standards reflecting components of leadership and institutional development include assessments of integrity; vision, mission, aims and objectives; governance; human resources; facilities and infrastructure; funding; information systems; and sustainability. In turn, the standards that reflect components meant to exhibit quality, efficiency and effectiveness of a program examine students, curriculum, methods of learning; quality assessment mechanisms; management and the ability to create and sustain an academic atmosphere. Statements of performance standards used in the assessment of curriculum employ nine indicators seeking to measure appropriateness, adequacy, relevance, efficiency, sustainability, selectivity, productivity, effectiveness, and academic atmosphere.

## Self-Evaluation and Reviews

Major components of higher education assessment are the reviews and self-evaluations that they conduct both for their own internal processes of assessment and as aids to external reviews. These self-evaluations are designed to promote a broad spirit of inquiry across institutions. For example, institutions are guided to inquire

1. assessment: where are we now?
2. improvement: where can we get it?
3. accountability: what did we do with what we had?
4. problem identification: what went wrong?
5. problem solving: what can we do about what is wrong?

6. funding: how much money is needed and what are the sources for funding?
7. professional accreditation/certification:
   - what do our graduates know?
   - how competent are our graduates?

The focus of a self-evaluation review can be vertical for the institution as a whole, or focus on departments, programs, library, administrative offices, and so on. It can also be horizontal dealing with aspects that cut through the whole institution, such as research, teaching, student support services, community outreach, and discipline reviews.

## International Accreditation and Quality Certification

Increasing global interdependence has resulted in the internationalization of education in the forms of transnational education, borderless education, or cross-border education. Altbach (2002) points to current cross-border trends that include student markets, Internet-based technologies, the global knowledge economy, and massification of higher education. Others, such as Knight, have used internationalization to refer to the specific policies and initiatives of nations and individual academic institutions or systems dealing with global trends. A modification of Knight's classification (2002) could be used to identify

1. the *activity approach*, involving activities that are international in nature such as student and faculty exchanges, study abroad, international development activities, foreign language studies, international studies, area studies, joint degree programs, and comparative studies;
2. the *competency approach*, stressing the development of skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values;
3. the *ethos approach*, emphasizing a campus culture that fosters internationalization;
4. the *process approach*, emphasizing the integration of an international dimension into teaching, research, and service;
5. the *business approach* that emphasizes profit from international student fees;
6. the *market approach* with its stress on competition, market domination, and deregulation.

At the national, sector, and institutional levels, the internationalization of education may have the effect of integrating international, intercultural,

or global dimensions into the purposes, functions, or delivery of postsecondary education. An increase in student mobility and the free flow of labor are dimensions of how this may occur. Such changes heighten the need for higher education transnational quality assurance as this is an important step in the transnational recognition of qualifications. Transnational education is developing particularly in countries with a supply-demand gap, which tends to be experienced along the dimensions of quantity/access or in quality variance. Gaining mutual recognition among higher education types is not an easy road. To take Europe as an example, even where the stage of development of higher education in various countries is more uniform than in the ASEAN region, the process has been ongoing since the mid-1980s. A convention on the recognition of qualifications in higher education in the European region was held as recently as 1997, that is, the Lisbon Convention. The creation of a network for academic recognition in Europe has been an even more recent outcome, that is, the Network of National Academic Recognition (NNAR) (Tadjudin 2003).

In the Asia Pacific region, UNESCO's Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (PROAP) has also taken initiatives to promote academic mobility and mutual recognition of qualifications. The problems faced for mutual recognition in the region are

1. the different stages and levels of development of the higher education system in the different states in the region;
2. different levels of understanding and awareness of accreditation in particular and quality assurance systems in general;
3. variation in development stages, policies, and priorities for establishing quality assurance agencies;
4. different political and economic systems (market economy, socialist system, transitional system, etc.) and the implication of these for mobility and recognition;
5. different cultural and academic traditions within various societies and for specific institutions.

In the face of continuing globalization, Indonesia plans to establish an open system of education, one in which students from overseas can register as students, Indonesian graduates can use their national diplomas for work overseas, and overseas higher education institutions can establish campuses in Indonesia, whether autonomous or in cooperation with local institutions. For this purpose, some kind of quality assurance or accreditation is desirable, as it is observed that open systems experience fewer difficulties with transnational education than do monolithic ones.

## Accreditation for Transnational Education

Accreditation for transnational quality assurance can take the form of national accreditation by a national accreditation agency or transnational accreditation by agencies, usually professional, with international stature.

As transnational accreditation develops, its intersection with national accreditation appears at least in these instances:

1. marketability: The influence of the brand name of the provider of the training/certificate with international standing is often of more value than the official seal of a national agency;
2. the role of academic accreditation seems to be declining compared to the effects of professional accreditation;
3. the international credibility of purely national accreditation, especially in smaller systems, is far from guaranteed depending on the status of the national system;
4. different national systems producing different decisions about the same program/qualification from a given provider may cause confusion;
5. tensions between nationally based accreditation and transnational accreditation agencies and transnational education providers could arise, if these providers are not reviewed by local agencies. In Indonesia, for example, all institutions issuing diplomas must, by law, be reviewed by national agencies. An optimal method might be a review by a joint team of national agencies and those from home country providers.

At present professional programs are most active in seeking transnational accreditation, mainly provided by professional accreditation bodies with international stature such as the Accrediting Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) in engineering and the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) in management. Regional associations of accreditation agencies have also been established such as the Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN). "International" accreditation agencies, independent from national systems such as the Global Alliance for Transnational Education (GATE), have also emerged. At present the Australian University Quality Assurance Agency (AUQAA) reviews programs provided by Australian universities in Indonesia. These programs are usually bridging programs that do not issue diplomas.

## Transnational Quality Assurance

Widely ranging methods are employed to assure quality transnationally, such as comparison of programs offered abroad with equivalent programs offered in the home country, comparison of provider with host country standards, and comparison with their own published standards and mutual recognition. In some cases, programs must be previously approved. Some countries allow providers to set quality standards without review, while a few have excluded all "foreign" courses from approval.

Assessors and quality assurance agencies doing transnational accreditation also have responsibilities, which include

1. ensuring exports are the same quality as the product provided by the exporting institutions at home;
2. recognizing cultural sensitivities within the areas in which the programs are given;
3. seeking cooperation and mutuality with quality assurance agencies in the affected countries;
4. ensuring programs do not undermine the values of the host country;
5. including appropriate representatives of the host country in the assessment process;
6. being open about requirements, process, and expected results.

Transnational accreditation agencies that are doing reviews in a third country should do the reviews in cooperation with the national agencies.

The main issues in transnational quality assurance for higher education are standards, cooperative relationships, exchange of information, and the beneficiaries of quality assurance. The issue of standards includes assurance of high quality and devising strategies that can be used to protect at least minimum quality. Operationally, various methods are used to review programs originating in other countries, including comparing programs offered abroad with equivalent programs offered in the home country; comparing provider with home country standards; comparing programs with receiving country standards, and mutual recognition.

As global higher education is an enterprise without boundaries, a broad range of political and economic issues thus impinges on the ability of institutions to create successful cooperative relationships across borders. Many cooperative agreements already exist between institutions of higher educations (e.g., National University of Singapore—ASEAN Network [NUS-ASEAN], Association of European Rectors) and between specialized and

professional accreditors (e.g., Washington Accord, ABET, GATE, and the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education [INQAAHE]). Many engaged in these enterprises would emphasize the importance of establishing a framework to protect the quality of higher education as a "public good." In this context, inclusion of education as a tradable commodity (service) within the GATS agreements is a matter of concern.

Creating patterns of partnerships for cooperation across national boundaries is highly dependent on effective information exchange and the establishment of trust and confidence between partners. Some quality assurance organizations have found it useful to have foreign members participating in quality assurance as a way of improving cooperation, and creating programs sensitive to cultural differences.

Transnational quality assurance faces two distinct challenges, fully evident in the Indonesian case. First, important institutional information on quality tends to be available only to knowledgeable "insiders," those who work within higher educational institutional contexts. Joining existing information data bases and providing reports to Web sites that are targeted to lay audiences provides an expanded approach to establishing greater utility for transborder quality assessment. Information mechanisms of this order allow one to address the second issue, which is the rapid spread of lower quality higher education, ranging at the bottom end of the distribution to "diploma and accreditation mills." If transnational quality assurance is to be effective over time, cooperative endeavors by the most highly accredited institutions and their respective quality assurance bodies will need to combine with effective and contemporary modes of information dispersion.

## Mutual Recognition as Transnational Quality Assurance in the Region

Mutual recognition promises a simple tool for improving transnational quality assurance. Mutual recognition is at the least bilateral, but may also be developed into a network. As indicated above, the most important steps toward mutual recognition are trust and confidence building. Beyond these, one envisions establishment of national quality assurance agencies with common features of independence, accountability, transparency, and professionalism. Another important step would be the establishment and publication of standards and methodology. A regional clearinghouse could also be established to share information about experiences, lessons learned, and best practices identified.

In Indonesia and several countries in the region there is not yet a qualifications framework. This needs to be established and used as a basis for standardization of the different types of degrees and diplomas along with credit recognition and transfer schemes.

## Transnational Education in Indonesia

The delivery of transnational higher education in Indonesia is regulated by the Indonesian Basic Law on Education (Law No. 20/2003). Article 65 stipulates that aspiring foreign higher education institutions must first be accredited in their own country. Transnational higher education providers must operate in cooperation with a national higher education institution. If the system differs from the Indonesian system, adaptations to conform to the Indonesian system must be made. Article 61 of the law stipulates that only accredited institutes and programs can issue certificates, diplomas, or degrees. Twinning programs currently operate in Indonesia in which students usually spend two–three years in Indonesia in special programs called "international programs," delivered in English. They then spend one–two years overseas to finish their education.

Some institutions claim to have franchise arrangements. On inspection these are mostly with diploma mills accredited by accreditation mills. Cultural practices that emphasize the obtaining of an academic degree, especially a foreign degree, primarily as a status symbol, impede efforts for assuring the quality of those degrees.

Overseas students also take degrees in Indonesia—most are from Malaysia. The courses taken may be "international courses," but some Malaysian students who also understand Bahasa Indonesia may take regularly offered courses. Most of this work is in medicine, offered by medical schools already accredited by the Malaysian Medical Association. Islamic Studies is a popular course for Malaysians and other Moslems in the region. These are offered by State Islamic universities, private Islamic universities or higher-level *madrassahs* (Islamic schools) and *pesantrens* (Islamic boarding schools). Tuition fees in the "international programs" are higher than in the regular programs.

## Conclusion

Quality assurance in higher education is both a national and a global issue. The critical question is who is to be primarily responsible for higher

educational quality? First and foremost, higher education institutions themselves must accept this responsibility in concert with government and designated quality assurance agencies.

Quality issues become critical with the progressive internationalization of higher education, spurred by the critical role of knowledge in production and wealth creation activities. As the consequent exploitation of "knowledge markets" assumes even greater importance, the exclusion of developing countries from or subordination to international knowledge markets will reinforce the so-called north-south division (Meek 2003). The import and export of courses is particularly important for developing nations, where the capacity to offer distance education or courses is limited. However, this relative dependence makes those countries especially vulnerable to outside programs of poor quality. Given their minimal capacity to monitor externally sponsored programs or the Internet, they are dependent on the standards of exporting nations. This relationship imposes a major responsibility on exporting nations to ensure the quality of their exports.

The enormous cultural differences between nations have implications for quality assurance, generating in part a concern in many parts of the world about "cultural imperialism" by the major providers, especially Australia, Europe, and the United States. Providers need to be sensitive to this issue and responsive to local needs and conditions. The reality is that within the broad structure and flow of international education, powerful inequalities persist (Altbach 2002). A few countries dominate global scientific systems. Most new technologies are owned primarily by multinational corporations or academic institutions in the major Western industrialized nations. The domination of English as the medium of instruction creates advantages for the countries that use English as the medium of instruction and publication. All this contributes to a tendency toward dependency on major academic superpowers by developing countries. Within a global neoliberal environment in which the control of many nation-states over their domestic economies is weakening, the role of international foundations like the Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations, and international agencies like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to set higher education policy agendas is striking.

Ultimately, assuring the quality of transnational programs will require improving access to information about standards, accredited institutions, certified programs, and the results of quality assurance reviews. If these efforts are coupled with greater cooperation among quality assurance organizations, accreditors, and providers on an international level, a more informed international perspective may emerge that results in mutually acceptable quality standards, greater clarity in the terminology used, and increased cooperative relationships. However, in the end it is the provider institution itself, the goals and aims of having the program, and leadership

of the institution that will decide whether a program offered is of good quality or not!

The mission and role of the NAB in Indonesia will continue to evolve. As geography and the government/bureaucratic establishment is perceived as a problem, should the NAB be regionalized or an institutional accreditation system established and qualified higher education institutions be awarded a "self-accrediting" status? The accreditation of professional programs like accountancy, engineering, medicine, for example, will be examined within a context in which the NAB migrates toward a likely "hybrid system," in which program accreditation, institutional accreditation, and professional accreditation by professional associations coexist.

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# Chapter 12

# The Challenges of Creating and Maintaining Higher Education Quality under Conditions of Rapid Economic Development in Thailand

*Suchart Muangkeow*

## Introduction: Higher Education in Thailand

Higher Education in Thailand dates back to the late nineteenth century when the first comprehensive Thai university, Chulalongkorn University, was established by upgrading the existing Civil Service College to the university level in 1917. Several specialized universities were later established in Bangkok after the revolution of 1932, namely, Thammasat in 1933, Mahidol, Kasetsart and Silpakorn in 1942. In a period of accelerating rural development, the government focused on establishing universities to serve such development. Regional universities were then established throughout the country, such as Chiangmai in the north, Prince of Songkhla in the south, and Khonkaen in the northeastern region.

Over the past 30 years, higher education provision had reached only 10 percent of the 18–22 age cohort. Government moved to accelerate access through a process of massification by encouraging the private sector to take part in higher education, establishing open universities, and expanding teacher education to cover many parts of the country. The evolution of information technology over the past 20 years has also contributed to a

shift in expansion priorities moving away from the creation of regional universities to the establishment of 33 information technology campuses on existing universities throughout the country. These IT campuses use information technology to complement existing teaching and learning to create and maintain quality.

The Eighth National Higher Education Development Plan (1997–2001) established "Quality and Excellence" as one of the six major policies identifying both long- and short-term strategies and relevant projects/activities to be realized during the plan's course. The Ninth Plan (2001–2005) stipulates quality as the main emphasis of its overall implementation. The Ministry of University Affairs (MUA), then the Commission on Higher Education, has the task of assuring the quality of higher education by establishing quality control of the overall study programs. It does so by establishing minimum requirements for both public and private higher education institutions.

With the significant increase of global interdependence and competition affecting all sectors of the society, higher education quality control was seen as insufficient. The Council of University Presidents of Thailand (CUPT) incorporated with the MUA, proposed a set of principles and directions for quality assurance in 1994. On July 8, 1996 the MUA announced a quality assurance policy with guiding directions. The policy stipulated that all universities improve and enhance their efforts for quality of instruction and the academic learning environment.

Implementation of this plan began soon after the promulgation of the National Education Act of August 1999. Internal quality assurance (IQA) and external quality assurance (EQA) are mandated in Chapter 6: "Educational Standards and Quality Assurance," Section 47, which reads: "There shall be a system of educational quality assurance to ensure improvement of educational quality and standards at all levels. Such a system shall be comprised of both internal and external quality assurance." In relation to IQA, Section 48 specified that "Parent organizations with jurisdiction over educational institutions and the institutions themselves shall establish a quality assurance system in the institutions. Internal quality assurance shall be regarded as part of educational administration, which must be a continuous process. This requires preparation of annual reports to be submitted to parent organizations, agencies concerned and made available to the public."

Section 49 also states that the EQA is responsible as a new and independent body, subsequently embodied as the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Public Organization). ONESQA was established in October 2000.

# Challenges Facing Thai Higher Education in a Rapidly Changing World

It is strongly held throughout government and much of Thai society that Thai higher education needs to adapt itself better to the mainstream of globalization with the ultimate goal of maintaining national identity and ethnic harmony while also keeping pace with global trends toward achieving liberal democracy. In addition, the country needs to be aware of national security threats in light of the increasing threat of global terrorism. Such adaptations have not come easily to Thai higher education institutions over the past few years. Cultural tolerance among different ethnic communities is an immediate issue, which unavoidably involves higher education. The Thai domestic political situation has deteriorated in recent years in the context of governmental upheaval and outbreaks of violence in the South of Thailand where Muslims constitute a local majority population. Thailand finds itself faced with an unaccustomed social situation of multiculturalism, which is very new to Thai society. Current Thai governmental policy is to employ education to alleviate the turmoil in the south of Thailand. Thus, world changes have had an immediate effect on social development, some of which, it is believed, can be cured effectively by education. This situation is complicated further as a large part of the higher education system requires reform and renewal.

Rapid changes resulting from global interdependence impact Thai higher education in a variety of ways. Free trade and trade liberalization at both bilateral and multilateral levels, especially as a result of the GATS agreements, introduce transformative elements into both the society at large and higher education in particular. This can be viewed specifically in relation to the rapid changes taking place in science and technology, which generate market demands for workers with new knowledge and skills. Higher education institutions are expected to fill this need, providing graduates with the competences required by changing professions. Simultaneously, limitations in the resources available to support higher education are in decline, forcing institutions to seek additional resources externally and to form networks to enhance their overall capabilities. As the work environment changes, workers require constant upgrading of their skills, providing higher education with a significantly enlarged constituency with continuously changing needs that must be addressed. Changes in the knowledge environment create new intellectual property requirements for university-based research. All universities are forced to seek new opportunities to gain external funding through varieties of

entrepreneurial activities and network associations. In the midst of these pressures for alignment between universities and the vocational requirements of the emergent knowledge economy, it remains a central concern to balance the needs of the social sciences and humanities with the sciences and to ensure that Thai cultural and social values remain a central component of higher education.

Limitation of resources for the support of higher education both qualitatively and quantitatively has compelled Thai higher education institutions to seek additional resources externally and synergize their collective strengths to form networks for mutual benefits.

All these factors have helped shape present-day Thai higher education and caused the Commission on Higher Education to rethink its mission. These tasks ahead informed the formulation of a Second 15-Year Long Range Plan for Higher Education that was completed in December 2007, which is reported on briefly in this chapter's conclusion.

## Education Reform in Thailand

With the dawn of the new millennium the number of enrollments in Thai education institutions increased dramatically. This was due in part to the enforcement of the National Education Act of August 1999 together with the Thai constitution of 1997, which guaranteed opportunities for equal access to 12 years of basic education. One consequence of the law's enforcement was the increase in the numbers of students enrolled in higher education. This increase also led to a phenomenal increase in the number of institutions of higher education as many teacher colleges were upgraded into multidisciplinary universities. At present, there are about 221 institutions of higher learning throughout the Kingdom of which 166 are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, illustrated in table 12.1.

In total all public and private higher education institutions deliver approximately 8,000 study programs at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Total enrollment for both public and private higher education institutions was 1,748,873 in 2007, of which 74 percent study in the social sciences and humanities, 22 percent in sciences and technology, and 4 percent in health sciences.

Each higher education institution has a different background and its own characteristics; their strengths in different disciplines vary. On the plus side, Thai higher education institutions provide great variety, but on the negative side there are challenges for educational administration to manage quality and maintain standards of higher education.

**Table 12.1** Thai higher education institutions by type

| **Public Higher Education Institutions (78)** | | **Private Higher Education Institutions (68)** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Autonomous universities | 13 | Universities | 34 |
| Traditional universities | 16 | Institutions | 5 |
| Rajabhat universities (former teachers training institutions) | 40 | Colleges | 29 |
| Rajamangala University of Technology | 9 | | |
| Community Colleges | 19 | | |
| Total enrollments (2007) | 1,748,873 | Total enrollments (2007) | 283,588 |
| Total graduates (2006) | 282,675 | Total graduates (2006) | 51,428 |
| Lecturers (2007) | 45,429 | Lecturers (2007) | 14,133 |
| PhD holders (2007) | 11,804 | PhD holders (2007) | 2,295 |
| Masters degree holders (2007) | 26,676 | Masters degree holders (2007) | 9,107 |
| Bachelors degree holders (2007) | 6,755 | Bachelors degree holders (2007) | 2,731 |

*Source*: Information Center, Commission on Higher Education (As of September 2008). Created by author from this data.

Gerald W. Fry has classified educational reform in Thailand into four phases, the first of which occupies the period from 1868 to 1910. Taking place during the Fifth Reign, the period derives from the Visionary Reforms of King Chulalongkorn (King Rama V) whose 1871 decree read that "Once they have acquired a literate education, goodness, beauty and prosperity will be with them to the end of their days."

The second phase from 1973 to 1980 is known as the Student "Revolution" and its Aftermath. A first major turning point in Thai politics occurred in June 1932 when the absolute monarchy was transformed into a constitutional monarchy. The subsequent critical incident took place in October, 1973 with a student uprising. These two events are the two most pivotal incidents in twentieth-century Thai political history. In the immediate aftermath of the October student uprising, a major education reform movement emerged.

This was followed in the period 1990–1995 by a set of reforms known as the Challenges of Globalization and Internationalization. In the early and mid-1990s another attempt at educational reform emphasized Thailand's need to adapt to the challenges of globalization and

internationalization. The basic premise was that for Thailand to be internationally competitive, it needed to prepare its young people for an increasingly intercultural global era by internationalizing its educational system.

The current period occupies the fourth phase beginning in 1997 termed Crisis as Opportunity. Thailand's latest educational reform initiatives stem from the shock of the Asian economic crisis and subsequent political reforms including the new October 1997 Constitution, which mandated educational reform and decentralization.

The most recent reforms of Thai education were promulgated to enhance the quality of education, provide opportunities for equal access to education, promote the development of teaching and learning methods, and promote lifelong learning for the current knowledge-based society in order to improve the quality of life while maintaining the equilibrium of intellectual, moral, and cultural values. In addition, education is expected to play a pivotal role in assisting young people to become competent and good citizens. Stakeholders are encouraged to play a part in the delivery of learner-centered education (Fry 2002).

Reform of the teaching and learning process focuses on providing greater emphasis on student learning in part by locating student preferences and capabilities in the center of the teaching process. This shift occurs within an educational culture that has been slow to change and long based on the most traditional forms of instruction. The new learning and teaching model focuses much more on reorienting the status orderings of the classroom, increased utilization of problem-based learning and more diverse and rigorous assessment. Within this framework learners are encouraged to more fully develop their performances within the knowledge zone they are familiar with, the heart of teaching and learning process. This reframing also emphasizes student interests and skills, emphasizing their natural abilities and individual capabilities. Curricula need to be reformed to emphasize analytical, managerial, and conflict resolution skills and ensure that students can learn and apply these skills.

Other goals of the reform emphasize that students learn from direct, hands-on experiences, a goal that is coupled with developing a love of reading and developing critical thinking in the service of learning self-sufficiency and lifelong learning skills. A critical component of this learning package is acquiring media skills, which are viewed as being essential to balance knowledge, and developing an ethical and moral view, attributes that are seen as leading in turn to the development of suitable character on a personal level.

To accomplish these goals requires significant modification of existing teaching and learning environments to render them student centered. Further, faculty are enjoined to make use of research as both a teaching

methodology and to enhance student learning. In this model learning is viewed as an outcome that can be created anytime and anywhere, outcomes that are enhanced by the use of electronic media.

Reform of standards and quality of education is critical to the accomplishment of quality goals. Quality assurance is a relatively new tool for Thai higher education and reforms focus on its implementation to improve and secure the quality and standards of education. Higher education institutions have been encouraged to build up their own internal quality assurance systems, but time will tell how the system will be sustained and consistently improved. Both HEIs and the CHE are in the process of developing a common culture that seeks to make good use of the results of the external assessments provided by the Office of National Education Standard and Quality Assurance (ONESQA) every five years.

A major goal of the reform movement was the mobilization of resources from both public and private sectors. The reform plans envisioned gaining additional resources from local public administration, communities, foundations, religious bodies, business and industrial operators, and stakeholders.

## Pursuing Reform

By early in the decade it became clear that the reform efforts envisioned by the plan required greater focus. By 2003 the Ministry of Education had identified five measures on which it sought to measure reform success:

- reform of structure and management systems should be undertaken to ensure good governance and management at the university level;
- development of measures and process in quality management such as postaudit evaluation should be in place and functioning;
- reform of teaching, learning, and research including both basic and applied research;
- reform of financial systems to initiate a partial shift from supply side (public higher education institutions) financing to demand side (students) financing;
- development of faculty staff and higher education personnel in parallel with the research development to increase the overall international competitiveness of Thai higher education, including increased provision of academic staff scholarships to encourage pursuit of the PhD.

In November 2003, the Office of the Education Council, Thailand issued a report on the follow-up and evaluation of education reform for its

third anniversary after promulgation of the National Education Act of 1999. Regarding education standards and the process of quality assurance it concluded that there had been three critical issues addressed: (1) the development of a quality assurance system and educational standards; (2) issues of internal quality assurance for institutions; and (3) the creation of external quality assessment to be achieved according to the objectives as specified in the Education Reform Act of 1999. The report found that little progress had been made on the development of a quality assurance system and educational standards. The creation of internal quality assurance mechanisms had been modestly achieved. Efforts to develop external quality assessment were hamstrung by the absence of appropriate ministerial regulations and the creation of national standards. In addition, many institutions did not undertake quality assurance efforts, and it was also clear that many institutions lacked a clear understanding of what the quality assurance endeavor was about.

Consequently, in 2003 the Ministry of Education announced a new set of higher education standards specifying clearer quality and standard requirements. The standards were to be used for promoting, protecting, ensuring, evaluating, and assuring Thai higher education quality.

Three sets of standards were adopted. The first specifies the suitable characteristics of Thai graduates as Thai and global citizens. The second focuses on the delivery modes of higher education, and the third provides guidelines for the establishment of learning organizations in the context of a continually emerging knowledge society.

After the announcement of additional national higher education standards in 2003, subsequent standards for basic, vocational, and higher education were later announced in 2006 following a similar pattern. The first established standards for assessing the quality of graduates. The second developed standards to be applied to the quality of HE management, including specifications of good governance and appropriateness of mission in HE management. The third focused on the attributes of a knowledge-based society and the role of learning organizations within it.

The announcement of these higher education standards in 2006 helped to clarify and define the direction for higher education development. However, bringing institutions into compliance with these standards required that they voluntarily follow the guidelines to formulate appropriate objectives, strategic plans, and quality assurance mechanisms. Since Thai higher education institutions enjoy total academic freedom and management autonomy, the role of the Commission on Higher Education is to function in an advisory capacity and attempt to convince institutions to voluntarily comply with the prescribed standards.

## Challenges in Thai Higher Education Development

As these reforms have worked through the process of implementation, it has become clear that Thai higher education has experienced considerable progress, especially in the improvement of equity and providing better access to higher education, developing more diverse delivery modes, and inventing study programs catering to different social and economic needs. This has included distance learning, the creation of double degree curricula, and providing education for disadvantaged and in-service employees. In addition, progress has been made with respect to collaboration with the private sector, an increasing internationalization of higher education, improved academic cooperation with foreign partners, and development of international curricula. Specific progress can be pointed to in the utilization of ICT for higher education development.

Concurrently, the internal and external forces acting on Thai higher education include a phenomenal increase in the number of students, the changing structure of the population, a call for greater accountability for quality and management of higher education institutions, changing roles of higher education institutions in social and economic development, enhancement of the country's competitiveness in educational services, resource constraints, and the impacts from new technology and education reform. These pressures have slowed the development of Thai higher education and required greater quality accountability for institutions.

These constraints have resulted in diminished higher education quality leading to a variety of shortfalls such as questionable quality of some university graduates and their employability, a lag in the development and implementation of new knowledge and technology, and a shortage of qualified lecturers. Further, institutions experience an inability to act responsively in meeting the demands for increased Thai competitiveness in international communities. And, one can observe a widespread lack of understanding among the Thai population concerning the still relatively new GATS policies that view HE as a commodity. The majority of the higher education community in Thailand considers the delivery of higher education within the framework of providing social services for the broader national community and not as a commodity. Therefore, there continue to be academic debates regarding the appropriate nature of the delivery of higher education.

These deficiencies have had an impact on the widening gaps in the quality of higher education. An important task remains ahead for Thai higher education institutions to improve their quality, to be able to react

more quickly and effectively in response to social and economic needs, and to do better in meeting social expectations. Part of the challenge in accomplishing these objectives is to assure stakeholders that steps being taken meet outstanding social needs. One step is to commit the governmental planning process to actions necessary to improve learner competencies and to involve important stakeholders in the planning process. In this way, it is held by planners, one makes a firmer move toward assuring the relevance of higher education outcomes to national social and economic development as well as enhancing international competitiveness. Other critical steps involve a conscious effort to allow higher education institutions to develop their academic strengths and expertise within the framework of their own identity and characteristics. This climate of distinctive pluralism creates a framework for quality improvement without sacrificing distinctiveness. A further move toward integrating the public into the overall higher education improvement process is the creation of useful data bases with easy access for the public, a step that allows better decision making for university admission.

## Improving and Maintaining Quality

In addressing the above challenges the Thai higher education community addresses the means to improve and maintain quality in cooperation with relevant stakeholders. A major step was the creation in 2004 of a Roadmap for the development of Thai higher education quality for the years 2005–2008. The Roadmap calls for upgrading the quality of university graduates, faculty members, research, teaching and learning, and the quality of higher education management. These efforts are to be regulated by prescribed higher education standards and a more effective higher education monitoring and evaluation system.

The Roadmap identified major challenges and issues to be addressed to improve and maintain the quality of Thai higher education. One critical element is the improvement of academic management itself. The existing system is relatively inflexible, deriving from and supporting the continuance of the verticalities (silos) that are so typical of higher education. It is clear that this feature limits the flexibility of institutions and their abilities to deal with change. An altered administrative environment would encourage interdisciplinary programs that synergize the strengths of multiple disciplines. A companion to this endeavor is promoting innovative teaching methods that incorporate research and development as part of the teaching and learning process. In addition, this opening of administrative

perspectives also requires providing opportunities for the private sector and other stakeholders to participate in the curriculum and learning environment, including having the ability to develop new and innovative curricula for the future such as artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, biotechnology, and so on. The development of a National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education to support the quality assurance process is required to ensure consistent achievement of standards.

The effective utilization of innovative and suitable technology for teaching and learning are critical to quality development and maintenance. The Roadmap addresses the technology issue through the metaphor of an ICT circle in which some possess capability and others do not. Heavy national investments in such technologies are consistent with the national goal of continually expanding the ICT circle. Various innovations have been proposed to assist the expansion and use of ICT, including establishing a consortium network to share resources and transfer new know-how among faculty members. One important baseline for quality improvement in this area is incorporating e-learning with conventional teaching practices to enhance effectiveness in student learning, including exploring the use of multimodal and multimedia as alternatives to conventional classroom teaching. A companion need is to include access to higher education through distance education, allowing anytime learning of high quality. Similar modalities are to be developed over the years of the plan to extend lifelong learning opportunities of high quality. This platform provides abilities and capabilities in learning organizations that can, ultimately, provide the basis for a knowledge society.

Providing state support for higher education has become a problem throughout our increasingly globalized world, and it is clear that quality issues are touched in many ways by issues of finance. The Roadmap seeks to take into account both the supply and demand sides of higher education finance, as well as issues of social and economic development in general and the personal needs of both students and faculty members before recommending a course of action. It is increasingly clear that higher education in Thailand can no longer rely on a single source of support, and therefore educational resource mobilization, utilization, and distribution must be sought from stakeholders in both the public and private sectors and from communities and local administration. This imposes a new burden on higher educational institutions as they must also learn to be more accountable for their own financial resources by developing more flexible financial management, improving their financial performance, and delivering quality education outcomes. Steps toward these goals will include incrementally raising the student share of the cost of higher education, controlling expenditures on educational services and administration, and

balancing capital, art and cultural conservation costs, environmental preservation, and other lower priority spending. At the same time it is necessary to enhance research capacity to increase revenue from research and academic services while managing intellectual property and patents to generate funds. All of these financial activities will be accompanied by efforts to raise additional funds from charitable foundations and alumni.

Another significant quality vector is effective governance. Thai higher education institutions require a variety of administrative and governance reforms including greater focus on institutional missions, developing more participatory processes, recruiting and providing remuneration in a more transparent manner and developing fair evaluation processes. Within the overall range of administrative reforms will be efforts to encourage institutions to decentralize and delegate authority and administrative power to facilitate more effective and flexible management and to enable institutions to respond to rapid changes in the broader environment. Transparency and reliability in accounting practices have become part of the broader public demand for accountability in higher education, and are viewed as good governance requirements for linking institutions more closely with their supporting publics. One component of transparency that is easy to overlook is the manner in which the development of information technologies can be used to manage and distribute information evenly throughout the academic community while supporting the future development of teaching and learning. The essential conservatism of higher education institutions in general may need to be counterbalanced by developing systems that will nurture a new generation of executives and coach them as modern professional and academic leaders. One element of such a system would be the establishment of networks for the exchange and sharing of professional experiences.

The Roadmap makes specific provision for the development of quality assurance as a value-added, ongoing process for continuous improvement leading to academic excellence. Each individual institution is to be encouraged to develop its own flexible and adaptable quality process, bearing in mind that quality assurance should be measured by social demand, satisfaction of stakeholders and employers, and international compatibility. Specific steps in this direction promoted by the Roadmap include assuring that monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are effective and that quality assurance processes are properly in place enabling participants to develop "quality culture" in their heart. Institutions that do well on various quality indicators should model those for other institutions. Overall, Thailand must formulate an accreditation system that is comparable to international standards and develop degree equivalency standards that allow for international comparisons. The process needs to encourage student participation

and establish a public information system to disseminate the performance of higher education institutions.

Research and intellectual property management also need to be further strengthened. Research is one of the important means to improve quality and is the source for the generation of innovation and new bodies of knowledge. This new knowledge can then be transferred not only to develop teaching and learning but also to manufacturing and other social sectors. We have been urging our universities to strengthen their endogenous capacities in order to be less dependent on external sources of technology. It is becoming increasingly crucial to have the capacity to conduct the full cycle of research activities from creating research topics and producing researchers, to transferring technology for commercial use, and protecting and managing intellectual property rights. The prevailing view is that the focus should be on research output that can be used for developing new bodies of knowledge that can in turn be transferred to business sectors thereby benefiting the economy as a whole. In our case, we encourage our universities to concentrate their research activities on the development of agriculture and agroindustry to support our economy.

In order to make use of research activities to benefit Thai society as a whole, it is important that the direction of research be in line with academic and national development and lead to the establishment of research linkages with industry and private sectors to gain synergy. This in turn will lead to the promotion of value-added output of university research and transfer know-how into commercialized applications. These goals in turn are best achieved by involving the community in research activities and transferring knowledge to grassroot levels in order to train them to be able to solve their community problems and to make community development more sustainable.

Academic collaboration among universities should be promoted by linking higher education institutions nationally and internationally. With the emerging pressures of globalization, rapid technological change, and trade liberalization, higher education is not free from these external pressures. At present, these institutions are looking for partners and forming academic networks to exchange and share their knowledge and experiences. In the age of globalization, it is necessary to allow opportunities for faculty members and students to be exposed to global perspectives in order to be globally competent and be able to communicate better with international communities. In this regard, our universities should promote exchange of faculty members and students regionally and internationally, organize academic symposia jointly to share knowledge regularly, promote joint research activities internationally, and encourage cross-disciplinary research so as to transfer know-how among different disciplines

and share innovative knowledge and new technologies with members of the network.

## Conclusion

While this chapter was taking shape, events in Thailand moved quickly in 2007 to generate the next step in long-range planning for higher education, taking the form of the Framework for the Second 15-Year Plan on Higher Education in Thailand, developed under the auspices of the Commission on Higher Education (2008) covering the period 2008–2022. This comprehensive effort to assess the nature of social change that will occur within Thailand over this period and to anticipate the higher education needs that will be required to meet social objectives during this period is both bold and risky: bold, because the territory it stakes out for higher education is vast; risky because it seeks to plan and make claims in a world that the plan itself acknowledges is rapidly changing. Indeed, the challenge of all social planning in these coming decades is fraught with difficulty.

The Framework is intended to provide "an integrated and holistic" approach to identifying and taking strategic directions for Thai education. The Framework organizes the work in two major parts. The first provides future scenarios for the society and higher education linking them to emergent global and local socioeconomic environments. The second focuses on seven scenarios to be addressed: demography; energy and the environment; employment; violence and conflict management; decentralization of Thailand; students and youth in the postindustrialization world; and developing a sufficiency economy. These factors come to frame nine issues of specific relevance to higher education: articulation with secondary and vocational education; the proliferation of higher education institutes; university governance and management; national competitiveness; financing of higher education systems; staff and personnel development; university networks; programs for southern Thailand; and learning infrastructure.

It is clear from the analysis that most of these issues are those developed in the Roadmap and that a major function of this Second 15-Year Plan is to preserve its agenda as the country faces both the challenges and uncertainties of the coming years. The recent plan is distinctive in its emphasis on the integrative approach that must be taken to link broader elements of social change with both the roles and reforms present in the current higher education climate with newer roles that will emerge from these highly charged dynamics of continuing social change. In this way one can conclude that the elements of quality themselves as they exist within this

vortex of change will depend a great deal on the way that higher education as a social enterprise deals with the challenges of such change.

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# Chapter 13

# The Future Directions of Higher Education Quality Assurance in Korea

*Keunwoo Lee*

## Introduction

Higher education throughout the world has recently experienced a quantitative expansion along with a diversification of institutions, structures, programs, and delivery modes. Increased market pressures and the imposition of more formal procedures and regulations have been imposed by governments seeking greater measures of control. These changes appear to have been motivated in part to require universities and other higher education institutions to compete at both the national and international level.

The number of higher education institutions has increased in Korea during the past 10 years, at the very time the number of prospective students is decreasing because of the phenomenally low rate of birth—at 1.08, the lowest in the world in 2005. No less than 82 percent of high school graduates were enrolled in higher education institutions in 2005, the second highest in the world after Finland's 88 percent (*Financial Times* 2007). Because of the economic contraction following Korea's foreign exchange crisis in 1998, the number of "good" jobs for graduates has declined.

Currently, the competition to secure minimum enrollment among institutions is greater than at any other time in the past. If conditions continue, one can expect that several less prestigious institutions will be forced

to close. Accordingly, many universities are struggling to survive by actively recruiting international students as well as conducting collaborative activities with foreign institutions.

These factors give new dimensions to quality issues as HEIs need to comply with national or international standards as demonstrations of quality. Increased institutional competition attenuates a growing concern in the general population that the quality of inputs will be realized in appropriate outcomes. Accordingly, new quality assurance systems are being looked for by an increasingly diverse range of users, providers, and other stakeholders in higher education.

This chapter reviews relevant selections of the higher education quality assurance literature and reports on a qualitative survey administered to university academic staff members and evaluation-related institutes in Korea. A questionnaire was sent to 30 representative universities out of a total of 201 universities in Korea. The 30 universities selected are roughly representative in terms of quality reputation, size, location (i.e., 16 urban, and 14 rural), and governance entity (i.e., 10 national, and 20 private). The questionnaire was also sent to three other higher education evaluation-related institutions—the Ministry of Education (MOE), Korean Council for University Education (KCUE), and Korea Education Development Institute (KEDI). Forty-two responses were received from twelve institutions and organizations yielding a 36.3 percent rate of institutional responses.

The questionnaire addresses five main topics: (1) elements of quality; (2) desired measurement of quality; (3) perceived problems in current evaluations; (4) future desirable elements of quality; and (5) improvement of evaluation. A primary concern underlying this survey is to suggest improvements for the current Korean higher education quality assurance system, based on international trends, related wisdom accumulated through past experience across national borders, and respondents' suggestions.

## Concepts of Quality of Higher Education

A definition of quality itself has importance in determining the shape and function of the quality assurance system that embraces it, as it connotes both the purposes and contents of quality assurance mechanisms.

Higher education is commonly regarded as linked to a general improvement of individuals, groups, and society as a whole as they are touched by its activities. It provides the basis for preserving and transmitting the values of society and for reflecting on and identifying needed areas of change. Through research and creative activity, institutions of higher education

also promote the values of creativity and discovery. In offering diverse educational programs, institutions help their graduates prepare for productive lives as citizens and members of society. The quality of higher education is necessarily closely related to these purposes and functions.

The quality of higher education activities tends to be judged by the extent to which such activities fit expressed purposes and functions. However, it is increasingly held that these purposes and functions themselves ought to constitute a good fit for the institution's stakeholders: their so-called relevance. The quality of activities is also determined by the extent to which they meet a minimum indicator set for inputs, processes, and outcomes, constituting the "standard-based approach to quality."

Summarizing this approach, Van Bruggen, Scheele, and Westerheijden (1999) indicate four general parameters of higher education quality:

- the fitness of the objectives of higher education in each study program for students who will live in a dynamic, professional, and flexible world;
- the fitness of the content of programs with a view to the state of the art in the underlying areas of knowledge;
- the results of higher education in terms of standards for graduates' knowledge, skills, and attitudes; and
- facilities, organization of the programs, and so on.

Sanyal and Martin (2007) have broadened these roles in contemporary institutions to include becoming partners in regional and international consortia, engaging in different forms of transnational education, joining virtual university initiatives, and building partnerships with industries.

Earlier, Harvey and Green (1993) developed a simplified quality model that they hold accords well with ideas of the lay public about quality. Quality to many observers implies sound value for money, a criterion that also satisfies the demand for public accountability. Quality as fit for purpose links activity with capability, of which teaching and research have been the most historically important. And, quality as a transforming activity focuses on an institution's ability to change student perceptions of the world.

## Significance and Mechanisms of Quality Assurance

The Regional Report of Asia and the Pacific (UNESCO 2003) defines quality assurance in higher education as systematic management and

assessment procedures to monitor performance of higher education institutions. As a worldwide phenomenon, external quality assurance began in the 1980s, developing rapidly throughout the 1990s—the so-called decade of quality (Frazer 1992 cited in Woodhouse 2004). Following the opening of the higher education market under the rules of WTO and GATS, linking quality assurance to higher education international standards has emerged as something of an imperative. This seeming imperative has marked 2000 as "the decade of international quality assurance."

Brennan and Shah (2000, also see Wahlén 2004) reviewed consequences of quality assurance on the basis of an Organization for Economic and Cooperative Development (OECD) case study, distinguishing three types of impacts on institutions: impacts through rewards, impacts through changing policies and structures, and impacts through changing higher education cultures. They suggest that the first two may be the result of external evaluation reports and that the last one may follow from self-evaluation and internal institutional quality assurance. They stress the direct impact of external evaluation as well as the indirect impact of quality assurance through internal evaluations on higher education institutions, implying that nearly all changes within the institutions reviewed could be attributed to quality assurance activities.

Sanyal and Martin (2007) classify quality assurance mechanisms into three basic types: quality audit, quality assessment, and accreditation. Quality audits examine an institution or one of its subunits for a system of quality assurance procedures, and determine their adequacy. Audits are program specific and customarily performed by individuals not involved in the subjects being examined. Van Damme (2000) observes that nowadays audits are typically used where universities themselves control the quality assurance process. Here, an audit is a kind of meta-review of the quality control mechanisms themselves, and is often the responsibility of the government.

Quality assessment, the most widely used method of quality assurance, can be conducted either internally or externally. It assesses an institution or its programs to determine whether they meet agreed-upon or predetermined standards established by designated stakeholders. Although it does not provide a quality label, this process can establish greater confidence among stakeholders.

Accreditation can be defined as confirmation by an external body that key standards of quality have been assured in higher education institutions or programs. It formally ensures that a higher education institution as a whole or a specific higher education program has reached a given level of quality according to the institution's mission or the objectives of the program. Accreditation usually awards a quality label or a recognition status for a limited period.

U.S. systems of accreditation date from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Accreditation was initially needed to inform institutions or individuals about the standards being used elsewhere in the country. Accordingly, accreditation primarily represented only a threshold to be met or exceeded. Accreditation has changed over the years and is currently widely used as a mechanism for ensuring that quality education exists in higher education institutions and programs of substantial difference and diversity.

## Objectives of Quality Assurance: Quality Improvement versus Quality Accountability

Quality assurance has two main purposes, quality improvement and quality accountability. As constituents of the process, universities are particularly interested in improvement of their curricula, whereas external stakeholders are typically attracted to the varieties of evidence provided by external evaluation. Commonly, higher education institutions will have developed their own systems of internal quality assurance aimed at quality improvement.

Conversely, the public often seeks assurance that students have acquired a given degree of knowledge, skills, and abilities of presumptive value—especially in meeting employment needs. Policymakers in their stead seek assurance that acceptable progress is being made in student learning and other meaningful academic activities. Increasingly, policymakers desire credible, comprehensive, and comparative data about colleges and universities to be collected and made available to students, parents, and themselves. Benjamin and Klein (2006) emphasize this trend in their concept of educational accountability as the extent to which higher education institutions meet goals set by the public. To satisfy this demand, universities are asked to reliably demonstrate that students have acquired important knowledge and skills while achieving other goals such as timely graduation, achieving necessary prerequisites for professional schools and gaining employment.

Internal quality assurance systems are primarily concerned with quality improvement, whereas external systems tend to focus on quality accountability. Harvey and Newton (2004) see accountability as overwhelmingly the dominant underlying rationale of external quality assurance evaluations, observing that in countries where university autonomy is accepted or based on market norms, one finds a growing demand for explicit accountability, and in countries where higher education has been substantially controlled by government, greater accountability is the inevitable consequence of increased autonomy.

However, across a wide variety of countries, improvement-focused activities are receiving more attention as full-blown external nationwide evaluations (mandatory or not) move into their second or third cycles. Virtually all countries with QA systems are concerned to some extent with both accountability and quality improvement, whether they pursue an accreditation model or an audit model.

## Evaluation Methods and Further Tasks

Most widely used QA methods examining institutional resources, structures, practices, and achievement outcomes are classified around four types of evaluation: institutional capacity, reputation, faculty research, and student experiences. Among these, faculty research and student experiences are most often used for performance-based measurement of quality.

However, most large-scale evaluations today do not fit easily into any one of these types and are instead multimeasure approaches evaluating several dimensions of universities such as institutional governance, operational processes, and financial or facility viability.

In principle, any measurement of quality should make clear its "product," that is, the extent to which academic activities attain their purposes and the degree to which quality may be measured objectively. Issues of validity and objectivity of the measures used are paramount. In reality, however, often the definition of quality is one thing, and its assessment or measurement of quality another. Brooks, for example, observes that many HE quality assessments fall short of the larger goal of measuring quality, because they lack sufficient theoretical clarity or methodological precision (Brooks 2005).

Quality assurance is also often distinguished as retrospective or prospective, summative or formative. Biggs points out that retrospective quality assurance looks back on what has already been done and makes a summative judgment against external standards. The main purpose is managerial rather than academic, with accountability as a high priority; procedures are somewhat top-down and bureaucratic. This approach, despite the rhetoric, is rarely concerned with the quality of academic activity, but with quantifying some presumed indicators of good teaching and good management, and arriving at some form of cost-efficiency decision. Liston (1999) finds this model prevalent in universities in Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom (Biggs 2001).

Conversely, prospective methods seek to assure that present and future academic activities fit institutional purposes. It is concerned with

examining how well the whole system works in accomplishing its mission, and encourages the continual upgrading and improvement of academic activities through internal quality enhancement efforts. The efforts of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges Senior Commission (WASC) in the United States to work with institutions collaboratively to align the institution's context and areas of needed development exemplify the prospective model.

Differences in reporting at the last stage of evaluation relate to the summative or formative purposes of evaluation. Where summative purposes predominate, reports contain explicit statements of outcomes, for example, pass/fail or a qualified grade; such reports tend to be written for external audiences. Where the emphasis is formative, the audience tends to be academic, and the reports emphasize recommendations for improvement. Billing (2004) finds that where institutional autonomy is high, the summative approach to quality assessment emphasizes literal accountability. Where strong state regulation of the higher education sector is the norm, little need for further control through quality assurance exists, and a more formative approach predominates, emphasizing improvement.

In theory, different foci of evaluation require different approaches and methods. What surprises Harvey and Newton (2004), however, is the lack of research into the appropriateness of evaluation methods for the purposes of quality assurance.

> Rather than starting with purpose, focus, and data requirements, then designing an appropriate methodology, quality monitoring has been characterized by pre-specifying the method (ignoring the epistemological aspect of methodology) and using convenience measures, irrespective of their intrinsic value or whether they are appropriate operationalizations of any concepts under investigation. In essence, purpose, focus and object of study are post hoc relationships. The political rationale overwhelms the enquiry methodology. (Harvey and Newton 2004, 153)

To generalize a need across the overall enterprise of QA, it seems clear that studies are required of the appropriateness of specific methods of evaluation to the purposes and foci of the quality assurance activities to which they are directed.

## Comparative Quality Issues in Asia

Asia's more recent focus on higher education quality and accreditation, borrowing heavily from U.S. and British models, has resulted in higher

education accreditation becoming a major policy issue with various countries (e.g., Thailand, Malaysia, India, Indonesia, and China) developing state-led agencies for quality assessment and assurance.

Japan developed U.S.-style accreditation mechanisms modeled under the influence of postwar American occupation policies. The establishment of the Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) in 1947 was followed by government enactment of its own HE quality standards for university establishment in 1956. By the 1980s, the issue of university evaluation took on new emphasis with the declining number of high school graduates. Simultaneously, the governing University Council and the government chose in 1991 to deregulate the standards establishing universities, requiring them to self-monitor and self-evaluate as devices to improve their quality of education. The role of the JUAA shifted increasingly to external assessment. Delayed implementation led in 2000 to the establishment of the National Institution for Academic Degrees (NIAD) as the national organization for university evaluation. This remains an incomplete process in which NIAD examines only 99 national universities, while over 400 local public and private universities are "recommended" to go through some form of external evaluation on their own (Yonezawa 2002; see Yamamoto, chapter 8).

India's two primary independent accrediting bodies were formed in 1994 at the national level but without any regional agency: the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and the National Board of Accreditation (NBA). The NAAC accredits over 90 percent of higher education institutions and programs, while the NBA provides accreditation to only engineering-related programs. The marked feature of Indian quality assurance is that monetary or nonmonetary incentives are heavily associated with the results of the evaluations of both agencies. For example, development grants distributed by the University Grants Commission (UGC) and other nonmonetary prizes, such as greater autonomy in finance and curriculum, are directly linked to the grades from these agencies.

The Malaysian National Accreditation Board (or Lembaga Akreditasi Negara—LAN) was established as a statutory body in 1997, and is in charge of quality assurance for private higher education programs, not for institutions. The NAB conducts three levels of evaluation: course approval, minimum standards, and accreditation. The first two procedures are mandatory, while the third, accreditation, is voluntary. All programs provided by registered private institutions are subject to at least the first two levels of evaluation (Suleiman 2002). In 2002, the government determined that public institutions must also be included within a quality assurance discipline and established the Quality Assurance Division within the Ministry of Education. An overarching Malaysian Qualifications Framework

(MQA) was developed jointly by the MQA and the LAN achieving government approval in 2005. This led to the formation of an overall integrated agency, the Malaysian Qualifications Agency, in late 2005. This agency currently has full responsibility for QA for all tertiary higher education institutions.

In China, the "Higher Education Act" in 1998 explicitly established an institution's obligation to receive required evaluations from the government. Moreover, the purposes, types, methods, procedures, and agencies of evaluation are governed concretely by regulations adopted in 2002. The Ministry of Education requires four types of evaluations: for a newly established institution, for undergraduate education quality, for graduate education ranking, and for the excellent institution selection evaluation (Park 2005). Though the Chinese quality assurance system is characterized to a remarkable degree by government-led evaluations without the involvement of any professional agency, it is fairly well supplemented by various evaluations from the private sector.

## Some Trends in External Quality Assurance

Throughout the world, the relationship between universities and the state has been altered, including the rise of formalized state roles in quality assurance. In the traditional American accreditation model academic institutions took most of the responsibility for the quality of their programs. As El-Khawas (2001) observes, today state-organized and directed quality assurance agencies dominate these activities, overshadowing the role of universities.

Correspondingly, the traditional way of controlling higher education through central ministerial regulation and administration of educational standards is rapidly diminishing. Stable standards are in decline, replaced by a continuous process of benchmarking employed by universities to learn about innovative ways of education (Van Bruggen, Scheele, and Westerheijden 1999). Professional accrediting agencies or external organizations are no longer held to be sufficient to address all the challenges of quality assurance in higher education, regardless of their continued acceptance by and support from the academic community. Nor does the tendency toward commodification alone promise effective university self-regulation as they are challenged to improve through competition.

Second, an overall trend seems to be developing away from institutional level assessments and in the direction of program evaluation. Program assessments are more likely to focus on regulating teaching inputs and tend

to be more liberating and developmental. As such, they are viewed as empowering higher education institutions to become more self-regulating, innovative, responsible, and responsive to market needs (Billing and Temple 2001 quoted from Billing 2004). Since there is no particular cumulative information value of institutional evaluations, the emphasis in quality assurance seems to be shifting from the institutional level to program and subject levels (Wahlén 2004).

Third, a globalization of quality assurance agencies has taken place, responding to the significant increases in transborder higher education. More institutions find it necessary to gain quality markers for this kind of work. The Global Alliance for Transnational Education (GATE), hosted by the Center for Quality Assurance in International Education (CQAIE) in Washington, DC, represents one such model, focused on a certification process seeking to supply consumer protection in the context of quality improvement (Van Damme 2000). In 2002, UNESCO's Global Forum on Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education proposed an action plan for UNESCO, covering a range of standard-setting, capacity building, and clearinghouse activities (UNESCO 2007).

A fourth trend is increasing cooperation between and mutual recognition of agencies. The International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) formed in 1991 provides mutual support and assistance between agencies (Woodhouse 2004). The main purpose of the Network is to collect and disseminate information on current and developing theory and practice in the assessment, improvement, and maintenance of quality in higher education. It aims at information-sharing between agencies, and encourages various activities such as promoting good practices, facilitating research into quality management, and linking accrediting bodies to one another. From an initial membership of 20, the Network has now grown to a membership of 194 agencies from 77 countries (INQAAHE 2007).

Fifth is a trend toward the evaluation and recognition of quality assurance agencies themselves. Over two decades have passed since various systems of higher education quality assurance were widely introduced across the world, with sufficient rapidity to raise concerns about the quality of agencies themselves. It led the INQAAHE to devote its biennial meeting in 1999 to this topic (Szanto 2005). In the same vein, the Center for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) provides recognition of U.S. accrediting agencies on a voluntary basis. The U.S. Department of Education also links their approval of accrediting agencies to federal student loan funding and conducts its own recognition process for accrediting bodies.

About a dozen agencies have been externally evaluated by various, mostly international, review panels in the past decade or so. These evaluations are expected to serve them to advise on future processes, to strive to meet international expectations, and thereby to facilitate and contribute to the mutual recognition of agencies, which is a significant step toward enhancing academic mobility and cooperation globally.

## A Review of Higher Education Assurance in Korea: Some Problems and Suggestions

The first systematic and detailed evaluation of Korean universities occurred in 1982, with the establishment of the Korean Council for University Education (KCUE), a nongovernmental and autonomous cooperative organization of member universities. KCUE later acquired legal status with the passage of the KCUE Act in 1984. The current evaluation of 201 universities by KCUE involves both institutional accreditation and academic program evaluation.

KCUE completed its first five-year cycle of systematic institutional accreditations during the period 1994–2000. It has recently completed a second cycle of five-year improved institutional reaccreditations, from 2001 through 2006. The organization also conducts its own assessment of a small number of disciplinary or program evaluations each year, and has done so since 1992. From 2005, it decided to conduct academic program evaluations similar to its program accreditation cycle, on the basis of five-year terms.

The KCUE process is similar in many respects to that of other systems, beginning with a self-assessment report based on published criteria. These reports constitute input to external committees, mostly consisting of peers. These external committees conduct a site visit, leading to public reports. These include a finding of results and recommendations for improvement—the entire report known as a "consulting evaluation" (KCUE 2007). Evaluation results are ordinarily graded as "Excellent (over 94 points)"; "Good (over 89, less than 95 points)"; or "Fair (over 69, less than 90 points)." Ratings are valid for five years. Findings of "Needing Improvement" or "Unacceptable" are rarely conferred. No instance of giving an "Unacceptable" either in institutional or program evaluations exists. Sometimes, the result of evaluations is to highlight examples of good practice. Evaluation outcomes are publicly disclosed. At this point, evaluation results have not as yet been linked to government funding as they have in some countries.

By requesting improvement in university administrative procedures and outcomes, evaluations have resulted in administrative improvements, as they have also encouraged universities to increase their investments in facilities and staff (Kim 2004). On balance, however, the Korean system continues to display numerous weaknesses and would benefit from comparison with experiences and practices of countries with more mature systems.

## Problems of Higher Education Quality Assurance in Korea: Reviewing Questionnaire Data

Questionnaire respondents indicated a broad range of problems with the current system of quality assurance. Respondents found the reviews to be

1. too superficial and uniformly comprised of numeric evaluative criteria, mainly focused on performance (13 cases);
2. irrelevant with respect to evaluative criteria (6 cases);
3. focused on measuring research performance rather than on teaching performance (10 cases);
4. lacking in professional and effective evaluation system (10 cases); and
5. lacking with respect to international evaluative criteria (3 cases).

The majority of respondents pointed to problems with the criteria themselves. Nearly half noted the strict rigidity of numeric quantitative evaluation criteria and the irrelevance of some. Respondents noted that some of the evaluative criteria themselves do not accurately reflect social needs, whereas other criteria were ambiguous in terms of what they sought to measure. A major problem identified by numerous respondents focused on the inflexibility of the criteria, such that their uniformity did not account for the plurality and difference of the disciplines and universities that they were meant to evaluate. This rigid structure in turn led the process to develop an "outcome" that amounted to little more than a statistical report on overall academic operations that is difficult to relate to actual institutional practices. Because of how reviews were conducted, other respondents found a lack of ownership on the part of institutions in the process.

A significant number of respondents emphasized that evaluations are structured to emphasize research over teaching performance, and believe that the criteria poorly represent what actually takes place within Korean universities. To round out this view, many respondents indicated that the weakness of the overall process tended to arise from the lack of a fully

professional and effective quality assurance system. This view focused on the lack of linkage between the evaluation system and universities, reflected in the absence of input on development criteria for reviews. Other complaints pointed to the limited effort the agency exhibited in supplying useful feedback that could lead to improvement activities. Evaluators were found to be deficient in skills and expertise, again reflecting agency weaknesses. Additional critiques touched on the lack of coherence among evaluations, the absence of financial rewards for good institutional performance, and insufficient lead time to prepare for evaluations, coupled with poorly run preparatory workshops.

In summary, respondents create a picture of a relatively immature agency that is poorly integrated into the actual activities of the universities they seek to evaluate. Many academic employees are willing to conclude that evaluation criteria are problematic, lacking in relevance, and characterized as overly superficial, rigid, obscure, and quantitative.

It is useful to place these responses in the context of the relevant literature. Kim Ki Un (2004), for example, found that KCUE's evaluation checklist for both institutional accreditation and program assessment lacks items pertaining to academic performance or outputs. KCUE's final judgments are predominantly based upon input factors, with the exception of a few items that touch on innovative practices and the rate of graduate employment or further academic work.

Kim Ki Un also found reliability an issue with site visits. A given team will conduct an assessment for only a few universities among the whole subject group, leaving an open question as to whether "identical screening measures" will be used with other institutions. While this is a common weakness in peer review systems throughout the world, the fact remains that such a system, especially if aggravated by poor team training, may lead to incompatible reviews (Kim 2004).

Kim Kyung Hoi (2006) points to the overall lack of consequences within the system. While evaluations are conducted according to a predetermined schedule predominantly made up by KCUE staff, and the agency is required by law to periodically evaluate universities and report the results to the Ministry of Education and HRD, universities themselves are not legally required to receive these external evaluations. Recently, some universities and academic departments have rejected external evaluations and suffered no harmful consequences.

The burden of reviews on institutions has been reported by both Shin Jae Chol (2006) and Kim Ki Un (2004). Universities complain about their preparation for outside evaluations, especially in light of the short notice given. Multiple and uncoordinated reviews are also a problem, as universities must often undergo similar assessments by KCUE, the Ministry of

Education (MOE), or the Korea Institute of Curriculum and Evaluation (KICE). MOE and KICE request highly specific data from universities to ensure their eligibility for various financial subsidies. Institutional accreditation in particular is considered an onerous task because of excessive checklists and the long period of data preparation without receiving commensurate incentives for good record-keeping.

In addition, Kim Kyung Hoi (2006) criticizes the fact that KCUE constitutes a de facto monopoly assurance system, one that includes important professional reviews such as the Accreditation Board for Engineering Education of Korea (ABEEK), and the Korean Accreditation Board of Nursing (KABN). These monopoly endeavors imply that only one set of definitions, concepts, methodologies, and criteria should govern practice. Such a one-agency system risks excessive uniformity and homogeneity.

Finally, the system has a make-work quality to it, lacking in effective consequences. Although evaluations continually take place, no fundamental research seeks to assess the process itself (Kim 2004). Evaluations tend to be one-time-only events without any follow-up processes and therefore of no significant consequence.

## Suggestions for Future Directions in Korea

Based on the suggestions of questionnaire respondents and on the relevant academic literature relating to higher education assurance in Korea, I propose some future directions for an external evaluation system in Korea.

### Develop Relevant and Acceptable Evaluating Criteria

Effective evaluation ultimately must rely on the linkage of data and findings with practices that institutions value and find useful to pursue. This suggests that agencies should develop a variety of flexible and pragmatic nonnumeric criteria through active and open debates between agencies and higher education institutions. New indexes should be able to measure effectively both teaching and research performance, as well as academic activities conducted in the international arena. (WASC, for example, seeks to make all this available through publicly available electronic data sets.)

### Mandatory Evaluations

The assessment and accreditation process is crucial for providing a reflective outcome that can be useful in future decision-making processes of

institutions and other stakeholders. Given Korea's relatively small size, it seems unnecessary to make this a voluntary process. Rather, it seems reasonable to provide each institution a choice among different assessment bodies, each with a focused purpose. It may also be useful to allow institutions to choose an international quality agency such as the Global Alliance for Transnational Education (GATE) for their quality assessments to encourage comparison with international norms.

## Improvement and Autonomy-Oriented Evaluations

The focus of evaluations should be on continuous improvement in the value-added contribution of the institution to student learning and on the range of outcomes over time, rather than on absolute levels achieved. Evaluations should serve the university's own needs and thus be a development tool for its own processes of quality improvement. Institutions should be encouraged to make improvement plans relevant to their own purposes and contexts, reflecting the reports of external evaluation committees or the agency. The follow-up evaluation should focus on an institutional quality enhancement plan or on learning and teaching improvement strategies, and systems and mechanisms for the identification and dissemination of good practice.

## More Open Debate and Transparency

Not all academics and institutions are willing to work in teams with outsiders and to reveal their teaching practices and program contents. However, as Harvey (1997, also see Harvey and Newton 2004) points out, relying predominantly on self-assessment in a high-stakes context, with poorly trained academic peers engaged in a contentious setting, entails contrived dialogue, and accordingly, very little information for improvement. Such contrived dialogue may be prevented by creating a mechanism for open and shared dialogue. Government or agencies should support such processes and outcome reports that are transparent to the public. Making such information public will surely lead to more open and transparent debates in academia and in society, as well as promoting ongoing institutional improvement.

## Enhancing Objectivity of Evaluations

Some problems related to interteam variance and subjectivity in peer group assessment are unavoidable. In reality, one visit team will not be able to

examine all universities by employing the same measures. However, the best way to minimize interteam variance is to orient the peers to the assessment framework through rigorous training programs. A good example exists in the experience of the Indian National Assessment and Accreditation council (INAAC) (Stella 2004). The accreditation body should play a major role in planning the assessment framework, developing instruments and methodology, fine-tuning the implementation, and ensuring the objectivity of the process.

## Introducing a Competitive Evaluation System

The Korean quality assurance system has been applied to universities virtually unchanged for a quarter of a century. The quality assurance process itself results in learning by individuals and organizations involved in the process. Learning, despite its positive effects, does not always cause a positive outcome. Particularly in the area of evaluation, there can be an onset of diminishing returns in repetition of the evaluation cycle (Jeliazkova and Westerheijden 2002). Once success has been achieved during a first round of evaluations, a second (unchanged) round of evaluations cannot add as much quality improvement or accountability as the first did.

To protect institutions from this cycle of diminishing returns, quality assurance systems need to be designed with a built-in facility for continuous learning and change, in other words to be able to evolve. Universities no longer should attempt to solve quality assurance problems as defined only by the state or by only one agent. They should continuously redefine problems through active argumentative inquiry among competing plural agents, and only then develop adequate solutions.

## More Incentives

There are many objections to the amount of labor expended in the evaluation process without significant returns. Too high a stake should not be placed on the results of the evaluation. Universities in Korea are already suffering from an oversupply of higher education institutions. Their academic appraisal is quite well reflected in the results of annual recruitment of new students. In other words, the market economy is already controlling the quality of universities more than anywhere else in the world. Therefore, the process of assessment or accreditation should be an arena for self-learning and academic debate for improvement rather than for strict accountability. Moreover, there should be some positive signal or monetary incentive for excellence as a useful device to motivate institutions.

## Solid Internal Evaluation Systems

Poor outcomes inevitably occur where institutional evaluation is undertaken as a one-time event immediately after institutions have been notified that they are to be assessed. More appropriately, universities should run an ongoing internal quality assurance system. Internal evaluation systems breed confidence in evaluation processes. Active internal systems would also strengthen ownership of quality assurance among the institutions.

## Increased Commitment of Agencies

Evaluation and assessment are growing academic fields. Evaluation bodies, themselves, need to adopt norms of continuous quality improvement, which in these cases necessarily involves being current with the literature of discovery and application.

Continuous follow-up case studies by the evaluation body on positive or negative impacts of institutional strategies on the ultimate outcomes in learners or researchers are recommended to be rigorously conducted and to be widely disseminated, perhaps online. It also would be good policy to make public and explicit its policies, procedures, and criteria, along with collaborating with other international agencies.

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# Chapter 14

# Accreditation in the Philippines: A Case Study

*Victor Ordonez and Regina M. Ordonez*

## Introduction

As countries progress along the development trajectory, the availability of a competent human resource base becomes a determining factor of progress. Countries progressing from an agricultural economy to a manufacturing economy to a technological and knowledge economy recognize that an adequate supply of higher education graduates is a necessary precondition for achieving and sustaining advanced levels of development in this globalized, competitive, fast-changing world, as the tiger economies of Asia have proven.

The Philippines boasts of a well-established higher education system that has provided relatively democratized access for over a century, enrolling proportionately more students than all but 5 countries in the world, until about 30 years ago. From the 1980s to the present, however, as many other countries witnessed phenomenal higher education growth rates, enrollment rates in the Philippines grew only slowly. More alarmingly, contrary to prevailing economic wisdom where higher ratios of higher education graduates within a population are meant to correlate with improved economic development, this is not the case in the Philippines, where many graduates seem ill-prepared to handle the complex workforce demands of the modern workplace.

One symptom of this shortcoming is the performance deficit of graduates in various national licensure exams certifying entry to various professions. In exams of the Integrated Bar given by the Supreme Court, for example, only 27 percent of the candidates pass the examination. For teaching candidates the pass rate for the national Licensure Examinations for Teachers (LET) examination is just 31 percent and for accounting graduates taking the Certified Public Accountants exam only 24 percent.[1]

Another symptom: Employers and the business community in general have warned that an inadequate supply of well-trained and prepared graduates is limiting the performance of the business system. Leaders in the service outsourcing industry, an area of projected rapid growth, for example, complain about unqualified applicants, and are facing a downward projection in expansion plans.

Clearly the quality of higher education is a matter of national concern. The challenges in assuring workplace preparation and quality have figured largely in the evolution and development of the accreditation movement in the Philippines. For policymakers and business leaders alike maintaining the right balance between government regulation, private sector-led accreditation, and adaptation to the requirements of the existing work environment are matters to be constantly monitored. It is in this context that various efforts at establishing accreditation for quality have evolved.

## The Philippine Higher Education System: Context

The Philippine higher education system evolved much earlier than its Asian neighbors. Its first universities date from the seventeenth century, founded by the Spanish colonizers, to educate a local ruling elite that would serve as its surrogates. With the arrival of American colonizers in the early twentieth century, the education system was partially democratized at all levels, encouraging democratic access and private initiative. By the 1950s, hundreds of higher education institutions had developed, mostly religious or private in nature, a pattern that persists to the present in a system comprised of 125 public universities and colleges, and 1300 private universities and colleges. The quality of these institutions varies widely, from world-class universities to those that are little more than glorified high schools.

Responsibility for governing this system was located for many years within the Ministry or Department of Education, in the Bureau of Higher Education that exercised oversight over private institutions and through an attached Board of Higher Education under the Minister or Secretary.[2]

State colleges and universities were autonomous and not under the Bureau's supervision, but the Secretary or Minister of Education (or his/her deputies) sat as chair of their Boards of Education. In 1994, the Department of Education was reorganized by an act of Congress into three separate entities: (1) the Department of Education for primary, secondary, and other forms of basic education; (2) the Technical-Vocational Education and Skills Development Authority for vocational skills training; and (3) the Commission on Higher Education for college and university studies.

In the attempt to protect students and promote national concerns, the new Commission on Higher Education had to walk a tightrope between underregulation and overregulation.

On the one hand a need existed to establish minimum requirements and standards, especially as provided by law with respect to for-profit institutions. Hence, stringent requirements were imposed on institutions for an initial "permit" period prior to their official "recognition" that allowed them to grant degrees. These requirements included minimum standards for size of campus, library holdings, laboratory facilities, the percentage of faculty with advanced degrees, and so on. In addition, the government prescribed in detail the number of credit hours required in subject areas for each degree program, which all institutions were required to follow to gain recognition for the degree. Institutions could add to these requirements, but not replace or reduce them. For many years, even rates of tuition increase and the percentage of those increases allocated to salaries were stipulated by Ministry fiat.

The creation of uniform national standards, however, did not allow for adaptation to local needs. More importantly, overprescribing programs of study and the management of assets of the institution denied the better universities the freedom to innovate and adjust to new needs and the changing demands of society.

In practice this particular exercise in government regulation proved to be a double-edged sword. The body and context of regulation prevented bad schools from becoming worse, but the very rigidity of regulation, even in areas like curriculum, had the perverse effect of preventing good institutions from becoming better. Private sector-led accreditation supported by government deregulation proved to be a way to solve this conundrum.

## The Origins of the Accreditation Movement

Accreditation in the Philippines had an early beginning, but was characterized by several aborted starts, with some setbacks caused by protagonists

with differing objectives and constraints, along its path to eventual development.[3]

In 1949, the Department of Education issued the first public statement suggesting that quality assurance through private sector accreditation would be necessary to preserve, if not enhance, good tertiary education. The private sector needed to take the initiative in the name of quality improvement and establish another set of standards, higher than those of the government, to which institutions could aspire in their quest for quality. By proceeding in this way, it was hoped that the government would validate the accreditation effort, even if it did not financially support it, and provide accredited institutions with some form of deregulation as a result.

The private sector did not act to implement an accreditation process until 1951, when Francisco Dalupan, the president of one of the largest universities in Manila, the University of the East, acting on his familiarity with United States–style accreditation, brought together several equally knowledgeable leaders to pursue the subject. Dalupan expressed the appropriateness and timing of the enterprise in this way:

> Up to this time the standards attained by higher education in the Philippines have been the end-product of the minimal government requirements for the issuance of permit and the extension of recognition, of government control and supervision, and of the isolated but commendable efforts of individual schools and individual educators towards improvement. While these standards in many cases are sufficiently high, they are in most cases relatively low. In schools where the minimal government requirements have been barely met, there has been left much room for improvement. In some cases, the conditions have warranted the charge that private schools in the Philippines are nothing but diploma mills . . . higher education in this country is over three centuries old; yet it must be admitted that it has not rendered as much service as it might have to the people and to the nation. (Dalupan 1951)

This group formed the unfortunately short-lived (1951–1952) Philippine Accrediting Association of Universities and Colleges (PAAUC), welcoming all three major professional associations of private colleges and universities to join them. These were

- a Catholic group represented by the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP);
- a protestant group, the Association of Christian Schools and Colleges (ACSC);
- a nonsectarian, mostly for stock and for-profit group, embodied in the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities (PACU).

The distinguished educators of the first PAAUC board tried to bring these three groups together in a common drive for accreditation, but differences in philosophical as well as financial issues stood in the way.

PAAUC viewed the accreditation exercise as a voluntary self-examination by the institution for purposes of self-improvement, rather than a vehicle to pass compulsory government inspection.

But PACU's view was that accreditation should be government controlled, as was common in Europe, and not necessarily voluntary. Its for-profit institutions feared that accreditation would reinforce the reputations of the elite HEIs, and indirectly negatively affect their institutions, which might be considered inferior to the elite, mostly Catholic, schools.

More fundamentally, improving quality was expensive, necessitating investments in equipment, better salaries, and more research, to meet higher standards. Such investments would have to come from tuition income, which would diminish or even erase returns to stockholders.

In 1951, PACU withdrew its membership from PAAUC, choosing to prepare its own handbook on "accreditation"—in reality only a guide for accepting new institutions into its association. The handbook was finally revised for accreditation purposes in 1973, and standards were adapted to make them more readily acceptable to the existing membership. By any measure, the PACU effort could be said to have erred on the side of laxity in its accreditation pretensions.

The Protestant ACSC, the smallest of the three associations, remained in PAAUC for a short period, but with the withdrawal of PACU and a change of association leadership that provided no continuity for accreditation discussions, it, too, eventually withdrew in late 1952.

Finally, the consortium of the three major associations, PAAUC, died a natural death.

## The Establishment of the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges, and Universities (PAASCU)

The remaining Catholic association, CEAP, continued to pursue accreditation within its own ranks, forming an Accrediting Committee in 1954. After field-testing PAAUC's standards and criteria, CEAP developed a self-survey form, a question-and-answer list to evaluate an institution's operations. A few adjustments were made to accommodate matters of particular Catholic interest.

Given its limited accreditation experience, CEAP sought to encourage and foster the conducting of self-surveys among the better-known Manila universities and colleges from 1953 until 1956. Subsequently, CEAP responded to member institutions seeking recognition through its Accreditation Committee. Survey site visit teams examined eight areas of institutional operation—covering the objectives of the institution, the faculty, instruction, library facilities, laboratory, physical plant, student services, and administration—across the three program areas of liberal arts, commerce, and education.

By the end of 1957, 11 prestigious Catholic HEIs had successfully completed preparatory training for accreditation. However, instead of constituting the new CEAP accrediting association, this initial group chose to incorporate separately as a private, voluntary, nonprofit and nonstock organization to be known as the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges, and Universities, or PAASCU. It registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission on December 2, 1957, declaring its independence from CEAP's structure.

Subsequently, the Department of Education officially recognized PAASCU as an accrediting agency, and eventually offered certain privileges, including exemption of its accredited member HEIs from the requirement of obtaining government oversight of the graduation process. With government continuing to support the idea of private, voluntary accreditation, PAASCU specifically invited both non-Catholic and nonsectarian colleges and universities to become members, to avoid the perception that it was only for private Catholic HEIs. This triggered attempts by some members of ACSC and PACU to revive accreditation processes for their member institutions, but they were unable to do so until several years later.

## Expanding the Accreditation Movement

Under martial law, imposed in 1972, the government moved to reestablish control over various quasi-state functions, Article 15, Section 8 (1) of the 1973 Constitution stating "all educational institutions shall be under the supervision of and subject to regulation by the State." The Ministry of Education was decentralized into 13 regional areas. The government imposed stricter regulation of higher education institutions, many of which had proliferated indiscriminately through political influence. In particular, private accreditation was slated to become a formal part of national educational development policy.[4]

The plan was that a government-mandated federation of accredited associations would enlist private HEIs, which would then receive public

grants-in-aid for accreditation activities. This, however, did not transpire. A majority of HEIs, both urban and rural, still opted for low-cost programs in liberal arts, commerce, and teacher education, avoiding the heavier investments required by technical programs like engineering, health care, the physical sciences, and agricultural technology, despite their presumptive value to national development. Commercial viability trumped both the pursuit of quality or facilitating national development.

Ironically, as the country's need for a technologically educated citizenry grew, accompanied by significant student demand for higher education, this very demand allowed HEIs to determine their own programs, creating an imbalance between the nation's needs and the outputs of their low-cost programs. Assuring the achievement of quality and relevance to national needs was left to the more expensive HEIs, mostly in Manila, who serviced the elite.

Two events moved accreditation forward. In 1975, the Fund for Assistance to Private Education (FAPE)[5] commissioned a study to reexamine higher education, claiming that "accreditation is essential, but only partly effective, in its present status." While private sector education leaders, including the heads of many of the more important universities, expressed a willingness to self-regulate for quality and relevance, and to help weaker HEIs, private sector institutions did not collectively have the resources to do so. Government aid and incentives, the report concluded, were needed to improve the system.

Almost concurrently, a majority of higher education institution heads attending an Educators Conference in Baguio in 1976 concluded that accreditation was an important way for institutions to protect their autonomy and diversity from encroaching government regulation. In fact, as long as institutions were self-regulating, they would receive less bureaucratic supervision and more grants-in-aid and other economic and noneconomic incentives. For these institutions, the unifying goal was to provide for broad academic autonomy under a voluntary evaluation process established by various accreditation mechanisms coordinated by a national accreditation federation, *and* supplemented by government aid and support.

## Birth Pangs of the Federation of Accrediting Agencies of the Philippines (FAAP)

From multiple deliberations came the newly organized Federation of Accrediting Associations of the Philippines (FAAP) in 1977, a body intended by the then Education Secretary Jaime Laya to become a superbody of accrediting agencies in the form of a federation.

At the same time, both the Christian HEI organization of ACSC and the nonsectarian HEI association of PACU formed their own accreditation groups. They did not join the seemingly exclusive and still predominantly Catholic PAASCU, insisting that they needed to protect their own members' interests.

ACSC formed the ACSC-Accrediting Agency (ACSC-AA), a body focused more on the role of educational development and service than on improved standards of quality. Its head reported to a Board, which in turn was subject to the general body of missionary HEIs, the Assembly of Accredited Institutes of ACSC (AAI-ACSC). Thus, though unincorporated, it functioned independently of its mother organization, ACSC.

Similarly, the nonsectarian PACU Committee on Accreditation, or PACU-COA, did not incorporate, but reported to its parent organization any deviations on interpretation of the latter's policies and directives regarding accreditation. It revised its handbook for the third time in 1974, and again in 1977.

The Ministry of Education recognized FAAP in 1979, and in 1984, through the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports (MECS) Order No. 36, gave it the power to certify, a role traditionally performed by individual accrediting agencies. The more recently activated associations, ACSC-AA and PACU-COA, were no match for PAASCU's expertise and size. PAASCU was to be the lead accrediting agency, a status owed to its 20-plus years of experience in the field.

However, ACSC-AA and PACU-COA regarded this organizational structure as politically unacceptable to their constituencies. They lobbied instead for two representatives from each of the three associations to constitute a Board of the Federation. In the "El Grande Consensus," all parties agreed that there should be equal representation in formulating policy, while maintaining autonomy for individual operations and the implementation of accreditation practices among their own institutions. For political expediency FAAP gave equal amounts of funding to all three accrediting institutions at the price of ignoring their relative organizational strengths, weaknesses, and specific needs.

The two newer associations came to occupy the majority bloc of the FAAP, capable of outvoting PAASCU. They also insisted on comprehensive institutional accreditation, rather than program accreditation, as the basis for the accreditation judgment. PAASCU had long pursued a program-based model. PAASCU argued that institutional accreditation would allow weak programs to be masked by stronger ones. Such "protective coloring" could act in turn as a disincentive to quality improvement efforts by weaker programs.

PAASCU faced the challenge of being a member of an organization whose interpretations of "acceptable" quality standards were capable of

being judged differently by the three constitutive agencies. For example, when FAAP sponsored its first program to familiarize accreditors of the three associations with common criteria and the self-survey instrument it had endorsed, ACSC-AA and PACU-COA adopted these immediately as their official standards and procedures for liberal arts, education, and commerce of their member HEIs, but PAASCU rejected them, as too quantitative and mechanical and inappropriate for reaccreditation purposes, where qualitative judgment by evaluators was a necessary component. Yet, PAASCU maintained that it needed to stay within FAAP to oppose the transformation of the federation into one national accrediting agency, where its voice would be drowned out.

Individual associations could also ignore FAAP criteria, one of which stipulated that all members must incorporate. Only PAASCU fulfilled that requirement, yet the others remained active federation members. Among the three organizations under FAAP, PAASCU was by far the most advanced in its development as an accrediting agency, having continually refined its requirements (1968) and between 1973 and 1988, developed accreditation for programs in Agriculture, Nursing, Law, Engineering, Social Work, Computer Science, Medical Technology, Pharmacy, and graduate schools. By 1987, PAASCU had accredited programs in 56 colleges and universities, while the two other associations combined, hampered by inexperience, inadequate survey instruments, and less resources, had reviewed only 27 institutions.

## Continued Support from the Government of Corazon Aquino

In February 1986 the Marcos regime was toppled by the EDSA People Power Revolution, ushering in a new president and government. These events indirectly changed the course of the quality assurance movement. Lourdes Quisumbing, president of the prestigious Miriam College, and an active PAASCU director, was appointed as the Minister of Education, Culture, and Sports (DECS). She supported voluntary accreditation by promulgating Department Order No. 27 in which FAAP was to serve as the coordinator and funder of accreditation activities in association with FAPE. FAAP would certify accreditation actions taken by various accrediting agencies, which DECS would then formally recognize. This would make the newly accredited HEI eligible for progressive government benefits.

The minister recognized the potential of accreditation for quality improvement for a wider array of institutions. To reach them, she

encouraged the more developed HEIs to guide less prepared HEIs in their respective areas to reach the standards for accreditation. They would benefit as accreditation would bring access to government scholarships and faculty development grants.

Accordingly, the Department of Education authorized FAAP to develop four levels of accreditation, and four levels of incentives and deregulations, according to which accredited programs would be exempt from various aspects of DECS bureaucratic requirements, depending on the levels of accredited status earned. This included rules on increases in tuition fees, the lifeblood of most HEIs. If accredited, an HEI would have more leeway in setting its own rates, and be exempt from requirements such as spending 60 percent of revenue increases for salary adjustments of teachers and other staff.

The Department's involvement in allowing such incentives to encourage nationwide or universal accreditation could have led to its duly influencing the voluntary, private, and self-evaluating nature of accreditation, thereby leading to quality improvement. But some expressed skepticism for the encouragement of all colleges and universities to apply for accreditation. Many HEIs, it was argued, would tend to treat accreditation superficially, going through the self-survey mechanically and reviewing data with the survey team in a pro forma manner, primarily motivated by government deregulation incentives than by improvement of quality.

## Accreditation in the Public Sector

State chartered colleges and universities grew significantly from 86 in 1990 to 125 in 2008, clustered as the Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges, or PASUC. Many had been converted from secondary vocational schools or substandard agricultural or technical colleges as a result of local political influence. Many dating from before 1986 had been established either by President Marcos or under a charter given by the old unicameral legislature, the *Batasan Pambansa*, the president's legislative arm. After 1986, the post-Marcos Congress chartered several new colleges, often converting large secondary schools within a member's district to enhance their own prestige and political visibility. It mattered little whether the new institution was adequately prepared for delivering higher education, or whether the higher education needs of the area were already adequately met by either existing private HEIs or public HEIs.

In 1987, the public institutions established the Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities of the Philippines (AACCUP),

developing their own standards under the presumption that the private sector could not fully understand the regulatory environment governing public institutions. Given that many of these institutions had been established primarily as vanity institutions for local politicians, the concern over meeting current high quality standards was real. If they were to fail in the evaluation process, they would face public censure, sanctions, and budgetary cuts.

## An Overview of the Current Accreditation Procedure

Currently, member HEIs of all accrediting agencies generally undergo a process similar to quality assurance methodologies in many countries: a self-study using a survey designed to fit their organizational or program profile, followed by an on-site review by a team of trained and experienced accreditors. CHED Order No 31 of 1995 remains in effect, and complements the efforts of the accrediting agencies by progressive deregulation and the granting of benefits, in line with an institution's membership status within the accrediting agency.

PAASCU has evolved the most developed procedures. It accepts applicant institutions, reviews them for candidacy, and reviews for accreditation status at four levels, with each higher level representing both an increase in the stringency of the standards and the presumption that achieving these higher standards is equivalent to an increase in overall institutional quality.

Once the agency accepts and passes on the adequacy of an application, the HEI is then granted candidate status. Any shortcomings revealed by the initial studies are addressed by the institution and a more formal self-survey is undertaken.

To achieve Level 1 accreditation an institution must (1) show progress in addressing identified shortcomings; (2) receive a visiting external team of accreditors provided by the agency; and (3) acquire a positive recommendation from the visit. Positive findings are passed on to FAAP, which approves them to the Commission on Higher Education (CHED).

A similar process applies for Level II, prior to which the institution should have attended to or complied with any existing recommendations for improvement. Level II reaccreditation applies for three–five years.

Reaccreditation to Level III is based on a high standard of instruction evidenced by outstanding performance of graduates in licensure examinations, a visible research tradition, strong links with other institutions and

agencies, extensive library and other learning resource facilities, and a visible community extension program, including a reasonable budget, measurable quality outputs, such as publications, and a strong faculty development program.

Finally, institutions with outstanding research and publications, teaching and learning methodologies at internationally acknowledged levels, global linkages and consortia, social and educational contributions at both regional and national levels, and planning processes supportive of quality assurance mechanisms may achieve Level IV accreditation.

For institutions to maintain or upgrade their activities to a higher level requires discrete activities relevant to quality assurance that are carefully supervised and monitored. Even an HEI that has reached Level III or IV may be downgraded if it does not maintain the quality expected of it.

## Continuing Challenges

The accreditation movement in the Philippines continues to grapple with critical issues such as the fluid nature of the shared responsibility between the government (represented by CHED) and the agencies themselves (represented by FAAP), the comparability of standards among the different agencies, and the linkage between accreditation standards and quality.

The Higher Education Act of 1994 detached higher education from the DECS and created the CHED, cloaking it with the power to monitor and evaluate programs and institutional performance for appropriate incentives or sanctions, such as the withdrawal of accreditation. The law specifically required CHED to provide incentives for accredited programs. However, CHED maintained that FAAP would continue to certify the accreditation status given by the various agencies, as long as standards were acceptable to CHED.

CHED was to take a more active role in accreditation oversight—in fact it was to be responsible for certifying institutional status granted by the accrediting agencies, thus proposing to withdraw this authority from FAAP. CHED formalized the role and relationships among it, FAAP, and the accrediting agencies, to wit: "CHED shall authorize federations/networks of accrediting agencies to certify to CHED the accredited status of programs/institutions granted by their member accrediting agencies and in accordance with their own standards, as accepted by the CHED, for granting benefits to institutions/programs at various accredited levels" (CHED 2005). The institutional process linkage operates by beginning at the government agency level (CHED), proceeding to the Federation

(FAAP), and then through the accrediting agency member (PAASCU, ACS-AA, or PACU-COA), and then on to the individual member HEI.

The comparability of accreditation status for specific degrees granted by different agencies became problematic because employers and the general public continued to perceive accreditation associations as having different operating criteria and thus different standards. In 2000, the government created the Presidential Commission for Education Reform (PCER) to study the quality assurance issue. PCER's report concluded that while the three associations would continue to maintain their institutional identities, the technical committees for program areas, for example, engineering, accountancy, and so on, would meet under the auspices of FAAP and work out common procedures and criteria for their respective disciplines. This would assure the public and employers that accreditation in specific professional fields by the different agencies was indeed comparable.

Perhaps the most important issue is using accreditation to improve institutional quality. It may be argued that any effort at self-analysis to determine and remedy shortcomings, especially when guided by agency parameters, involves some measure of quality improvement. However, the specific exercise of accreditation in the Philippines is largely based on evaluation of inputs to quality (facilities, faculty credentials, etc.), rather than of outputs (employability of graduates, service to society, the extent to which the institution's mandate and vision are being met, etc.), which are ultimately more important, though harder to measure. In this sense, the Philippine accreditation system can be seen as still lodged in the more traditional accreditation paradigm. The situation is further complicated by the fact that self-surveys and visiting team activities may be less effective than desired because of the uneven development levels of the accreditation agencies themselves. A further complication arises because the various agencies may have different motives at play in the process beyond those of quality improvement.

## The Cumulative Impact of the Accreditation Effort in the Philippines

PAASCU turned 50 years of age in 2007. During its existence, 255 higher education institutions have been accredited or are undergoing the initial process. The other two major agencies, PACU-COA and ACSC-AA, have processed over a hundred additional HEIs. Still, as CHED reports, this represents less than half of all private higher education institutions. Nevertheless, a momentum has been created, and the number of applicant institutions is increasing steadily.

PAASCU, clearly the lead agency, has gained international credibility. It was a founding member of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), established in 1991. PAASCU is also a founding member of the Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN). In May 2004 PAASCU was awarded the seal of comparability by the U.S. National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation (NCFMEA), recognizing PAASCU's accredited graduates. The association has invited staff from Cambodia's Ministry of Education to the Philippines to observe the whole of its accreditation system and process. It continues to be invited to assist in the development of accreditation in neighboring countries.

The other major accreditation agencies, under the sustained and effective guidance of FAAP, have had similar successes, becoming more stringent in their requirements. The technical committees for specific program areas, galvanized by the recommendation of the 2000 Presidential Commission on Education Reform, have come a long way toward standardization of their criteria, instrumentation, and processes. Even the for-profit institutions now recognize that investing in quality to attain accreditation does not diminish returns, but increases their image and attracts more students, and thus brings in even greater revenue.

Philippine colleges and universities, both private and public, through their own accreditation bodies, now actively seek accreditation and recognize that it is the most effective way to spur their institutions to self-improvement. With momentum building and more institutions applying, serious thought is finally being directed at the explicit impact accreditation has on quality. Instrumentation and visitation mechanisms are being reviewed to gauge their probable impact on institutional quality measurements, conceptualized in terms of both input and output. The stronger accredited institutions contribute to this dialogue. With the increased awareness of accreditation by Philippine HEIs, the support of government, and the constant efforts at improvement by the agencies themselves, there continue to be encouraging signs that accreditation in the Philippines will not only grow, but also be a positive force in the improvement of quality in higher education.

## Notes

1. From reports of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED business), 2007.
2. Prior to 1987, executive heads of departments were named ministers, and their departments named Ministries. This was changed with a new Constitution in

1987, which utilized the titles Secretary and Department under a restored presidential system. For our purposes, the terms Ministry and Department, and Minister and Secretary, are basically interchangeable.

3. Cf., Appendix 14.1, "Chronology of Important Developments," for a timeline to guide further reading.
4. Presidential Decree No. 6-A, Educational Development Decree of 1972.
5. This was a public foundation created by legislation in 1968 from some of the surplus of the Philippine War Damages Claim's monies to support the country's large private education sector.

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# Chapter 15

# Constructing a General Framework for Quality Evaluation in Higher Education

*Jinghuan Shi and Deane E. Neubauer*

Faced with the challenges of an emerging knowledge society, higher education systems throughout the world have increasingly realized that meeting minimum quality standards is no longer sufficient and that it is necessary to start the journey to performance excellence. Evaluation in its many forms plays a key role in influencing higher education to move beyond the achievement of minimum or adequate quality to that of pursuing excellence. Currently evaluation functions as a tool for both measurement and improvement. Quality assurance systems in numerous countries, many of them established within the past two decades, have become too crucial a part of this process to any longer be regarded as merely a technical adjunct to the educational process. In this chapter we review some of the context of quality assessment and evaluation and seek to develop a partial, but provocative framework identifying the major factors that determine or influence higher education quality pursuits. From this framework, we argue, one can initiate an exploration of quality assurance across the complexity of different Asia Pacific higher education systems that locates it in the overall policy process. We conclude by directing attention to some current efforts to construct measurable high education quality standards that meet the challenges of difference and variety that characterize the region.

# Major Factors Influencing the Efforts of Pursuing Quality

The university as the proto-typical institution of higher education in contemporary societies has moved beyond its historic characterization as an *Ivory Tower* with its "ambivalent relations with their surrounding society," depicted by Altbach, Berdahl, and Gumport (2005) as "both involved and withdrawn, both servicing and criticizing, both needing and being needed" (4).

Many have sought to delineate the factors and the dynamic interaction of higher education with its surrounding society. Perhaps the best known model is the triangle framework of Burton Clark in which the university is situated within the powerful forces of three structures of determination and influence: state authority, market forces, and the academic oligarchy. Clark (1983, 143) sought to cut through the many discrete differences of national higher education systems by developing the three ideal types of systems: state, market, and professional. Clark's model offers two- and three-dimensional spaces for comparison. He is able to demonstrate that these elements are in play in all national higher education endeavors, which tend to differ from each other primarily by the kinds of linkages that have been developed among the three elements, ranging from loose to tight, resulting in structures characterized in turn by weak and strong patterns of control. We may borrow the Clark triangle model and extend it to a diamond shape to further depict the factors influencing universities in contemporary knowledge economies as shown in figure 15.1.

This modified framework suggests that universities operate within a realm of functionality defined by their relationship to knowledge. What we observe over the past several decades is the changing status of universities within their traditional array of knowledge functions (creation, transmission, and conservation) as society itself is transformed by the knowledge explosion (Neubauer and Ordonez 2008). The claim to a privileged knowledge status, as Clark asserts, has been both the origin and ultimate source of authority for higher learning institutions. Universities, and by extension many other postsecondary entities, continue to be socially constructed as academic institutions in which "knowledge is authority" (Clark 1983, 158). The historic argument of universities (and the academy as an organized social force) is that knowledge or academic work requires autonomy as the "essential ingredient" for effective knowledge production. From this it follows that the real safeguards for academic autonomy are the freedom to select staff and students who form academic communities, the freedom to determine curriculum and degree standards, and the freedom to allocate

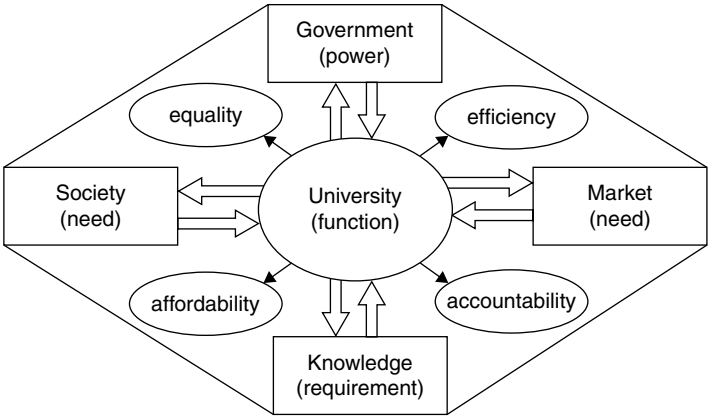


**Figure 15.1** An enlarged diamond framework

*Source*: Created by authors.

funds across categories of activities to achieve its chosen goals. During the historical periods in which universities were biased toward the production of "pure knowledge" with less regard to its social utility and transmission, and where only a small number of young elites from well-established social aggregations attended such institutions, this basis of authority was relatively unchallenged. Figure 15.1 suggests that in a contemporary knowledge society context, this is less the case.

Universities were a major contributor to creating the science and technology that would prove instrumental in the creation of knowledge societies. However, in this role, as social institutions, they came to be identified as much with the needs of national and social development as with the more narrow knowledge functionality that previously characterized their Ivory Tower status. As this occurred, they came to share social authority over knowledge with other important institutions located variously within the market and the state, and through new arenas of social invention. With the devolution of social authority over knowledge came an entire new set of forces acting on universities that have attempted to direct their "work" and demanded new norms of accountability and performance.

Figure 15.1 suggests the emergence of four critical elements that have come to "surround" and "constitute" the modern university, which cause higher education thematics to be injected into public policy environments. Demands for accountability arise in large part from market needs and take the various forms of managerialism, creating expectations that universities will be run in a "business-like" manner, and be relatively transparent in

their activities. Pressures arise for higher education institutions to produce both comprehensive and publicly available data to meet various knowledge-based requirements. Within this environment efficient use of resources becomes a norm associated with accountability as both government *and* the market generate expectations that higher education institutions will produce outputs acceptable to both sectors—again, in ways consistent with broadly accepted business models. In this model, government's role reflects social needs and is underscored through efforts to reform higher education along various pathways to massification, a transformation that is driven in large part by broadly accepted notions of equality. Expectations for broadened access are conjoined to notions of affordability, which is viewed as a precondition of massification. In practice these elements become intertwined in the overall structure of higher education and the desire that exists in all societies to create or maintain a class of elite institutions, a tendency that militates to a significant degree against the forces of massification specified in the model. Figure 15.1 portrays a sense of the continual changes in the nature of the forces acting on the university as an institution in a knowledge society.

Many of the chapters in this volume underline this point within specific country contexts, recognizing in particular the changing nature of the values and demands that shape and are transmitted through the policy process. Government policy along these lines ranges from the programmatic and specific to the evolutionary and diffuse. As Ka Ho Mok details in his accounting of *minban* institutions in China (see chapter 2), government policy is often shifting, expedient, and in the end contradictory. Altbach, Berdahl, and Gumport have pointed out in the American context that whereas the U.S. Constitution lodges no specific responsibility for higher education with the national government, "yet the federal influence on American colleges and universities has been enduring and persuasive" (2005, 163). As universities have emerged to constitute "a knowledge conglomerate," or "central institutions of post-industrial societies," governments in many countries have taken any number of approaches to align higher education with various national purposes, through legislative regulations, public taxation policies, student loans, and funds for university-based research.

Society in this model broadly represents a variety and range of factors that either directly or indirectly influence how universities are constituted and develop. Many Western countries, for example, have a rich history of postsecondary education being supported by private funds (both religious and secular) and other philanthropic patronage. Subsequent increases in government reach and oversight have left higher education subject to a much higher degree of central government coordination, even if it

sometimes parades under the label of increasing autonomy for universities. On the whole, public opinion, mass media, and nongovernmental support strongly influence not only the images and perceptions of universities in civil society, but also their basic status as institutions, which in turn affects their various sources of income and resources.

As Geiger argues, the market, compared with the other forces that have traditionally impinged on higher education, may be viewed as of relatively recent import (Geiger 2004, 3). Only when we recognize how the market system operates to produce efficient pricing and how this mechanism works on higher education, he suggests, may we understand why the rising costs of higher education are a critical component of national policy because market forces may and do work against achieving greater levels of equality. The social coordination that has occurred through markets across many societies has in many cases brought greater inequality of wealth while increasing the social stratification of students. However, there is little doubt that market forces will continue to grow and exert their influence in the current era and as a result increasingly shape what universities are and will become.

This model clears some ground for us to ask about the quality assumptions that arise from these four factors and how they create demands and expectations for how universities will produce and represent quality. From their historic knowledge functions, universities may continue to privilege notions of academic standards, knowledge quality, and institutional reputations. Governments for their part may increasingly instrumentalize universities, being concerned primarily with their contribution to realizing national (regional) goals, and ensuring that they better serve the urgent needs of the country and contribute in the direction of social equality. Society, represented by aggregations of individuals and social groups, may demand that universities meet a variety of personal needs or goals, preferably in an affordable way in the pursuit of vague but important notions of social justice (which includes facilitating individual achievement and social mobility.) The market for its part will emphasize efficiency and productivity, combining ideas of institutional competitiveness with demands for accountability.

Part of the quality achieved in any discrete instance stems from different sectors and stakeholders providing varying and often contrary requirements and criteria to assess quality, all while advocating its improvement. As Brint (2002) has argued, a modern university is simultaneously "a city of intellect," "a new economic center," and "a city of infinite variety." These multiple complexities make it too difficult to "see" as a whole, and in important ways the university has become too important to leave in the hands of educators, politicians, or business communities. An imperative emerges for

these groups and interests to work together in a collective pursuit for developing and assuring the improvement of quality across higher education. In the following section we develop a modest framework that identifies common elements in the overall quality improvement movement that suggests some of the values of such cooperation and pathways toward it.

## Major Trends and Concerns of Quality Assurance Systems

As knowledge-based institutions, universities historically performed central and multiple functions. These are currently being both reproduced and transformed in our continuously emergent knowledge societies. The accepted mission of universities "to seek truth" has come to be widely interpreted as working to establish valid academic knowledge through systematic (and increasingly scientific) inquiry. As knowledge-centered institutions, universities have (usually) enjoyed a substantial and privileged degree of autonomy, which allows academic expertise or an equivalent organized consensus to define what knowledge is valid and to what extent given lines of inquiry are responsible and qualified. Although increased fiscal control over higher education in many countries has become commonplace, the university itself still on balance maintains significant discretionary control over its own regulative provisions, service control, and resource disbursements. Overall, the focus of fiscal responsibility becomes clouded with what is variously termed as the autonomy, corporatization, or decentralization movement in higher education. Ashby views resource control by higher education institutions as a kind of freedom, an "internationally recognized and unambiguous privilege of university teachers, which must be protected whenever and however challenged" (Ashby in Altbach, Berdahl, and Gumport 2005, 6). But overall, the macroglobal economic environment strongly affects higher education and in a multitude of ways and conditions it determines what universities want to do and are allowed to do. The early twenty-first century, as Altbach and Peterson argue, is the "perfect story of external pressures and internal responses" (2007, Introduction). After a half-century of dramatic expansion worldwide, higher education institutions have become not only larger, but more complex than ever before.

Figure 15.2 locates quality assurance as an outcome operating within a signal system comprised of government, the market, and universities themselves. In this model we have initially posited for each of these three sectors values for which they have been historically responsible, moderately

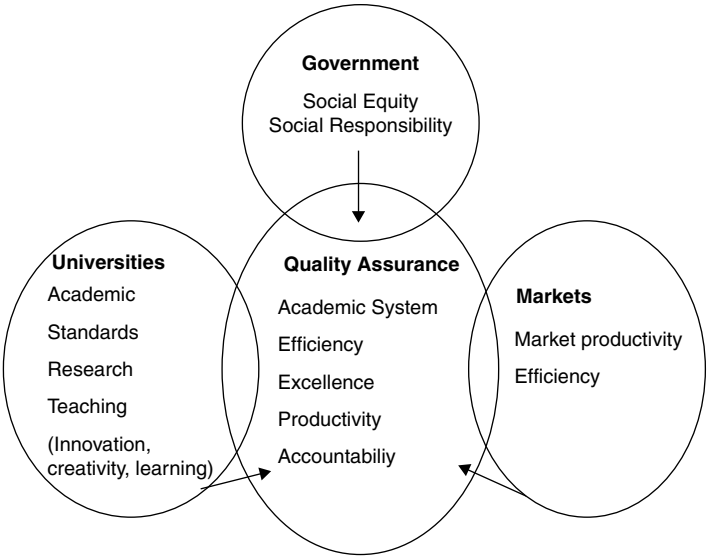


**Figure 15.2** Quality assurance as a broker of signals and interests

*Source*: Created by authors.

deconstructing the idea of quality assurance into five essential elements: the academic system, efficiency, productivity, excellence, and accountability. We suggest that quality assurance wherever it emerges includes these elements. The model suggests through its use of arrows the transmission of signals arising out of these value sets that impel quality assurance in these directions.

This figure suggests the important role that quality assurance plays in how universities do their business in the context of constant signal interaction from government and markets; and, while this role is important, it may not be decisive in determining how universities behave. On the contrary, the most important aspect of this interaction may be that quality assurance as "a thing" in the environment helps the market and relevant policymakers make choices about multiple aspects of higher education. One of the critically important roles that quality assurance plays as such systems develop is allowing agencies to comprehend the highly interactive role of system components, recognizing that many factors influence quality issues and that various sectors provide and promote different notions of quality. These factors may be understood in part by the predominant interests that define these sectors. It may be argued, for example, that universities

need to be first and foremost concerned with creating and maintaining academic standards, whereas the market (including in this sense individual consumers) is more likely to be concerned that educational institutions function to efficiently address market signals, and government may first and foremost be concerned that HEIs operate to promote some acceptable level of social equity conjoined with responsibility. To function efficiently, an agency of quality assurance (whether located in the public or private sector) needs independence and autonomy to be able to balance the requirements of the different interests and stakeholders who constitute the system. This critical role for quality assurance might be viewed as at the center of a signal exchange, evenly modulating the signals sent and received in this system from all interests.

The model also suggests that quality assurance has a mediating role in sorting through the play of these interests and the different signals each sector sends. Empirically, it plays a different role in each country depending on its particular national evolution and the sectoral site of its institutional location. The overall value of quality assurance to these sectors and society at large may be its ability to translate the concerns of different sectoral entities to universities, which are then internalized within the particularized diversity of discrete institutions. While this is a valuable function, in many cases it may be underdeveloped and usefully so. In some circumstances universities—for example, where market or student demands may be highly attenuated and excessively focused—need to be protected precisely so that they can develop the quality that all sectors desire. In this sense quality assurance agencies serve the dual function of signal transmission and buffering.

Commodification is an increasingly strong signal coming from markets. How universities respond by producing acceptable outcomes should be, it can be sensibly argued, a university responsibility. As we have observed in many instances, significant tension exists between the interests of universities in defining and executing curricula that meet its standards of academic responsibility and the marketplace that encourages (and sometimes demands) universities to redefine their purposes and reinterpret their standards. In such circumstances quality assessment agencies can and perhaps need to mediate the force of such commodification demands.

Where universities exist largely under the control of government departments (as they do in much of Asia), these regulatory regimes operate in what others may regard as largely a "black box" situation, one in which the rationale for and content of regulation may be determined almost exclusively within government departments without either minimal transparency or the participation of other interests. Here quality assurance agencies may increasingly come to see *their* responsibility as unlocking the black box to

make it knowable to others, and ultimately, to expand the regulatory legitimacy frame. In this sense, quality assurance is a producer of the common value of a common language. It becomes an additional "thing" in the regulatory equation and the effort is to get both universities and government to accept the value of this "thing." Having gained initial success in this direction, quality assurance may then interpret the black box for the market.

In practice opening the black box is a two-way process. It is necessary for universities to appreciate the value of the process to them and respond with increased transparency. Given that part of the responsibility of quality assurance in this model is to respond to and interpret signals, this places quality assurance (repeatedly) in the position of raising questions about the legitimacy and relevance of market signals for universities. It is here, again, that the brokering or modulating function of quality assurance can come into play.

The foregoing implies that quality assurance has a legitimate and important role in promoting higher education reform. In the past much quality assurance work and quality discourse in general focused on the identification and measurement of institutional inputs, viewing them as essential elements of institutional capacity and as threshold conditions for achieving minimal levels of acceptable quality. As the concern with quality has shifted from threshold achievement to continuous improvement (impelled in this direction largely by market critiques), emphasis has shifted accordingly from an assessment of inputs to that of process, output and outcomes produced by higher education institutions.

These four elements can be conceived of as linked in time suggesting the movement from relatively greater levels of agreement on the nature and measurement of inputs to the increasingly lesser agreement on delineating and measuring outputs and outcomes.

A generalization that seems to hold across national experiences is that the rapid expansion of higher education results in a corresponding decline in overall quality across systems. A commensurate problem arises from increases in the variety of system components as they grow to provide greater access. The abiding research problem for quality assurance as a tool is defining and devising measures that work suitably across this resulting variety. A common feature of such systems in the process of expansion is the need to develop measurements and assessments that are consistent across different levels of development. In general, older and more well-established institutions can be assessed relatively easily regarding the extent to which their inputs meet acceptable levels, which enables the assessment exercise to progress toward linking inputs with elements of process, outputs, and outcomes. For newer, less developed institutions, this entire approach is complicated by the problematic nature of their inputs, such as

having large numbers of inexperienced faculty or administrative staff, or students of lesser quality.

Conceptually, as has been described in other chapters of this volume, the macroshifts taking place in higher education throughout the world are in part a result of the transition from a traditional "industrial or plan-based model" to a new "flexibility or need-based model," recognizing that not all countries are equally or simultaneously making such a transition. Quality evaluation is undergoing a parallel process, a paradigm shift from instruction that is teaching-centered to that which is learning or student-centered; from input-focused to process and outcome-focused; from written exam based evaluations to those that are performance based; from one point or static evaluation to multidimensional assessments focused on value-added elements; and from top-down, administratively dominated decision making to participatory models that emphasize the idea of a mixed community of professionals working together. All these shifts complicate evaluation and render it more challenging even as the relevance of conducting assessments based on these elements is underscored. For higher education as a whole, and for quality assessment in particular, an urgent need has arisen to advance research on measuring outcomes, especially in cross-national contexts (see Wolff, chapter 6).

## Improving Quality through Evaluation: The "Four E" Framework

Movement in the direction of developing and implementing this emergent paradigm of quality has taken form throughout the world, especially in the United States and Europe. The Centre for Higher Education Development in Germany, for example, has established a set of university rankings across Europe and Canada, with the focus on subject matter (see Federkeil, chapter 5). The UK has established a set of sector benchmarks, including fields of study, entry qualifications, student age on entry, and graduate employability. The European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) has emerged as the umbrella organization for European quality assurance agencies of higher education supported by the European Commission through the SOCRATES program. ENQA has initiated several major projects, such as Trans-National European Evaluation Project (TEEP) conducted between June 2002 and October 2003, specifically aimed at establishing a common framework of reference for quality assurance, and which is working directly toward the establishment of a European quality assurance framework by 2010 (ENQA 2003).

Although no "general model" of quality assurance exists that is universally applied, efforts continue to produce an international scheme for evaluation that works as a generalized tool for quality assurance wherein most of its elements may apply across the range of country differences. In this context we turn to various suggestions of what the major contents of such an evaluation endeavor would include.

The 2005 report of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) on education policy states that "effective schools require the right combination of trained and talented personnel, adequate facilities, state-of-the-art equipment and motivated students ready to learn" (OECD 2005). Although it is difficult to measure some of these, effective assessment requires that we take them into consideration and work to develop adequate instruments for measurement and evaluation. A suggestive step in that direction is a general framework for discussion that can be summarized in these four words: "Environment," "Engagement," "Enhancement," and "Effectiveness," with each representing an aspect that can be subdivided into secondary elements in evaluation.

In this context "environment" refers to the elements of basic conditions under which institutions function: infrastructure, finance, and personnel resources. As the OECD report suggests, "[a]lthough it is difficult to assess the optimal volume of resources required to prepare each student for life and work in modern societies, institutional comparisons of spending on education per student can provide a starting point for evaluating the effectiveness of different models of educational provision" (OECD 2005). So do the physical facilities and human infrastructure. The quantitative data including aggregate and per student space of classroom, laboratory, library, gymnasium, and other facilities; the annual budget and shares of teaching and learning, both total and per student spending; teacher/student ratios and the qualifications of teaching and support staff. All are necessary elements in developing the category of educational environment. Various indicators or frameworks exist to assess the material-based conditions and resource-oriented environment, which we can adapt to this purpose. And, while these are in many cases customary elements of input analysis, they can be seen in this framework as necessary if not sufficient conditions for overall assessment.

"Engagement" speaks to several elements crucial to the quality of higher education. Voluminous research demonstrates that "those institutions that more fully engage their students in the variety of activities that contribute to valued outcomes of college can claim to be of higher quality compared with other colleges and universities where students are less engaged" (Kuh 2002). In order to assess the engagement of students during their undergraduate experience, researchers have worked out different frameworks

and indicators, such as the "Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education" (Chickering and Gamson 1987) and the College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ). Currently, the best known instrument is the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) developed by George D. Kuh, the annual survey of which in 2006 was based on 260,000 randomly selected first-year and senior students at 523 four-year colleges and universities in the United States (National Survey of Student Engagement 2006).

NSSE is specifically designed to assess which students are engaged in empirically derived good educational practices and what they gain from their college experience (Kuh 2001). The main content of the NSSE instrument, *The College Student Report*, includes 27 carefully designed questions organized within five Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice that represent student behaviors highly correlated with desirable learning and personal development outcomes for undergraduates. NSSE findings are a source of longitudinal information that provide faculty/staff with information they can readily use to strengthen learning environments and processes.

The basic findings underscore that what students do in college and how they use an institution's resources for learning are critical to their success broadly defined, including academic achievement, satisfaction, and persistence. The elements of the survey are universally applicable and the five Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice that focus on levels of academic challenge—active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, enriching educational experiences, and a supportive campus environment—can be adapted to diverse situations in many Asia Pacific countries. Tsinghua University, to take one example, is currently engaged in a joint research project with Kuh's Center and other related agencies at Indiana University. The project is revising the basic instrument to fit the national experience, and plans exist to start a pilot survey of student engagement in China in 2009.

"Enhancement" is a newer concept in the evaluation regime, but in some countries it has already become the core theme of a new approach to evaluate and improve higher education quality. To take a prominent example, the Scottish Funding Council, successor to the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC), together with other Scottish higher education agencies, has worked out a new framework called the Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF). Unlike traditional evaluation instruments that concentrated on the current state of affairs, QEF has created a distinctive new approach based on the simple and powerful idea that the purpose of quality systems in higher education is to improve student experiences and make higher learning institutions better (Centre for the Study

of Education and Training 2006). As the QEF Steering Committee points out in the final report of a three-year round of evaluation work, "the QEF is a complex policy instrument designed to shift a culture to embrace enhancement rather than assurance as the driving force to improve the quality of teaching and learning." The shift also is "away from top-down compliance-inducing processes to participative and critical(ly) supported self-evaluation; away from audit and towards improvement; away from ruffling the surface of higher education practices and towards permeating the system with practices compatible with the QEF; away from mechanistic models based solely on inputs and outcomes and towards more sensitive other forms of evidence of cultural change, while maintaining rigour and challenge" (Centre for the Study of Education and Training 2006).

The fivefold QEF indicators depicted as institutional quality processes include internal subject review, enhancement-led institutional review (ELIR), providing public information about quality, student involvement in quality processes, and national enhancement themes. These indicators seem too complicated from an implementation point of view for a larger sized higher education system such as China's, compared with the relatively compact size of the Scottish system, which allows for formation of a higher education "community." But the philosophy of the new approach and the model of internal review represented as Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR) are quite creative and might be applied in different contexts to monitor progress in each aspect of the quality framework.

"Effectiveness" means that evaluation should emphasize the success, the helpfulness, or the usefulness of the strategies and actions taken by institutions in improving teaching and learning, the extent to which they really make a positive difference, and the costs for doing so. The measurement of effectiveness may take a technical form, in which the ability of an institution to translate inputs into outputs is measured. Dynamic effectiveness refers to the ability of an institution to alter patterns of service delivery in response to changes in student demand and technology (see also Wolff, chapter 6).

## Conclusion

Over the past three or four decades the world has witnessed the emergence of entirely new ways to promote growth and wealth, organize society, and trigger technologically induced social change of remarkable dimensions. Higher education has had an important role in this process, but often one not of its own choosing. Over the past half-century universities have

departed their comfortable social niche as Ivory Towers in which knowledge could be created and pursued and then transmitted to relatively small and well-chosen social groups. The primary function of these institutions was the reproduction of social elites. Within this social frame, universities enjoyed a privileged status and authority over what constituted important knowledge in society. Although breaches in this structure have existed for many decades (witness the creation of the public, state university systems in the United States), the critical datum in assessing this structure was the proportion of any population holding university degrees, less advanced degrees.

All of this changed radically with the unprecedented mobilization of societies in World War II and the "permanent war economies" in the years that followed, which injected technology and government as its sponsor in ways that were equally unprecedented. Embraced by the all-encompassing notion of "development," technology-induced change and the sciences that underlay it became the driver of social change and economic growth the world over. Increasingly, knowledge came to mean knowledge of science and technology, and higher education moved into the center of policy arenas as the social institution charged both with its creation and dissemination. The revolution that resulted is familiarly understood as "massification," the extraordinary expansion of higher education to embrace ever-larger segments of the population, rationalized and justified by values as distant and competing as national security and economic success, and individual achievement and personal fulfillment. Everywhere higher education moved toward commodification, reconceptualized as something obtained in a market for a price, and not surprisingly, everywhere the cost of higher education increased, resulting in seemingly endless patterns of differentiation in the "product" and ideas about how to mark its quality.

Within the Ivory Tower quality was largely what universities said it was. With massification and commodification the determination of quality and its application to institutions and their processes became subject to the complexities of those processes themselves, and with that distribution came an extraordinarily complex set of processes aimed at both the identification of quality and its measurement. These social dynamics moved rapidly through all sectors of society, higher education included. As the nature of higher education institutions changed with massification, so did the ability of universities (as a whole) to certify themselves as definers of and authorities on their own quality.

The decade of the 1990s witnessed the creation of quality assurance bodies throughout countries that had experienced massification and were flush in the midst of the particular kind of quality challenges that come from (too) rapid expansion of capacity. Situated in the context of an equally

remarkable and enormous increase in the degree of global interdependence created by the processes of rapid global change, efforts to develop common notions of higher education quality perforce took place within a bewildering mix of traditional practices, new ideas, familiar bureaucratic routines, and ever-changing ideas of the very things that might constitute quality.

As stated in the introduction, we have attempted to introduce a different way of thinking about quality assurance. Our belief is that this framework is consistent with where higher education is heading as it seeks the institutional and pedagogic structures implied in the emergent learning paradigm. We also believe that it holds up heuristically as a more inclusive and innovative way to view the quality assurance phenomenon. The framework appropriately emphasizes the critical function of quality assurance by combining its traditional role of holding institutions and programs accountable to essential capacity standards with an emergent role of working cooperatively with them to competently develop the frameworks and means to establish relevant outcome standards and their effective measurement. Finally, we hold that future research utilizing this conceptual point of view will significantly add to our understanding of its usefulness for documenting and analyzing the development of the learning outcomes paradigm.

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# Chapter 16

# Doing Quality as Public Policy

*Deane E. Neubauer*

## Introduction

It is arguably the case for the United States that the academy's efforts to improve quality and those of the public policy sector to assure it have never been effectively joined. This is a matter of some concern since much of the global effort to create state-oriented quality assurance mechanisms owes a good deal to the historical experience of the United States in producing a system that was able to combine significant diversity with an overall *systemic* level of quality that has become the standard to be emulated by others. In making this claim I do *not* wish to imply that the world of higher education outside the United States has rushed to emulate the very particular blend of decentralized, associational, regional, and professional accreditation characteristic of the United States. Indeed, this system is truly unique in the world. I *do* wish to argue, however, that the complex nature of "things that are exchanged" between the higher education sector and the broader public policy sector is replicated in various ways in many different countries.

In this concluding chapter, I wish to explore four interrelated aspects of the quest for higher education quality, efforts to assure it, and the relationship of these endeavors to the overall question of the changing role of higher education in contributing to the public good of societies that pursue it. I look first at some aspects of the changing structural nature of higher education and seek to relate these to quality activities. I then examine changes on the quality assurance side of the equation, seeking to identify

those elements of quality-related activities that are either structurally derived from their historical and logical development, or are arising from the conditions of increasing global interdependence. Third, I examine an effort on the part of Asian countries to develop a comparative coherence in promoting quality assurance. Finally, I examine the changing nature of ideas about the public good in this transforming higher education policy space.

## Structural Changes in Higher Education

Bigalke's argument in chapter 4 makes a critical point: many of the structural changes affecting higher education can be seen throughout the Asia Pacific region as well as in the United States. Among these are massification of higher education, increasing costs of higher education, declines in the proportion of higher education costs being provided by the public sector, increasing vocationalism and associated notions of alignment produced by the market, growing emphases on quality issues and global competitiveness, and overall the tendency toward increased privatization of higher education provision. Other structural changes have already significantly affected higher education in the United States and to a lesser extent in Europe, Australia, and New Zealand, but one cannot yet say whether these changes will develop through Asia and the Pacific as well. Ergo, Bigalke's query as to whether the United States in this instance is better viewed as a forerunner of having produced the kind of society and higher education structure to which the rest of the world is gravitating, or whether it is merely a deviant, albeit important, case of global higher education development. Among the changes in the United States, the most salient are the broad emphases on student learning outcomes, reductions in the percentage of full-time faculty within higher education, the privileging of research over teaching, the relative importance given to the sciences and professions over the social sciences and humanities, and perhaps most important of all, significant changes in the demographics of the undergraduate population, which increasingly is composed of older, nontraditional students who are returning to higher education settings.

To some extent one can observe elements of these structural changes and higher education responses in virtually every Asia Pacific country. Of critical importance in trying to assess the state of quality of higher education in these countries is the nature of the distribution of institutions with respect to these changes. Some measure of this distribution can be gleaned by broad statistical snapshots such as cohort participation rates. Table 1.2

provides these for a selection of countries and suggests (through UN data) the probable growth of participation over the next decade. These data allow us to gain a minimal sense of what each of these countries faces in terms of capacity challenges (and related questions of access and equity), but they say almost nothing about quality and its relation to the kinds of structural changes touched on above. Simply put, we rarely know what the top of the quality distribution looks like in relation to its middle or bottom. In India and Indonesia, government-mandated quality assurance efforts are really in their very early stages and given the vast number of institutions involved in each country relatively little can be said about how institutions compare with each other beyond the most rudimentary measures. What we do see in the three most populous countries of the region—India, China, and Indonesia—is that the quality distance between the top and the bottom is enormous, reflecting the kinds of gross social and economic inequality that distinguishes the most developed from the least developed regions of these countries.

Thus, to some extent, all the countries discussed in this volume, with the exception of the United States, have chosen to pursue some version of a strategy in which (1) quality is recognized as a value by government and promoted through policy; (2) a small, select group of institutions (often the existing elite institutions) has been singled out to emphasize and implement quality innovations (and to promote the idea of continuous quality improvement); and (3) a mandated system of quality assurance is focused on levels of compliance with minimal (threshold) levels of quality. This accepts that for the "better" institutions in the system, this will be an easy test to pass, whereas for others it will demand a significant (and in many cases impossible) mobilization and demonstration.

Ralph Wolff emphasizes that some version of this same process has been in place for years in the United States. The requirements of testing for minimal compliance are necessarily different from those focused on quality improvement. One focuses on testing institutions to assure that they can meet minimal standards. The other seeks to engage them in assessment activities of sufficient breadth and sophistication to begin measuring the structural changes (paradigm changes as it were) enumerated above. Wolff's own organization, the Senior Commission of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), pioneered one version of this differentiated accreditation model (as documented in chapter 6). Part of the motivation for this course was the realization that the traditional accreditation model, which is similar to the vast number of higher education quality assurance models used in Asia, focused overwhelmingly on issues of capacity. And while capacity is importantly related to improved quality, it is a necessary but insufficient condition for continuous improvement.

The evaluation process itself must become differentiated to make and uphold such distinctions. One can think of this distinction in terms of stages: in the first stage, institutions work through those fundamental processes that provide them with minimal capacity. It is quality assurance's primary responsibility to assert that this minimal stage has been met and that institutions possess the ability to maintain and sustain this level of capacity. In the second stage, institutions begin to move on to the far more complex assessment activities that are part of the paradigm change we have discussed above. Wolff's point is that it is important to see this as a second stage in the evaluation process, because its demands and requirements are significantly different from those of the first stage. If we do not differentiate these and continue to employ the same language—say an undifferentiated language of *quality*—we run the very considerable risk of conflating capacity with quality. In WASC's usage, a decision was made to separate the traditional site visit portion of quality assurance assessment into a capacity visit that would proceed by a year or 18 months; a second visit focused on the assessment of educational effectiveness. In this conception of quality improvement, capacity becomes a necessary precondition for educational effectiveness.

This notion of two stages of quality assessment serves to clarify what it is that quality assessment agencies are doing in their early periods—bringing large numbers of institutions into the process—from what they are seeking to do when working with institutions of admittedly higher quality. On the one hand, institutions in their early stages of assessment need to focus on passing thresholds of minimal compliance, and on the other hand, institutions well above the minimal thresholds of capacity can work through, and experiment with, the kinds of educational experiences that are increasingly becoming part of the passage into the emergent paradigm. This is precisely the kind of experience that Jinghuan Shi describes in chapter 7, providing Tsinghua University as a site for these assessment experiments.

## Increasing Global Interdependence and Quality Assurance

The global credit crisis that erupted on the world scene in the late summer and fall of 2008 underscored analysis of many globalization scholars who emphasize that increasing interdependence has both positive and negative consequences for the intermeshing of national institutions across borders (Hershock, Mason, and Hawkins 2007; Steger 2003). Perhaps most

surprising to both observers and participants has been the speed with which these developments swept the globe, illustrating the model David Harvey created for globalization in the early 1990s when he proposed that the *collapse of time and space* are the true harbingers of contemporary globalization—the fact that our multiple means of instantaneous communication link societies in multiple ways, some more obvious than others (Harvey 1990). In its many unfolding manifestations, the crisis made clear some of the pitfalls that result from following neoliberal deregulation dictums to the extent of placing significantly important aspects of national and global finance outside the purview of government regulators. In the event of the crisis, it became quickly obvious that only national governments and the strengths of national economies could lever the financial system sufficiently to regain some measure of balance. The extent to which any "lessons" instructive to developing acceptable notions of an appropriate balance between regulation and deregulation will be learned can be known only over time.

These matters directly affect higher education on at least three fronts. First, and most obvious, is the realization that as economies plunge into recession, funds available for higher education, whether from government revenues, student fees, or private sector research grants and contracts, will be significantly stressed. We have repeatedly emphasized through these chapters the degree to which funding is the linchpin to reaching minimum quality thresholds and embarking on the quests for continuous improvement. These recessionary climates will produce effects across the different systems we have discussed. Expanding systems will experience reductions in government funding, compromising their continued ability to provide desired access. Private institutions and public alike will find students less able to pay higher levels of tuition and fees, directly impacting efforts to conjoin expanding access with measures of equity. Countries with declining demographic trajectories such as Korea, Japan, and Taiwan are likely to discover that reduced amounts of wealth in society create a tipping point for private higher education institutions that may slip from marginal viability to simple nonviability. For each of these specific countries, their strategies for buttressing enrollment declines by attracting international students may also prove difficult.

Second, the dynamics structuring the whole of cross-border education are likely to rapidly change with the global crisis. As the costs of sending students "out" especially for graduate education increase, numbers are likely to decrease or take truncated forms such as semester-long "sandwich programs" or joint degrees. A review of recent economic history in the region suggests that "outreach" programs supporting higher education expand in times of economic plenty and contract when economies have

difficulties, witness the experiences of the Asian currency crisis in 1997. The entire policy rationale of "investing in education to gain a longer-term future benefit" tends to get swamped by more urgent priorities that arise with systemic economic contraction. Similarly, many of the countries that have been leaders in providing cross-border education to Asian countries, especially the English-speaking countries, are likely to find the ability to support such programs marginalized within their own institutions as these experience financial distress. Another tipping point may be introduced for receiving countries by situations in which the provision of cross-border education may be less costly on a per capita basis such that imported provision comes to replace domestic provision.

Third, the credit crisis may illustrate an important dimension to the climate of global competitiveness that has been represented by the production of higher education league tables. As Gero Federkeill points out in chapter 4, these rankings serve various functions for both the institutions featured within them and the countries they represent. No matter that the criteria driving the tables may be highly reductionist with respect to overall higher education achievement; seeking to gain standing in the tables induces countries and universities to tailor various investment and policy decisions in ways that speak directly to at least this limited notion of global competitiveness. In this sense, the tables invoke a positive status to global comparison and militate against some of the limiting aspects of national parochialism. Further, within regional settings such as the EU, a disciplined search for appropriate indicators of comparison can serve as a valuable pathway toward commonality of educational experience and product. The promise is that one element of increased global interdependence will lead to an authentic convergence of standards and indicators of quality that go beyond the limited reach of both *The Times* and *Jiaotong* Indexes, a convergence that advances quality discourses in demonstrable ways.

It is interesting to note that within Europe itself, the first response to the global credit crisis was to assume that the less advanced neoliberal climate of the EU had left in place a regulatory structure that would police national investment patterns. Within two weeks, it became clear that this was not the case and that many European investment banks were as deeply implicated and exposed in the unregulated global capital markets as were U.S. banks. Of perhaps even more import was the initial inability of EU nations to develop a common approach to the crisis, suggesting that this is a "hot button" area in which national interests and politics may trump regional cooperation.

Without elevating regional cooperation on higher education to this critical status, it is important nevertheless to note throughout the fabric of increasing interdependence (1) where structures are created that may lead

to unpredictable and unintended consequences; (2) where national interests overpower those that might be gained by regional cooperation; and (3) the extent to which financial considerations dominate other policy arenas. These points are, of course, elemental to even the most casual kind of policy analysis, but it is surprising how rapidly they tend to be "forgot" in times of expanding prosperity. Bubbles from wherever they spring, as we might ruefully reflect upon, occur repeatedly within economic systems, are almost always treated as if they were unpredictable and unexpected, and are usually cloaked in novel languages, terms, and mechanisms of social exchange of recent invention and origin. That is, they are rarely seen and recognized for what they are.

To underscore the point: the overall discourse of higher education competitiveness in a globally interdependent environment makes many valuable contributions to the discourse on quality. This very interdependence, however, has a fragility to it that is often overlooked as we seek to emphasize the elements of commonality that are emerging within the countries we examine. A cautionary corrective is to conceptualize higher education quality as the result of a continual tension between the forces that expand economies and other social sectors, especially under the impress of new technology. These may be seen as the primary force of convergence in the global economy. They differ from the forces that come to the fore when systems are forced into contraction, which we might label the forces of national concentration. Whatever quality is in any given situation, we suggest, it will be derived from the play of these forces in constant tension.

## Quality as Policy

Higher education policy environments and structures throughout the Asia Pacific region are enormously varied, ranging from the federal system of the United States where the inclusion of education as a federal responsibility is more recent to those of countries such as Japan, Korea, and China where education has always been a central responsibility of the state and where historically higher education grew out of centralized state initiatives.

As many of these chapters document, it has only been in the past two or three decades that much of Asia (the Philippines being a major exception) has witnessed efforts on the part of the state to devolve higher education in a significant manner to the private sector, to lower levels of state authority, or to the institutions themselves (Hawkins and Furoto 2008). In the hierarchy of higher education policy concerns, the expansion of capacity and access was prioritized as essential to national economic development.

Quality concerns took center stage when it became obvious that rapid expansion had resulted in the creation of higher education institutions of doubtful quality (however quality was defined or measured). Simultaneously, increased market signals focused on the inadequate preparation of higher education graduates to meet the demands of a rapidly changing economy. Such alignment concerns quickly became entwined with broader policy discussions about the kinds of graduates required in a knowledge-based economy, their appropriate numbers, their range of preparation, and models of education that were most appropriate for emulation.

Higher education quality assurance emerged as a major policy issue for the region during the 1990s, labeled by many as the decade of quality assurance. Throughout the region, most quality assurance programs owed much to traditional British and Australian models, although they themselves were undergoing continuous change during the period (Stella 2003, 2005). In part stimulated by European and UNESCO efforts to coordinate quality assurance, perhaps the most representative group, the Asia Pacific Quality Network, met in Chiba, Japan in February 2008 to adopt a set of principles known as the Chiba Principles, which supporters hope will guide higher education quality assurance throughout the region (APQN 2008). The principles as a whole knit together: those who hold that institutions have a fundamental responsibility to assure their own quality; those agencies that seek the appropriate structures and management leading to effective conducting of assessments for the accreditation and auditing of institutions and programs; and a set of guiding principles for institutions or programs to employ themselves or to be employed by other institutions. Chiba is a move across a broad front to provide model principles for use in discrete national contexts, recognizing the role of national particularity and individual preferences for the style and means of assessment instruments. A further goal is to establish informative multinational quality frameworks.

As with so much of quality assurance work, the reality and effect of quality assurance—that is, the extent to which it actually results in demonstrable improvements of quality—are ultimately dependent on how a given country's understanding of quality migrates into the policy process and gains standing. In the end, legislatures and ministries must be provided with a process that they trust and regard as reliable, such that when the needs of institutions and programs are translated into the provision of means, they have some confidence that such acts will result in the quality outcomes desired. These may take the form of new laws governing national examinations, the bundling together of resources to create new aggregations of human capital for development, or the revising of statutes and

administrative procedures that affect how the "on the ground" administration of higher education institutions is conducted.

Again, as many of the foregoing chapters attest, quality assurance agencies and the processes they represent are often ambivalently regarded in the policy environments in which they operate. In the United States the Department of Education regards with considerable skepticism the long-standing associational relationship between institutions and their accrediting agencies, which it views as self-serving. Federal authorities demand quality improvement represented by a demonstration of outcomes measured by commonly accepted criteria. In Asian environments where quality assurance activities are either new and/or voluntary (e.g., India), agencies must demonstrate their value to the policy process if their recommendations are to be held as worthy of relevant policy actions.

Overall, quality assurance however pursued is in a fluid state. All of the environments in which it operates are marked by rapid and unpredictable changes, whether the impulse for them comes from societal demographics, patterns of national economic and political development, or broader environments of global competition. What weighs much in favor of quality assurance as a movement, however, is the very fact of its growth and innovations over the past two decades, and the increasing commonality of its discourses and practices. In policy terms, quality assurance at all its levels has fashioned for itself a "policy space." Occupying this space is a set of claims and practices that must be scheduled on political agendas, through the inputs that come increasingly from a set of legitimated actors—higher education institutions, and the many quality assurance actors present in the international environment. At a very basic level, over these past two decades, the *quality community,* if it can be seen as such, has won for itself a legitimate place at the policy table.

## Quality as a Public Good

The current global credit crisis alerts us in a powerful way to how quickly and radically our notions can change about what constitutes a public good and why society should act to create or preserve it. The justifications for government intervention into the credit markets and banking systems of countries around the world are cast, ultimately, in appeals to the public good. The familiar argument goes that no one *wants* to direct billions and ultimately trillions of dollars (marks, pounds, yen, RMB) to propping up the banking system, but it is something we *must* do. The consequences of

not doing so would be disastrous. The good of us all (and in this case the global good of us all) demands such actions.

This crisis frame, however, reminds us that beyond its immediate demands, notions of the public good can be far more finely drawn, and laced through any number of societal aspects. What constitutes good for a society on any given day, in any given year, and in any given decade or generation is always a result of a complex process of articulation, attention gaining, contestation, and negotiation. Commonly, access to water and air seem self-evidently public goods—indeed, as minimal conditions for life. But, when they come to be seen as access to *clean* water, and *clean* air, and minimal sanitation, their status changes. They become claims made on society and the polity in the context of all those social activities (and the complex ways in which individuals and groups benefit from them) that lead to un-clean air and water. All to the point of reminding ourselves that all goods in society, whatever their nature, are situated within a set of claims that are always subject to debate, and are always realized by individuals as a result of some process by which the good is distributed throughout the society.

To a large extent, so it is with higher education quality. Higher education itself, long regarded as a diffuse public good for society, came to be viewed in postwar decades as an essential precondition to national economic development—stamping it instrumentally as a public good of the first order. Over the past two decades, as our chapters underscore, when higher education became increasingly privatized in many societies, its public good character shifted. While retaining an overall element of such a contribution (see, for example, the 15-year, long-range higher education plan of Thailand detailed in chapter 12), privatization creates in the exchange nexus between students and higher education institutions the element of personal investment, monetizing and commercializing the relationship that had historically been represented by the qualities, efforts, and achievements of the individual student. A subtle shift enters the relationship as inevitably "the student" is led to ask: What is in this for me? What do *I* get from it? How will this experience or degree further *my* career? These questions come to displace the quieter, but equally relevant question of previous periods: What is *my role* to be in society as a result of this experience? Privatization refocuses the identity component of the higher education process for those experiencing it.

The instrumentalization of higher education by its economic development role, or its privatization nexus (or both), powerfully affects quality questions. As our chapters repeatedly suggest, *the* quality questions in some regard are *always* what is meant by quality, by whom, and for whom? The shift in higher education quality is from the academy and into the policy

sphere where some mix of regulatory determination (most typically by an agency created or authorized by the state) frames higher education quality in terms of student learning outcomes, which are themselves judged against the instrumental standard of market needs. The ability of the academy to definitively claim that it can effectively determine what constitutes quality and be responsible for effectively applying those standards to itself is no longer conceded by the policy process. The very proliferation of quality assurance agencies throughout the world (a stage that one would predict would lead soon to consolidation) is a marker of the degree to which higher education quality is regarded as a problematic to be resolved by policy dynamics in the name of the public good.

Bigalke's chapter asks whether higher education in the United States should best be regarded as a forerunner of some of the kinds of dynamics that are likely to occur in higher education in other regions of the world, or as the definitive outlier case—important though it is. The question seems to be critical to ask. If the structural dynamics that have come to characterize American higher education are likely to be replicated in other parts of the world, then the U.S. experience, especially in its efforts to negotiate a balance between the public and private sector components of the experience, will be of critical importance to the Asian experience. If, however, the United States is merely the important deviant case, far less is to be learned from it.

Simon Marginson (2006) has raised a similar point with respect to the global passion for ranking higher education, discussed by Federkeil in chapter 5. A major problem with such rankings, Marginson holds, is what they imply with their measurements. Through the indicators employed, they create an overall interval scale that for the uncritical reader seems to imply that an institution ranked twenty-fifth is somehow 25, the fiftieth fifty steps away from that ranked first, and so on. The reality is that American institutions dominate the top of this scale to such an extent that what the rankings "really" tell the reader is that there are two quite distinct higher education "groupings" being represented: the top American institutions and a few others and "all the rest." For Marginson, this is very much a case of not comparing like with like. Wolff makes a similar argument in chapter 6, holding that the accreditation process is necessarily differentiated into institutions of unquestioned capacity for whom it is easy to link outcomes with particular capacities, and those institutions that are still struggling to attain capacity, for whom the question of the quality of outcomes is significantly more problematic.

The burden of Bigalke's question is given new meaning in the climate of the current global financial crisis where the degree of global interdependence is manifest. Bigalke challenges us to ask how other aspects of our

interdependence may drive us toward greater convergence, especially through the rapid adoption and deployment of knowledge technologies that link us all to similar, interrelated processes. The American experience underscores the extraordinary extent to which individuals in technology dominated societies need to return to higher education throughout their working lives to reeducate and retrain in response to continual technological and social change. Should it be the case that these dynamics come to typify Asian societies, what we mean by "higher education" in Asia Pacific will continue to rapidly change, and with it prevailing ideas of how to define and assure quality.

Quality assurance as part of global higher education culture will have a significant role to play in such a world. We have already seen any number of examples where rapid social change brings the *alignment* issue into play, and higher education as a set of social structures is pressured to develop more short-term, vocationally relevant capabilities. Left to their own devices, especially in funding environments where they become increasingly fragile, higher educational institutions bow all too readily to such pressures. Quality assurance, especially in its emerging forms, focusing as it does on student learning, is institutionally situated properly to enter the policy process as the kind of broker envisioned in chapter 15—one that speaks to the legitimacy of pressing economic needs and the demands of the market, but equally for the longer standing traditions of academic independence and autonomy that allow higher education institutions to be a continued source of innovation, creativity, and the preservation of important social values.

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# Appendix

## Public/Private Higher Education Institution Typology

| Element Ownership | Varieties | Discrete Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Public/State owned | Total number of institutions<br>Philippines—196<br>Japan—176<br>Indonesia—100<br>Thailand—78<br>China—2000<br>Korea—45<br>Malaysia—20<br>Vietnam—305 | |
| | National Institutions | Seoul National University (+39 public universities)<br>Chulalongkorn University<br>University of Malaya<br>University of the Philippines<br>University of Tokyo<br>Peking University, etc. |
| | Provincial organizations | Henan University (China)<br>Prince of Songkla University (Thailand) |
| | Municipal/City organizations | University of Makati (Philippines)<br>City University of Manila (Philippines)<br>Universiti Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia)<br>Hue University (Vietnam) |
| | Complex Doctoral | Tamasek Polytechnic (Singapore) |
| | Teacher training institutions | Ngee Ann Polytechnic (Singapore)<br>Ungku Omar Polytechnic (Malaysia) |

| Element Ownership | Varieties | Discrete Examples |
|---|---|---|
| | Vocational/ Polytechnic | Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Indris (Malaysia)<br>Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (Indonesia) |
| | Open Universities | |
| | National | Ramkhamhaeng University (Thailand)<br>Universitas Terbuka (Indonesia)<br>Korea National Open U (Korea Air & Correspondance University)<br>Open University of Japan<br>Indira Gandhi National Open University (India)<br>Hanoi Open University (Vietnam)<br>Bangladesh Open University<br>The Open University of Sri Lanka |
| | Public International University | UN University<br>International Islamic University (Malaysia) |
| | Multinational University/ Research Institute | Asian Institute of Technology (Thailand)<br>East-West Center (United States)<br>University of South Pacific (Fiji) |
| | State-owned systems | University of the Philippines (brick & mortar and selected courses/distance learning/separate chancellor)<br>University of California, (statewide system), University of Wisconsin, California State University (United States)<br>Vietnam National University<br>China Central Radio and TV University |
| **Private** | For Profit | President University (Indonesia)<br>University of Phoenix (United States)<br>Far Eastern University (Philippines)<br>Rangsit University (Thailand)<br>International Medical University (Malaysia) |
| | Not-for-profit | |
| | Sectarian | Assumption University (Thailand)<br>Sophia University (Japan)<br>Muhammadiyah University (Indonesia)<br>Dongduk University (Korea) |

| Element Ownership | Varieties | Discrete Examples |
|---|---|---|
| | | Catholic University (Korea)<br>Wonkwang University (Korea)<br>De La Salle University (Philippines)<br>Mahamakut Rajavidvalava Buddhist University (Thailand), etc. |
| | Nonsectarian | Bangkok University (Thailand)<br>Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (Malaysia)<br>Harvard, Yale, Princeton, etc. (United States) |
| **Source of Funds** | | |
| State Institutions | Totally funded by state | Military academy in Korea<br>Annapolis (U.S. Naval Academy)<br>Military academy in Indonesia<br>Police academy in Korea<br>Military school in Thailand<br>Korean Advanced Institute of Science & Technology<br>National Defence University of Malaysia |
| | Research-oriented institutions totally funded by the state<br>• Inside universities<br>• Outside universities | Korean Institute of Information, Communication Technology<br>Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI)<br>Korean Education and Research on Information Service (KERIS)<br>NIER (Japan)<br>Advanced Science & Technology Institute (Philippines)<br>LIPE (Institute for Science & Tech) Indonesia<br>NSTDA (National Science & Technology Development Authority) Thailand<br>China Social Science Academic Institute (Academia Sinica)<br>Palm Oil Research Institute (Malaysia)<br>Malaysian Institute of Microelectrionics Systems<br>Chulabhorn Research Institute (Thailand) belongs to princess, funding from government through Ministry of Higher Education |

| Element Ownership | Varieties | Discrete Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Nonstate institutions (no state funding) | | PSAP (Center for Study of Religion and Civilization)—under Muhammadiya University (Indonesia)<br>Brigham Young University (United States.)<br>All private universities in the Philippines (taxed @10% if for profit)<br>All private universities in Thailand<br>Industry-sponsored universities in Korea (ex. Samsung Semiconductor Technology College)<br>Jili University (funded by automobile company)<br>Beijing City University (China)<br>No funding for 33 private universities in Malaysia |
| | Size of private sector<br>Philippines—1514<br>Indonesia—3300<br>Japan—585<br>Thailand—68<br>Korea—147<br>Malaysia—33<br>China—278 (+313 affiliated with universities)<br>Vietnam 64 | |
| Blended funding | Types | |
| | Private institutions with public funding | University of Chicago (federal research grants, student loans, contracts from local government) and most other Ph.D. granting institutions<br>Almost all private universities in Japan (operational fees @12% subsidy from govt.)<br>Thailand (student loans)<br>Indonesia (operational fees @ 1–5% subsidy from government, depending on size of institution)<br>Korea (all private universities receive subsidies from government to support projects sponsored by governmental policies) (also national grants and student loans) |

| Element Ownership | Varieties | Discrete Examples |
|---|---|---|
| | | Malaysia (all private university students eligible for state-supported student loans)<br>Indonesia (government supported student scholarship and loans) |
| | Public institutions with private funding (e.g., tuition, donations, economic relationships with private sector firms, patent rights, royalties, subordinate enterprise [e.g., real estate]) | All |
| | Subordinate enterprises | Thailand, Chulalongkorn University renting land. Korea, Seoul National University operates English language testing service company. Indonesia, two malls on land owned by Bogor Agricultural University, also sales of agricultural produce. Universities renting out facilities<br>Korea, faculties allowed to run private for-profit enterprises |
| | Other funding combinations, for example, those with corporate funding | Universiti Teknologi Petronas, Multi-Media University, Universiti Tenaga Nasional (three private universities owned by public corporations in Malaysia).<br>INTI University College (owned by a public listed company in Malaysia). |
| | Nontraditional sources | Logo shops |
| | Nontraditional contracting arrangements | Livermore Laboratory (United States), UCLA Medical Center (United States) |
| | Public and private institutions with subordinate enterprises | Philippines |

| Element Ownership | Varieties | Discrete Examples |
|---|---|---|
| | Income financing for higher education (e.g., endowments, university-held patents, TV rights for sports broadcasts, university presses) | Harvard endowment investing in hedge funds, and so on. Most U.S. universities with sports programs.<br>UH investment in short-term bonds, etc.<br>Korea, Chonnam National University Medical Lab listed on stock market. |
| **Regulation** | | *Japan*—direct linkage between ministry and public campuses, private institutions also subject to same government regulations (licensure, audit, evaluation).<br>*Korea*—both public and private universities regulated by MOE, especially in metropolitan area regulated by student enrollment, program approval, quality assurance. In public universities, government controls budgets (national grants and subsidies, student fees and other fees—separately regulated).<br>*Thailand*—public universities autonomous in terms of administration, but budget from ministry of finance is itemized down to the faculty/dean level, auditor comes from ministry of finance to check on spending private universities, government controlled in terms of program approval and quality assurance.<br>*Philippines*—public institutions have own charter with governing board that sets out policies reapproval of curricula, appointments, outside enterprises, etc. Private institutions do not receive government funds, but highly regulated, with regard to curricula, also must register with SEC, high level of transparency.<br>*Malaysia*—highly regulated pre- postaudit, governement will give block grants (not line item budget), all public and private universities regulated by the Malaysia Qualifications Agency (MQA). |

| Element Ownership | Varieties | Discrete Examples |
|---|---|---|
| | | *Indonesia*—public universities itemized budgets from government (no possibility of realignment of budget), private universities not regulated by government, but curricula, and other decisions must be approved by government.<br>*China*—both state and private institutions highly regulated by MOE via annual audits. |
| **Types of Public/ Private Partnerships** | | |
| | State/provincial governments and private companies | Industrial University of Selangor (Malaysia), Penang Medical College (Malaysia),<br>National Institute of Technology (India), Tata Institute of Social Sciences (India), Symbiosis International Education Centre (India), Sichuan Normal University (China), Henan Normal University (China). |
| | Public universities and private companies | Monash University Malaysia (Monash University and Sunway Group), City College of Zhejian University (China), Pacific Financing College of Fudan University (China), Zuhai Affiliate Independent College of Beijing Normal University (China). |
| | Public universities and private colleges | Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) partnered with a number of private colleges throughout Malaysia such as Kolej Shahputra, Kolej IKIP, Kolej UNIKOP, Institut Teknologi Perak, Kolej SATT and others to offer their degree and diploma programs in commerce, science, communications and media, creative technology, etc.<br>The SAL Group of Colleges in Malaysia collaborates with several public universities such as UPM, UKM, UiTM, and UM to offer diploma and degree programs in computer science, law, accountancy, and business administration. |

| Element Ownership | Varieties | Discrete Examples |
|---|---|---|
| | Consortia of public universities | 11 public universities in Malaysia set up a private company, METEOR, to run Open University Malaysia. |
| | | Universitas 21 (an international network of 21 leading research-intensive universities such as University of Melbourne, University of Hong Kong, National University of Singapore, and others from 13 countries) |
| | Nonprofit private universities | Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) and Wawasan Open University (Malaysia), Thang Long University (Vietnam) Min-ban Heilongjiang Oriental College (China) |
| | | Min-ban Mongolian Fengzhou College (China), Hunan Women Professional University (China) |
| **Other Types of Public and Private Arrangements and Affiliations** | Public subsidies to private institutions | In Japan,the policy of government subsidies for the recurrent expenditures of private higher education institutions was introduced in 1970, and the current level of subsidies is about 12 percent of recurrent expenditures. |
| | | Public subsidies to deemed universities in India. |
| | Faculties from public universities teaching in private institutions | This is a very common practice in Indonesia, Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos. |
| | Students on government loans studying in private institutions | In Malaysia the government education fund (PTPTN) provides loans to students enrolled in programs accredited by MQA in private higher education institutions. |
| | Outsourcing of student services in public campuses | Universiti Sains Malaysia outsourced its student cafeteria and adopted the "build and lease" policy in the construction of student dormitories by private companies. |
| | Public and private partnership in research | Universiti Sains Malaysia has established the USAINS Group to manage all its commercial activities that include contract research, consultancy, joint ventures, license and sales of intellectual property and other forms of commercialization. |

| Element Ownership | Varieties | Discrete Examples |
|---|---|---|
| | Public and private partnership in offering professional services | Universiti Malaya and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia has a private medical wing operating in their teaching hospitals. The private medical wing allows public sector doctors to work additional hours for private consultation and medical procedures. Each doctor or specialist is allowed only three individual private sessions per week with each session lasting four hours. |
| | Quasi-private university education activities | All public universities in Hong Kong offer different kinds of continuing and professional education programs. |

*Source*: Assembled by authors.

## Chronology of Important Accreditation Developments

| | |
|---|---|
| 1950 | Formation of HEI associations, CEAP, ACSC, and PACU UC period from birth to demise. |
| 1957 | PAASCU registered, followed by four years of testing |
| 1967 | PAASCU recognized by DECS as the official accrediting agency |
| 1972 | Martial law was declared by President Marcos; PD 6-A recognized private accreditation as national education development policy. |
| 1973 | Philippine Constitution; MECS divided education ministry into 13 regional areas. |
| 1977 | FAAP federation, ACSC-AA, and PACU-COA formally organized. |
| 1979 | FAAP recognized by MECS. |
| 1984 | MECS Order 36 declaring FAAP as one accrediting agency. |
| 1986 | Restoration of democracy under Corazon Aquino "EDSA 1;" DECS Order 27 states FAAP as certifying body with authority to approve Government benefits. AACCUP was organized. Department of Education split, with CHED for HEI supervision FAAP recognized by CHED as certifying agency; AACCUP joined FAAP. |
| 2000 | PCER organized, recommends FAAP be replaced by CHED as certifier in the spirit of balancing autonomy with accountability. |
| 2005 | FAAP recognized through CHED Order No. 1 as certifier of accredited status granted by member accrediting agencies to HEIs or programs—Public HEIs' accrediting agency federation NNQAA recognized by CHED. |

*Source*: Created by authors.

# Contributors

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