Quality in Higher Education: Identifying, Developing and Sustaining Best Practices in the APEC Region

APEC Human Resource Development Working Group

August 2011

APEC Project HRD 04/2010

Editors:
Deane E. Neubauer
Professor Emeritus
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

John N. Hawkins
Professor Emeritus
University of California, Los Angeles

Produced for:
Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Secretariat
35 Heng Mui Keng Terrace Singapore 119616
Tel: (65) 6891-9600 Fax: (65) 6891-9690

APEC # 211-HR-04.1

Table of Contents

Cluster Four

- Tan Eng Chye, The National University of Singapore's (NUS) Mission to be a Leading Global University
- Rie Mori, Evaluating Third Party Evaluators' Role in Assuring Global Equality Among Premier Japan Universities
- Yiming Zhu, Project 985 and Project 211: The Innovative Measures in Improving the Quality of Higher Education in China
- Sally Davenport and Roger Wigglesworth, Higher Education in New Zealand: The Rigour-Relevance Gap and the Example of CANZ Being Internationally Excellent by Being Locally Relevant
- Edilberto de Jesus, Globally Competitive Universities

Guest Speakers

- Eduardo Ochoa, The Role of the Federal Government in Quality Assurance in U.S. Higher Education
- Linda K. Johnsrud, US Accreditation and the Influence of European Quality Assurance

Keynote Speakers

- Molly Lee, Quality Assurance and Qualification Recognition of Higher Education
- Nanzhao Zhou, Quality Assurance of Cross-Border Higher Education in China: International Perspectives, National Policies, and Institutional Practices
- Ralph Wolff, Conference Summary and Reflections

Foreword

This publication is part of an APEC project, *Quality in Higher Education: Identifying, Developing, and Sustaining Best Practices in the APEC Region* (HRD 04/2010). The goals of the project are to identify definitions of quality and quality assurance in higher education in the APEC region, share exemplary practices and developments, identify common elements, and initiate a foundation for continued discussion about quality and sustaining quality practices in the region.

As part of this project, papers from practitioners throughout the APEC region were presented at a conference in Honolulu, Hawai'i from August 4-6, 2011.

The conference was organized by the University of Hawai'i System in collaboration with the East-West Center. Dr. Deane E. Neubauer, Emeritus Professor, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, and Dr. John N. Hawkins, Emeritus Professor, University of California, Los Angeles, both senior education consultants with the East-West Center in Honolulu, Hawai'i, were senior project consultants. Prior to the August conference, the senior project consultants extensively engaged with presenters and also gained further stakeholder input through a project advisory committee.

The project was organized around four major topics, or clusters: 1) What is Quality and What is Quality Assurance?; 2) University Rankings; 3) Exemplars from Region and Economies; and 4) The Globally Competitive University. Flowing from this organization, the conference agenda was designed to encourage intensive discussion among presenters, active participants from APEC economies, moderators, and discussants. Papers within each cluster were first presented individually, followed by a convening of the presenters as a cluster panel with the addition of a moderator to facilitate a discussion that provided all conference participants an opportunity to engage in the session.

At the end of each conference day, participants were invited to take part in a sustainability workgroup to share ideas about how the quality discussion might be further developed after the conference. The senior project consultants facilitated these sessions where interest was expressed in extending the discussion, for example, to comparative work in quality assurance, student learning outcomes, and educating for globally relevant competencies.

The number of presentations included a total of 19 papers, 3 keynote addresses, 2 invited speeches, and moderators; in all, 20 economies participated in the conference. The final conference speaker, the third keynote, provided a summary and reflections of the three days: the many common issues; the ranges of approaches and stages of development; differences and similarities; and the willingness of participants to share and learn from experiences across the region. The distinguished participants and experts presented an outstanding range of papers that demonstrated the critical importance of higher education quality to economic growth and development across the APEC region.

Joanne Y. Taira, PhD
APEC Project Overseer
University of Hawai'i System
tairaj@hawaii.edu

Introduction to the Problem:

Economic growth and development in the Asia Pacific region depend on the quality of education and training available. Defining and identifying quality are notoriously difficult and constitute a perennial challenge in higher education; seeking to assure it within higher education institutions is another.

What constitutes quality in an educational program or institution? How do we know quality when we see it? Even as governments, universities, and colleges across the APEC region grapple with the concept of quality, they have responded to the press for quality assurance by designing assessment systems and working with higher education institutions to improve quality across institutions, within programs, across research endeavors, and certainly with respect to teaching and learning.

Across the APEC region, approaches to quality have involved both regulatory and voluntary models. The need to create and assure higher education quality has been linked to issues of creating sufficient higher education capacity, assuring important social values such as equity through access, and to the need for graduates to possess qualities and skills that can be meaningfully used in societies experiencing rapid and profound change. As higher education institutions in all economies struggle to adapt to such changes, the issue of how to develop quality in all aspects of higher education and how to sustain it has become a constant feature of the higher education landscape.

Despite the challenges and difficulties involved, successes abound. Throughout the region one can locate instances in which initiatives to assure and sustain quality are being identified, developed, and practiced at higher education institutions. In examining these instances of success, one is able to discover common elements that are attributes of exemplary practice.

The objective of the APEC Conference has been to identify ways in which quality initiatives are being defined, developed, and practiced within higher education programs, institutions, or governments in the APEC region, and in the process discover common and sustainable elements that are attributes of exemplary practice. These elements include practices that ensure equitable participation in higher education by women. The papers presented throughout these *Proceedings* include research and analysis by practitioners and scholars throughout the APEC region that describe quality assurance activities, and examine case studies and best practices. These particular and diverse examples inform common understandings and clarify the interaction among concepts such as access, equity, and finance and their relationship to quality.

Project Objectives

The focus of this conference directly responded to the priority expressed in the 2008 Joint Statement of Education Ministers at the 4th APEC Educational Ministerial Meeting in Lima, Peru that, "quality education for all is our common goal." The ministers stated that ensuring that all students receive quality education will help bridge economic chasms within economies and throughout the Asia-Pacific region while it improves the quality of life of citizens and promotes prosperity.

The conference organizers sought to align the conference in methodology and intended outcomes with the ministers' endorsement of EDNET's direction toward evidence-based practice and research as well as their recognition that economic, social, and cultural differences among APEC economies will enrich collaborative work that promotes 21st Century skills and competencies among students while such work ensures equity and inclusion. In gathering case studies and examples of practices that support and define quality from around the region, this conference has a strong bias towards studies that are evidence-based. Furthermore, by inviting examples from around the APEC region, conference papers include differences in approach based on a diversity of social and cultural understandings and economic resources.

The conference also responded to the 1996 APEC Economic Leaders Declaration of the importance of human capital development and the objectives that guide Human Resources Working Group (HRDWG) networks to: 1) develop 21st century knowledge and skills for all; 2) integrate HRD into the global economy; and 3) address the social dimensions of increasing global interdependence.

Conference papers and discussion focus on quality education and training as a foundation of long-term inclusive growth and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region. Higher education that builds capacity through a skilled workforce, research, and innovation supports human resource development that is inclusive, closes opportunity disparities across the region, and promotes the welfare of citizens. Intrinsic to these issues is the definition of quality. The Conference sought to generate discourse that would identify and help define the attributes of quality in higher education across the region and help create models based on evidence of successful practices that recognize economic, social, and cultural differences. Many of the studies reported on examine the scalability and sustainability of quality practices and their relevance throughout the region.

Organization by Clusters

Conference materials and presentations were organized into four "clusters." Cumulatively, these stage the approach to this subject matter by moving from the general to the specific—from a generalized but disciplined presentation of complexities that make up discussions of quality, especially higher education quality, to detailed case studies at the institutional or programmatic level of how quality is manifest. Central to this organization is situating the differing approaches to quality assurance that have been taken throughout the APEC constituency including through multi-national and regional approaches. Each cluster was composed of discrete research papers and at least one keynote address, the presenters of which sought to embrace and extend the interrelated themes of the conference.

Cluster One: What is Quality and what is Quality Assurance?

How do we conceptualize QA/Accreditation, variations within the region, the changes occurring in the US, and elsewhere, etc.? What are the compelling and dominant models of QA? What models seem to work best in given circumstances? Given that it is a commonplace, albeit an important one, to note that everyone seeks quality, but what it is and how it is to be achieved remains stubbornly context and place-bound. The issue remains, however, of how to define and work in higher education with useful and productive notions of quality.

Cluster Two: University Rankings

A force operating throughout the region with continually greater involvement by those within and outside the higher education sector is the phenomenon of university rankings. These—especially globally intended rankings-have proved highly controversial, but seem to be firmly established as a constant within the APEC higher education environment. This cluster explored the positives and negatives of rankings while seeking to clarify whether they have a critical and important role within formal Quality Assurance.

Cluster Three: Exemplars from Region and Economies

What works well and why? This cluster was dedicated to an examination of specific instances of acknowledged higher education quality and the assurance processes with which they are associated. Papers in this cluster focused on sorting through the complexities and differing contexts within which higher education quality occurs while seeking to determine both the causes of these (what accounts for these quality performances?) and how to scale them up. Of particular concern within this cluster were examples of successful contributions to achieving access and equity.

Cluster Four: The Globally Competitive University

Throughout the region we observe a concern at the national level to establish at least a small group of national universities as equal to some powerful if unspecified notion of a “global” or “globally competitive” university. The papers in this cluster were devoted to raising the issue of what this discourse really amounts to as a possible way of creating *de facto* standards of excellence. We wished to raise the question of whether such a compelling idea operating at the policy level within nations is a fruitful pathway toward excellence across the whole of national educational institutions. We also wish to seek to extract from this analysis and present further contributions to our inventory of best practices for quality.

Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation

Quality in Higher Education: Identifying, Developing and Sustaining Best Practices in the APEC Region

Agenda

Honolulu, Hawai‘i, USA
4-6 August 2011

Organizer: University of Hawai‘i System
In partnership with the East West Center

Location: Imin International Conference Center

APEC Project HRD 04/2010

Day One: Thursday, August 4	
9:00	Opening Remarks: University of Hawai'i President M.R.C. **Greenwood**
9:15	Opening Remarks: East-West Center President Charles E. **Morrison**
9:30	Opening Remarks: Representative of APEC EDNET Coordinator Brian **Fu**
9:45	Keynote Address: Molly Nyet Ngo **Lee**, Coordinator, Asia-Pacific Programme of Educational Programme for Development and Programme Specialist in Higher Education, UNESCO, Bangkok "*Quality Assurance and Qualification Recognition in APEC: Status & Comparison"*
10:30-10:50	Tea Break
10:50-11:15	First Paper from Cluster One—Antony **Stella**, President, Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN); Audit Director, Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA), Melbourne, Australia *"Conceptualizing Quality Assurance and Accreditation: Variety and Differentiation in the Region"*
11:15-11:25	Discussion
11:25-11:50	First Paper From Cluster Two— Nian Cai **Liu**, Director, Center for World-Class Universities; Dean, Graduate School of Education, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Shanghai, China *"The Phenomenon of the Jiao Tong Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) Model: Future Directions"*
11:50-12:00	Discussion
12:00-1:20	Lunch and Invited Speaker—Dr. Eduardo M. **Ochoa**, Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC, USA *"The Role of the U.S. Department of Education in Higher Education Quality"*
1:30-1:55	First Paper from Cluster Three—Ka Ho **Mok**, Associate Vice President (External Relations); Dean, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd), Hong Kong, China "*Enhancing Quality of Higher Education: Approaches, Strategies and Challenges for Hong Kong"*
1:55-2:05	Discussion

2:05-2:30	First Paper from Cluster Four—Eng Chye **Tan**, Deputy President (Academic Affairs) and Provost, National University of Singapore, Singapore *"Singapore National University's Mission to be a Leading Global University"*
2:30-2:40	Discussion
2:40-3:00	Tea Break
3:00-4:00	General Discussion of First Day Papers Moderators: John **Hawkins** and Deane **Neubauer**, APEC *Higher Education Quality* Senior Project Consultants
4:00-4:10	End of Afternoon session APEC Representatives and Speakers Group Photo
4:10-5:00	Sustainability group meets
5:00-7:00	Reception Remarks: The Honorable Neil **Abercrombie**, Governor, State of Hawai'i
Day Two: Friday, August 5	
8:30-8:40	Cluster One Panel: What is Quality and What is Quality Assurance? Moderator: Jorge **Nakamoto**, Senior Principal, Aguirre Division, JBS International
8:40-9:05	John **Hawkins**, Emeritus Professor, UCLA Graduate School of Education & Information Studies, Los Angeles, California; Senior Education Consultant, East-West Center, Honolulu, Hawai'i, USA *"Quality Assurance, Accreditation, and the Complexity of Higher Education in the U.S."*
9:05-9:30	Mario **Letelier**, Director, Center for Research in Creativity and Higher Education, University of Santiago of Chile, Santiago, Chile "*Understanding Quality in Higher Education in the Andean Sub-region*"
9:30-9:55	Alex **Usher**, President, Higher Education Strategy Associates, Toronto, Ontario, Canada *"Describing Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Canadian Higher Education"*
9:55-10:10	Tea Break

10:10-10:35	Javier **de la Garza Aguilar**, General Director of the Inter Institutional Committees for the Evaluation of Higher Education (CIEES), Mexico D.F, Mexico *"Quality Assurance and Transformation of Higher Education: The Mexico Experience"*
10:35-12:00	Discussion
12:00-1:15	Lunch and Speaker, Linda K. Johnsrud, Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, University of Hawai'i System, Honolulu, Hawai'i, USA *"US Accreditation and the Influence of European Quality Assurance"*
1:15-2:00	Second Keynote Address: Nan-zhao **Zhou**, Director, International Center of Teacher Education, East China Normal University, Shanghai, China *"Quality Assurance of Cross-Border Higher Education in China: International Perspectives, National Policies, and Institutional Practices"*
2:00-2:10	Cluster Two Panel: University Rankings Moderator: Sit Chuan **Soo**, Director of Accreditation (Social Sciences), Malaysian Qualifications Agency, Ministry of Higher Education, Selangor, Malaysia
2:10-2:35	Yung-Chi (Angela) **Hou**, Dean, Office of Research & Development, Higher Education Evaluation & Accreditation Council; Director, Faculty Development & Instructional Resources, Fu-Jen Catholic University, Chinese Taipei *"Rankings: Help or Hindrance to Quality Assurance? From a Perspective of Asian Accrediting Agencies"*
2:35-2:50	Tea Break
2:50-3:15	Deane **Neubauer**, Emeritus Professor, Political Science, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa; Senior Education Consultant, East-West Center, Honolulu, Hawai'i, USA "*How Might University Rankings Contribute to Quality Assurance Endeavors?*"
3:15-3:40	Discussion
3:40-4:30	Sustainability Group Discussion
Day Three: Saturday, August 6	
8:30-8:40	Cluster Three Panel: Exemplars from Region and Economies Moderator: Terance **Bigalke**, Director, Education Program, East-West Center, Honolulu, Hawai'i, USA

8:40-9:05	Sunwoong **Kim**, Professor and Chair, Department of Economics, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Wisconsin *"Model Quality Assurance; Success in Korean Higher Education"*
9:05-9:25	Olga **Bain**, (not present) Professor, Graduate School of Education and Human Development, George Washington University, Washington, D.C. *"Developing Quality Assurance Among Top Russian Universities: What Can Be Learned from These Successes?"*
9:25-9:50	**Tran** Thi Bich Lieu, Director, Center for Educational Research and Application, College of Education, Vietnam National University in Hanoi, Hanoi, Vietnam *"Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement of Higher Education Institutions: Vietnam Exemplar"*
9:50-10:15	Rachavarn **Kanjanapanyakom**, Associate Professor, Faculty of Engineering, Kasetsart University, Bang Khen, Thailand *"Thai Experience with Quality Assurance"*
10:15-10:35	Tea Break
10:35-11:00	Ashri **Ahmad**, Acting Assistant Director/Senior Education Officer, Department of Planning, Development and Research, Higher Education Division, Ministry of Education, Brunei Darussalam "*Managing Quality in Technical Education: Brunei Darussalam's Perspectives"*
11:00-11:25	Discussion
11:25-11:35	Cluster Four Panel: The Globally Competitive University Moderator: Katsuhiro **Arai**, Vice-Director General for College Testing, National Center for University Entrance Examinations, Tokyo, Japan
11:35-12:00	Rie **Mori**, Associate Professor, National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation (NIAD-UE), Tokyo, Japan *"Evaluating Third Party Evaluators' Role in Assuring Global Equality Among Premiere Japan Universities"*
12:00-12:25	Yiming **Zhu**, Professor, Department of Education, East China Normal University, Shanghai, China *"Project 985 & Project 211: The Innovative Measures in Improving the Quality of Higher Education in China"*

12:25-1:25	Lunch
1:25-1:50	Sally **Davenport**, Professor, Victoria Management School, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand; and Roger **Wigglesworth**, Director, Tourism, Major Events and Consumer Affairs Branch, Ministry of Economic Development, Wellington, New Zealand "*Higher Education in New Zealand –The Rigor-Relevance Gap and the Example of CANZ: Being Internationally Excellent by Being Locally Relevant"*
1:50-2:15	Edilberto **de Jesus**, President, Asian Institute of Management, Manila, Philippines *"The Global University Endeavor"*
2:15-2:45	Discussion
2:45-3:30	Final Keynote Address: Ralph **Wolff**, President and Executive Director, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities, Alameda, California, USA
3:30-4:00	Final Discussion
4:00-4:10	Remarks: Linda K. **Johnsrud**, University of Hawai'i System
4:10-4:15	Closing Remarks: Brian **Fu**, Representative of APEC EDNET Coordinator

Presenters (in order of appearance)

President Greenwood, an internationally known researcher and nationally recognized leader in higher education, is about to begin her third year as the University of Hawaii's 14th president. The first woman to serve as UH's chief executive officer, she unites strong belief in the exceptional caliber of the UH System with determination to develop the university's voice as a national leader in higher education and research. President Greenwood has brought her experience as both a campus and university system leader to this position. She previously served as provost and senior vice president for academic affairs for the University of California system, and held the position of chancellor of the University of California, Santa Cruz, for 8 years. She graduated summa cum laude from Vassar College and received her PhD from The Rockefeller University.

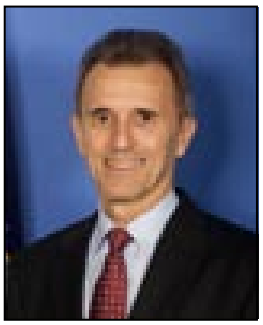
Charles E. Morrison has been president of the East-West Center since August 1, 1998. He has had extensive involvement in the conceptualization, organization and funding of policy-oriented educational research and dialogue projects in both Japan and the United States, and has long been involved in promoting the concept of Asia Pacific community. In September 2005, he was elected international chair of the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC). He is a founding member of the U.S. Asia Pacific Council, the U.S. National Committee for Pacific Economic Cooperation and a member of the U.S. Committee for Security Cooperation in Asia Pacific. He is a past chair of the U.S. National Consortium of APEC Study Centers. A former director of the Center's Program on International Economics and Politics, he is a former U.S. Senate aide and a research adviser to bi-national Japan-U.S. commissions. He holds a Ph.D. in international relations from Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.

Brian Fu is a Program and Management Analyst at the U.S. Department of Education's Program and Policy Studies Service. He supports international benchmarking efforts in education and provides U.S. representation in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Education Network where he serves as a project overseer for several U.S.-led APEC projects including the APEC International Benchmarking of Mathematics Education Project, the APEC Human Capital for Green Growth project, the APEC Strategic Plan for Languages project, and the APEC Knowledgebank project. Mr. Fu also supports the APEC Education Network coordinator. Mr. Fu joined the U.S. Department of Education in 2004 as a Presidential Management Fellow. Mr. Fu's holds a Master of Science from Carnegie Mellon University's Heinz School of Public Policy and Management, where he was a Peace Corps fellow, and a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from the University of Michigan.

Molly N.N. Lee is the Coordinator of the Asia-Pacific Programme of Educational Programme for Development (APEID) and Programme Specialist in Higher Education at UNESCO Asia and the Pacific Regional Bureau for Education in Bangkok. As the Coordinator of APEID, she runs programmes on higher education, technical and vocational education, education for sustainable development and ICT in education. Prior to joining UNESCO Bangkok, she was a Professor of Education at the University of Science, Penang, Malaysia. Dr. Lee has a Ph.D. in International Development Education, a Master's degree in Sociology from Stanford University, and a Master's in Education Planning and Development from University of London Institute of Education. Her research interests are higher education, teacher education, ICT in education and education for sustainable development, fields in which she has published widely.

Antony Stella, the President (2011-2013) of Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN), has been associated with the networking efforts among the quality assurance agencies of the Asia Pacific since 2001. Currently, she is Audit Director at the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) and head of its international activities. Before joining AUQA in August 2005, she held a senior position at the National Assessment and Accreditation Council, host of the 2011 APQN conference. Her experience with these two very different QA systems has been of great value to her understanding of the regional QA issues. Dr. Stella has published widely on quality assurance. She has authored reports, desk-study overviews, case studies and training materials on QA for organizations such as UNESCO, World Bank, and OECD. She wrote the scoping survey reports on the QA arrangements of APEC economies and the Brisbane Communiqué signatories for the Australian Government. She was a member of the UNESCO-OECD expert group that drafted guidelines for quality assurance of cross-border education.

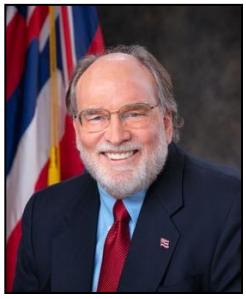
Nian Cai Liu took his undergraduate study in chemistry at Lanzhou University of China. He obtained his doctoral degree in polymer science and engineering from Queen's University at Kingston, Canada. He moved to the field of educational research in 1999, before which he was a professor in polymer science and engineering. Prof. Liu is currently the Director of the Center for World-Class Universities and the Dean of Graduate School of Education at Shanghai Jiao Tong University. His current research interests include world-class universities, university evaluation, science policy, and institutional research. *The Academic Ranking of World Universities*, an online publication of his group, has attracted attention from all over the world. His latest book is *Paths to a World-Class University: Lessons from Practices and Experiences*. Prof. Liu has been enthusiastic in professional services. He is one of the vice-chairmen of "IREG-International Observatory on Academic Ranking and Excellence." He is on the editorial/advisory boards of several international journals including Scientometrics.



Eduardo M. Ochoa is assistant secretary for postsecondary education at the U.S. Department of Education. He is the chief advisor to the U.S. Secretary of Education on programs that provide financial support to eligible institutions and disadvantaged students and promote foreign language study, international affairs, and international educational research and exchange. Before joining the Department, Ochoa was provost and vice president for academic affairs at Sonoma State University. He also has served as professor of economics and Director of the Bureau of Business and Economic Research at California State University, Los Angeles, and as dean of the College of Business Administration at California State Polytechnic University Pomona. A native of Buenos Aires, Ochoa attended bilingual schools before immigrating to the U.S. He earned a bachelor's degree from Reed College, a master's in nuclear science and engineering from Columbia University, and a Ph.D. in economics from the New School for Social Research.

Ka Ho Mok is Associate Vice President (External Relations) and Dean, Faculty of Arts and Sciences of the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd). He is concurrently Changjiang Chair Professor of Zhejiang University in China. Before he joined the HKIEd, he was Chair of East Asian Studies and Director of the Centre for East Asian Studies at the University of Bristol and Associate Dean of Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Hong Kong. He is also President of the Comparative Education Society of Hong Kong and Chairman of the Hong Kong Educational Research Association. Professor Mok has been researching and publishing extensively in comparative education policy in East Asia, contemporary social and political development studies in China and East Asia, and comparative governance and public policy in East Asia. He is Editor of *Journal of Asian Public Policy* and *Asian Education and Development Studies*. Professor Mok completed his Ph.D. at the London School of Economics and earned undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in Hong Kong.

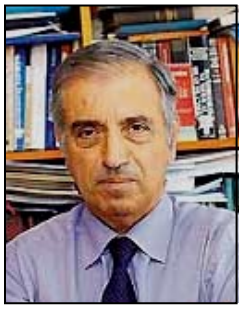
Tan Eng Chye is Deputy President (Academic Affairs) and Provost at the National University of Singapore (NUS). As Deputy President and Provost, he oversees NUS' Faculties and Schools, providing strategic directions and setting academic policies. His responsibilities include admission policies and processes, educational quality assurance, budget and resource allocation for the Faculties and Schools, and the development and implementation of new educational initiatives. Professor Tan is responsible for the appointment, promotion and tenure process, as well as the reward and incentive systems for academic staff. Professor Tan obtained his Bachelor in Mathematics (First Class Honors, 1985) at NUS and his PhD (1989) at Yale University. He joined NUS as a faculty member of the Department of Mathematics in 1985 (as a Senior Tutor) and has visiting positions at various universities overseas such as the Rutgers University, University of Washington at Seattle, University of California at Berkeley and University of Maryland, USA; Universities of Tokyo and Kyoto, Japan; as well as the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.



Governor Neil Abercrombie is Hawaii's seventh Governor since Statehood in 1959. He was inaugurated into office on December 6, 2010. Governor Abercrombie attended Union College in New York State, and came to Hawai`i in September 1959 to be a teaching assistant at the University of Hawai`i at Mānoa, where he earned a Master's degree in Sociology and later a Ph.D. in American Studies. Governor Abercrombie served in the State House of Representatives from 1975 to 1979 and in the State Senate from 1979 to 1986. In 1986, Governor Abercrombie was elected to Congress, after which he returned to Hawai'i to serve as Special Assistant to the Superintendent of Education. From 1988 to 1990, Governor Abercrombie was elected to serve on the Honolulu City Council, and in 1990, was elected to return to Congress. Governor Abercrombie represented Hawaii's first Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives until 2010.

Jorge Nakamoto, Ph.D. in Comparative and International Education, University of California, Los Angeles. MA in Spanish, San Jose State University, 1980. BA in Psychology and Spanish, San Jose State University, 1976. Primary research area is issues affecting hard-to-reach populations in the US and overseas with special emphasis on instrument development for ethnic groups, instrument and methodological translations from one language to another, and cross-language methods. Dr. Nakamoto is a national expert in Latino population research with extensive knowledge of migrant workers and other minorities in the United States and in cross-cultural research methods. His representative work activities include formulating research designs, implementing sampling plans, and collecting data via interviews and focus groups.

John N. Hawkins is Professor Emeritus and Director of the Center for International and Development Studies at the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles and a consultant at the East West Center. He was Dean of International Studies at UCLA, and has served as a Director of the UCLA Foundation Board, and is a former Director of the East West Center Foundation Board. He is Chief Editor of the new Comparative Education Series of Palgrave MacMillan Press, a specialist on higher education reform in the U.S. and Asia, and author of several books and research articles on education and development in Asia. He has conducted research throughout Asia since 1966 when he first visited the People's Republic of China and Japan.



Mario Letelier holds a ME degree from the University of Santiago of Chile and a M.A.Sc. and a Ph.D. from the University of Toronto. He serves as the Director, Center for Research in Creativity and Higher Education, University of Santiago of Chile and has been a member in various capacities of the National Commission for Accreditation from 1999-2010. He serves as President, Chilean Society for Engineering Education and is Professor, University of Santiago of Chile. His research areas: Non-Newtonian Fluid Mechanics, Engineering Education, learning processes and evaluation. He has published extensively in the fields of creativity, learning, and higher education as well as engineering science. Publications: over 300 refereed articles and book chapters in Engineering Science and Engineering Education.

Alex Usher is the President of Higher Education Strategy Associates, an international consultancy based in Toronto, Canada, as well as the Editor-in-Chief of the Global Higher Education Strategy Monitor. An internationally recognized expert in student financial aid and quality measurement in post-secondary education, Mr. Usher has authored numerous studies in higher education, notably in the fields of accessibility, higher education finance and quality measurement. In addition to his fifteen years of experience working for institutions, governments and foundations in Canadian higher education, his consulting work has included projects in the United States, Europe, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Uganda, Tanzania, and the Solomon Islands.

Javier de la Garza Aguilar has been Professor of Medicine of the Mexico Autonomous National University (UNAM) since 1973. He has a Master in Public Health from the National Institute of Public Health and has published widely in national and international specialized scientific magazines in medicine, medical education and higher education. His main lines of research are medical education, and evaluation and accreditation of higher education. In 2000 he received the National Prize of Biomedical Research. He was General Director Council for the Accreditation of the Higher Education, A.C. (COPAES) 2004-2010. He is currently the General Director of the Inter Institutional Committees for the Evaluation of Higher Education (CIEES).

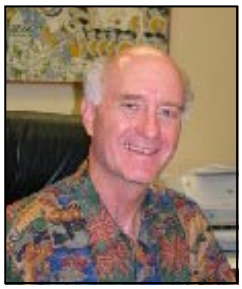
Linda K. Johnsrud has served as the University of Hawai'i System's chief academic officer since 2005. She collaborates with lead campus academic officers to set forth the overall academic vision, goals and strategic plan for the University of Hawai'i System. She also advises the president on matters relating to system wide planning, policy development and analysis, and oversees institutional research, human resources, employee relations and Hawai'i P-20 initiatives. Linda is currently the Chair of the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) serving a three year term (2010-2013). She was elected 2006-07 president of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE), an international association of scholars in the field of higher education. Author of more than 100 scholarly publications and refereed presentations, Johnsrud holds the rank of professor in the department of educational administration in the College of Education at UH Mānoa.

Zhou Nanzhao serves as President of Asia-Pacific Network for International Education and Values Education (APNIEVE), a UNESCO specialized network founded in 1994. He is Professor and Director of International Center of Teacher Education at East-China Normal University and concurrently also serves as President of Chinese Council of Private Higher Education. Dr. Zhou was a member of UNESCO-established International Commission on Education in the Twenty-first Century. He served UNESCO as senior program specialist in 'International Education' and APEID Coordinator (1998-2004) at Bangkok-based UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Office. Before he joined UNESCO Dr. Zhou was Vice President and senior research fellow of China National Institute of Educational Research and worked as project consultant in education projects for several international organizations in China. He holds a Ph.D. degree in education from State University of New York at Buffalo, USA, and has published extensively in international and comparative education.

Soo Sit Chuan graduated with a Bachelor of Applied Science from Malaysian Science University, and subsequently an MBA from the University of Missouri, US. He has worked with the Public Service Department, the Ministry of Education and the Prime Minister's Department before being seconded to the National Accreditation Board (later renamed Malaysian Qualifications Agency) since 2001, where he is responsible for overseeing applications from institutions of higher learning for accreditation of their programs. He is now the director for the Accreditation Division. Mr. Soo was also involved in the recent Academic Performance Audit exercise involving all the public and private universities. He has completed a course for MS ISO Lead Auditor and also participated in the UNESCO IIEP distance course on external quality assurance.

Yung-chi Hou (Angela), Professor of higher education, serves as Director of Faculty Development and Instructional Resources Center of Fu Jen Catholic University as well as Dean of the Office of Research & Development of Higher Education Evaluation & Accreditation Council of Taiwan. She specializes in higher education quality management, internationalization of higher education, faculty development, quality assurance of cross border higher education. Over the past 4 years, she has been in charge of international exchange affairs in HEEACT and engaged in many international activities of quality assurance of higher education of HEEACT. She is also a current APQN Board Member and consultant. Up to present, she has published more than 50 Chinese and English papers, articles, books and reports in the areas of higher education evaluation and rankings in local and international referred journals.

Deane Neubauer is Emeritus Professor of Political Science at the University of Hawaii, Manoa, Senior Research Scholar at the Globalization Research Center (UHM) and Senior Advisor to the International Forum for Education 2020 of the East-West Center. His interests lie in the analysis of public policy ranging from policy processes, health care, food security, education and more recently the development and conduct of globalization. His current work examines the varieties of national policy expressions in health care, food security, and education within the contemporary dynamics of globalization with particular attention to nations in the Asia / Pacific region.



Terry Bigalke directs the Center's Education Program division, which includes student scholarship and academic programs, leadership development, faculty and professional development programs, and higher education policy research, all primarily focused on the Asia Pacific region including the U.S. He has been active in promoting international dimensions in education at the college and university level. He holds a PhD in comparative world history from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, with a focus on 19th and 20th century Indonesia; an MA in Southeast Asian history as an East-West Center grantee at the University of Hawai'i; and a BA in history and Asian studies from St. Olaf College.

Sunwoong Kim is Professor of Economics at the Department of Economics, University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee. He also taught at Bryn Mawr College, University of Pennsylvania, Justus-Liebig University of Giessen (Germany), Ajou University (Korea), and KDI School of Public Policy and Management (Korea). After receiving B.S. in architecture and Masters in Urban planning from Seoul National University, he moved to the U.S. for his graduate education at Harvard (Planning) and M.I.T. (Ph.D. in Economics). He is a specialist in applied micro-economics. His current research interests include economics of education, urban and real estate economics, labor economics, and political economy. He has published articles in well known professional journals including American Economic Review, Journal of Political Economy, The Review of Economics and Statistics, Economic Development and Cultural Change, Journal of Urban Economics, European Journal of Political Research, Japanese Journal of Political Science, International Interactions, and Social Science Quarterly. He has served as the President of Korea-America Economic Association and Korean-American University Association. Currently he is the Co-Editor of International Economics Journal.

Olga Bain, Ph.D. (not in attendance), has doctorate degrees from the University at Buffalo, NY, USA, and from St. Petersburg University, St. Petersburg, Russia. Her research interests include higher education organization and change, policy analysis, internationalization, and the academe in a comparative perspective. She has authored a book *University Autonomy in the Russian Federation Since Perestroika* (Routledege-Falmer 2003), numerous book chapters and articles in peer-reviewed journals. Her recent research concerns participation and advancement of women in academe in an international perspective and changing attitudes and behavior of faculty toward internationalization (2011). She is currently teaching at the George Washington University, Washington, DC.

Tran Thi Bich Lieu earned her doctoral degree in the field of Educational Management at National Institute for Educational Sciences, Viet Nam in 2002. She was a Fulbright Scholar in the U.S. in Academic Year 2005-2006 where she studied the methods of improving higher education quality in the U.S. She has been travelling to different countries to do research and present at different international conferences and workshops. She also leads different research projects granted by domestic and international organizations. She is an author of books and tens of articles on educational management, higher education and education assessment and accreditation. She is currently Director, Center for Education Research and Application, College of Education, Vietnam National University in Hanoi.

Rachavarn Kanjanapanyakom is an Associate Professor at the Industrial Engineering Department, Faculty of Engineering, Kasetsart University. Previously she held the following positions at Kasetsart University: Vice President for Quality Assurance; Director of International Graduate Program in Industrial Engineering at the Faculty of Engineering; Associate Dean for International Affairs and Special Projects, Faculty of Engineering; Assistant Dean for Administration, Faculty of Engineering; Head of Industrial Engineering Department, Faculty of Engineering. Apart from her academic duties, she also serves as member of various professional and academic committees such as: the Board of External Assessors for Higher Education, Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assurance, Public Organization; Technical sub-committee, Thailand Quality Award; Executive Committee, Quality Association of Thailand; Subcommittee for Public Sector Management Quality Award, Office of Public Sector Development Commission; Best Industry Award Committee (Prime Minister Award), Ministry of Industry. Her interests are in the area of Production Planning and Productivity Improvement in Industry, Lean Production and Quality Management Systems.

Ashri Ahmad currently is Senior Education Officer, Higher Education Division, and Acting Assistant Director, Acting Head of Strategic Management Unit in the Department of Planning, Development and Research. Dr. Ahmad received his MSc in Environmental & Ecological Sciences at the Uni. of Lancaster (U.K.) and Doctor of Education from Murdoch University, Australia. His professional background includes serving as Principal of Nakhoda Ragam Vocational School, Senior Education Officer/Head of Quality Assurance Division, Department of Technical; Senior Education Officer, Higher Education Division. Professional interests are Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Technical Education Teaching and learning pedagogy.

Katsuhiro Arai is currently Professor and Executive Director of the Organization for the study of College Admission at The National Center for University Entrance Examinations and Emeritus Professor of Tohoku University. He has held a number of senior administrative positions at Tohoku University, including that of Vice President for Academic Affairs. He also served for five years as Professor at the Research Institute of Higher Education Hiroshima University. He holds a Ph.D. in Social Engineering from the Tokyo Institute of Technology and degrees in chemical engineering from the same institution. His current research focus is higher education policy, and the relationships of educational testing and education policy and planning.

Rie Mori is Associate Professor at the National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation (NIAD-UE), a quasi-national governmental organization in Japan that has two functions: conferring degrees, from Baccalaureate to Doctoral, to learners who have not matriculated at a college/university, and evaluating various types of higher education institutions in Japan. Mori earned BA and MA degrees from Waseda University. Her prime research interest is the accreditation of higher education institutions that ensures the legitimacy of higher education credentials, including degrees earned in nontraditional ways such as personal credit accumulation. She is an adjunct lecturer at Waseda University and a member of the Science Council of Japan.

Zhu Yiming was a full-time researcher in Shanghai Academy of Educational Sciences before 2008. Dr. Zhu has much experience in educational project monitoring and evaluation in China as a consultant, such as UNICEF's education project in China. Now, as a Professor in the Department of Education at East China Normal University (ECNU), he is mainly engaged in educational policy review and project evaluation besides teaching in ECNU. Teacher education and international educational cooperation are also his favorite research fields.

Sally Davenport has a background in the physical sciences and research expertise in the areas of strategy, technology, innovation and research management and policy. She also has extensive experience as a contract researcher for many of New Zealand's governmental organizations interested in innovation. She has been a principal investigator/leader on three major research grants. Sally is currently Deputy Chair of the Advisory Board of the International Society for Professional Innovation Management. Until July 2011 she was Head of the Victoria Management School and prior to that was Associate Dean (Research & Graduate Studies). In April she was appointed as a commissioner with the NZ Productivity Commission.

Roger Wigglesworth is a Director in the Tourism, Major Events and Consumer Affairs Branch of the New Zealand Ministry of Economic Development. Prior to this recent appointment Roger's work covered small and medium sized enterprises, entrepreneurship and business regulation. He was Chair of the OECD Working Group on SMEs and a New Zealand representative at APEC for 10 years. Roger has worked nationally and internationally in government and private sector roles in public policy, economic and regional development, strategic management and human resources. He has served on Advisory Boards for university schools. His Ph.D covered New Zealand history in the early contact period.

Edilberto C. de Jesus is currently the President of the Asian Institute of Management in Manila, and has also served as President of the Far Eastern University (Manila) and the University of the Cordilleras (Baguio City). He was appointed Deputy Peace Commissioner in 1987, and also served concurrently, from 1988-92, as Presidential Adviser on Rural Development in the Cabinet of Corazon Aquino. He was Secretary of Education from 2002-2004 in the first Arroyo Administration and served as Secretariat Director of SEAMEO (Southeast Asia Ministers of Education Organization) in Bangkok from 2005-2007.

Ralph A. Wolff has been president of the Senior College Commission of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges since 1996. He graduated from Tufts University and received a JD with honors from George Washington University. Before WASC, Wolff founded the Antioch School of Law, and served as Dean of the Antioch Graduate School of Education and also as a law professor at the University of Dayton. At WASC, Wolff is a national proponent for reforming accreditation into an agent of public accountability and quality assurance. His vision has led to major grants from the Pew Charitable Trusts and the James A. Irvine Foundation, and most recently, from the Lumina Foundation. He also founded and ran for ten years the Institute for Creative Thinking. He has served as an evaluator for multiple quality reviews in Hong Kong, and currently serves on the University Quality Assurance International Board (UQAIB) in Dubai.

ADDITIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Pepen Arifin, Ph.D., Secretary of Quality Assurance Unit, Institute of Technology Bandung, Bandung, Indonesia.

Mtro. Guillermo Pablo Lopez Andrade, Director General of Accreditation, Incorporation and Revalidation (DGAIR), Mexico.

Mr. Jalil Mail, Head of Higher Education, Higher Education Division, Ministry of Education, Brunei Darussalam.

Ms. Nguyen Thi Thu Huong, Program Officer, National Foreign Languages 2020 Project, Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), Ha Noi, Viet Nam.

Professor Dr. Kamanto Sunarto, National Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (BAN-PT), Jakarta, Indonesia.

Mr. Asmadi Tuah, Education Officer, International Affairs and Public Relations Unit, Ministry of Education, Brunei Darussalam.

Dr. Joanne Y. Taira, APEC Project Overseer, APEC HRD 04/2010, Quality in Higher Education, is with the University of Hawai'i System, Honolulu, HI, USA.

Trends in Quality Assurance in the Broader Asia-Pacific Region: Potential for a Regional Strategy?

Antony **Stella**

Director, Regulation and Quality Assurance
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA)
Melbourne, Australia

Introduction

This paper analyses the trends in quality assurance (QA) arrangements in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) region and the broader Asia-Pacific region. It employs a generic definition of QA whereby QA 'covers the processes used by quality agencies, such as accreditation, assessment, audit and registration, and also their quality improvement and enhancement activities.' Using this definition, I conducted surveys in 2008 to collect information on the QA arrangements in the region and those survey responses have been considered for this paper. There were 38 survey responses from the broader Asia-Pacific, of which 20 belong to APEC as well. Although the survey responses form the bulk of the information input to this paper, other data sources have been tapped to include recent developments in drawing trends in QA.

The significant trends that can be observed in the region are: (i) enhanced attention to quality assurance among policy makers, (ii) shared understanding about 'quality of quality assurance' among QA professionals, (iii) growing excitement about the role of QA networks in capacity development in QA among QA agencies, (iv) desire for further cooperation among economies and their QA agencies, and (v) favourable influence/impact of codes and guidelines of good practices in QA. Built on these trends I argue that Asia-Pacific is now well positioned for a regional QA strategy.

Key developments in quality assurance in the region

Enhanced attention to quality assurance

The higher education sector in the broader Asia-Pacific region has experienced considerable changes over the last 20 years that have required consequential changes in the approaches to regulation and quality. Massive increases in student numbers, total costs of higher education, the cross-border mobility of students and graduates, and the cross-border mobility of education have all combined to require such changes. Economies have responded to these changes in many different ways and consequently, the QA approaches in the region have many variations to serve unique national contexts. There are also similarities in the basic principles of QA. In some economies, after many years of experience, external QA is assuming new dimensions such as becoming more integrated with regulation.

Diversity in Approaches to QA

Every economy has some type of institutional registration or recognition process to approve them to operate as higher education institutions (HEIs) and/or to offer higher education programs. Over and above this approval mechanism, many economies have additional QA arrangements following one or more of the basic approaches to QA such as accreditation, assessment or audit. In practice, many QA bodies of the region follow a combination of these approaches. For example, the QA agency in Indonesia uses assessment in combination with accreditation. The outcome of its quality assurance procedure is a formal accreditation decision with a grade on a four-point scale – grade A to grade D, where grade A indicates that the course of study conforms to international standards, grade B indicates that the course is of good quality, grade C indicates that the course fulfils minimal requirements and grade D means not accredited.

Within the same economy, one can find different QA approaches among QA bodies depending on each agency's specific purpose. In India, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) declares whether an institution is accredited or not. It also combines the elements of assessment and classifies an institution on a nine-point scale based on its quality. The methodology has the element of audit where a small team of external peers is sent to the institution mostly as generalists and the report is made public. The Accreditation Board (Agriculture) of India gives the accreditation outcome on a three-point scale – accreditation, provisional accreditation, no accreditation. The National Board of Accreditation (Engineering) of India attaches varying periods of validity to its accreditation outcome.

The survey identified a scenario of diversities where the establishment, ownership, legal basis, governance, funding and the level of independence of the QA agencies vary among economies. Correspondingly, the features of the quality assurance frameworks differ significantly. In fact, the occurrence of a 'copy-cat' syndrome, where economies copy QA models without considering the suitability of the QA models to their national contexts has been very minimal.

The region is dynamic with many new and some very old QA developments with economies at various developmental stages in QA. Old is always new for some. In some cases, it is a scenario of enhanced attention to quality; in others many new initiatives are highly oriented to the immediate needs of the respective national higher education sectors and therefore they develop in many different ways. In the absence of a strong external framework for reference, national developments in QA will continue to increase these diversities.

Enhanced attention to quality assurance among policy makers has resulted in unintended outcomes too. In a number of emerging economies, the increased prestige attached to external QA resulted in a desire for policy makers to keep QA within their control. Developing autonomy for QA bodies in these instances becomes an important issue.

Variation in the well-developed/established QA systems adds to the unintended outcomes. In these systems the enhanced attention to QA manifests itself in a rather strange manner and it is too early to assess whether these developments are progressive or regressive. Five years ago, the generalisation that external QA evolved in many Asia-Pacific economies as a mechanism 'over and above the governmental regulation' was valid. Today, regulation and quality assurance are becoming more integrated in systems where reforms are underway after many years of independent external QA. Australia, India and Malaysia are examples.

In Australia, recent legislation for the establishment of the national regulator allows the new regulator Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, TEQSA, to also be responsible for external QA. It is expected that this integration will bring benefits to a mature higher education sector, by providing an opportunity to have regulation and QA in one continuum so that QA control can be triggered as necessary based on a risk based approach, among other things. It also, however, poses the danger of losing some fine elements of independent QA (currently provided by the Australian Universities Quality Agency) and more public information. It is too early to see the impact of this integration. India is discussing the establishment of a national authority/regulator that will regulate the operations of multiple QA bodies in the economy. In Malaysia, the independent QA body for private providers was merged with the national QA authority for both public and private institutions, creating a statutory body closer to the government.

Although one can argue that these bodies are independent of government and autonomous in their QA governance, the change in the relationship they have with their respective national governments has already affected the way these bodies can collaborate with each other. For example, collegial discussions on how QA bodies can use each other's QA decisions have become slow and ridden with obstacles when legal clearance is required from the governments.

Convergence among diversities

While diversities coupled with uncoordinated developments might seem to run counter to a regional approach, the quality assurance practices of the region have the following common critical core elements:

1. *Evaluation based on pre-determined and transparent criteria:* A set of standards and criteria or scope of areas to be covered are determined by the QA agency in advance and are applied objectively to all institutions of higher education or their programs in the economy.
2. *Process based on a combination of self study and peer review*: The institution (or program) undergoing the process is asked to do a self study (evaluation) and report on how it meets the standards set or criteria identified by the agency. A team of external reviewers/peers constituted by the agency analyses the self study report of the institution and validates the claims made therein, generally by

visiting the institution. The analysis of the self study report and on-site validation leads to the peer team reporting its recommendations to the QA agency.

3. *Final decision-making*: Based on the self evaluation of the institution or program and the recommendations of the peer team, the quality assurance agency or a high level body takes the responsibility for the final decision through an appropriate process.
4. *Public disclosure of the outcome*: In all the quality assurance mechanisms, there is an element of public disclosure of the outcome, although the extent of public disclosure varies. It may vary from disclosure of only the final outcome, as in the case of a typical accreditation, to disclosure of the full assessment report as in the case of a typical audit. There is recognition among the QA agencies that providing more public information on quality is a good practice.
5. *Validity of the outcome for a specific period of time:* The outcome is generally valid for five to ten years, five years being the predominant period.

This commonality among variations signals that possibilities for convergence and alignment with a regional approach are encouragingly evident in the region. In addition, a number of still-evolving aspects such as the qualifications framework, that are gaining increasing attention in the region, add to the potential for regional alignment in QA.

Shared understanding about good practices and 'quality of quality assurance'

Discussions around 'quality of quality assurance' have become prominent in recent years. The survey reveals that most QA systems in the region monitor the quality of their operations through internal controls (such as internal audits, annual reporting requirements, feedback from the stakeholders, feedback from international observers, etc). Voluntary coordination in regional networks is also seen as a measure of quality assurance of QA. Although quality assurance of QA is not the main driver for joining networks and associations, often QA agencies demonstrate their quality to various stakeholders by adhering to common standards and criteria of the associations and networks.

Some QA systems have undergone external reviews. There is a growing awareness among the QA agencies and their networks about the benefits of meta-evaluation or 'evaluating the evaluation itself' as a critical measure to ensure the quality of quality assurance. Demonstrating alignment with good practices and external reviews are being promoted by QA networks such as the Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN). The annual conferences of APQN have served as a good platform to share and discuss good practices in QA.

APQN is also working with the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) in identifying good practices in QA from the Asia-Pacific region. INQAAHE has a Database on Good Practices in Quality Assurance (GPQA), which is an online searchable collection of systems and activities that are relevant to good policies, practices and outcomes in quality assurance (http://www.inqaahe.org/main/other-resources-for-members). The GPQA Database has

been developed by INQAAHE as a resource for QA agencies seeking information on good practices to adapt and adopt. The basic principle of the selection is that the relevant system or action appears to be potentially transferable to other contexts and/or adds value to the growing knowledge base on QA. Another worthwhile initiative is APQN's project on external review of QA agencies, which has received external funding to conduct peer review for two of its members. The framework that will guide the review will be around the good practices in QA.

In other words, five years ago, the picture was characterised by heavy reliance on internal and ad hoc measures. Today there is a shift towards systematic benchmarking and external review of QA agencies against regionally and internationally accepted good practices.

QA networks in capacity development

Historically, national governments have been planning and providing for HE and as a consequence they have been seen as the natural custodians of quality in HE. Therefore, setting up national quality agencies and building QA capacity were seen as part of this national responsibility. In some economies the HEIs have been more pro-active and have played a lead role in assuring governments that the HEIs themselves can guard HE quality. Donors and funding bodies channelled their funds to national governments or associations of HEIs for QA capacity building. This perception that QA is a national responsibility and national response has changed in recent years. A number of QA issues that cut across national borders have come to the forefront, resulting in recognition that QA agencies would benefit from a common platform to discuss common issues and QA networks have evolved in response to that. In recent years, these networks have made a significant impact in QA capacity building and in the broader Asia-Pacific region the role of APQN in particular deserves attention.

APQN is a network of QA agencies of the Asia-Pacific region. It was formally founded in Hong Kong in January 2003 and incorporated as a legal entity in December 2004 with the Secretariat hosted by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) until February 2009. In March 2009, the Secretariat moved to the Shanghai Education Evaluation Institute, China.

APQN has four membership levels: Full Member, Intermediate Member, Associate Member and Institutional Member. In addition, it accepts observers from outside the region. As of 15 May 2011, APQN had 82 members from 33 economies and territories in the region. Of these, 27 are full members, 13 intermediate members, 31 institutional members and 6 associate members. It has five observers from outside the region.

APQN aims to enhance the quality of higher education in Asia and the Pacific region through building the capacity of quality assurance agencies and extending the cooperation between them. Its vision is to be the first point of reference for advice or support, one that is efficient in operation and open in information sharing. APQN has

maintained a strong program of information-sharing and capacity building while considering the unique national contexts in which the agencies have to function.

The role APQN can play in capacity development in quality assurance has been recognised by world bodies such as UNESCO and the World Bank. APQN was the first network to receive World Bank Development Grant Fund (DGF) support for the first three years of its establishment. For the past three years (2009 -2011) it has also been a beneficiary of the Global Initiative for Quality Assurance Capacity (GIQAC) grant administered by UNESCO. Projects that have been successfully implemented with the GIQAC grant include online discussion forums, creation of a database of consultants, and developing training material for trainers in quality assurance and internship programs.

An Evaluation Review of the DGF projects conducted by an independent external consultant in May 2008 showed that "the greatest impact has occurred in improving QA mechanisms across national systems in various economies, in the exchange of ideas and of expertise, and in promoting communication and cooperation between agencies and institutions". The reviews of GIQAC project implementation held in 2010 and 2011 made similar comments about APQN's role in the region.

While APQN has been a success story in its impact on QA capacity development in the region, there are also other QA networks developing in the region for specific purposes. The ASEAN Quality Network (AQAN) brings together the QA agencies of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations). Another network started recently is designed for countries of the Islamic World and there are APQN members who are members of these other networks as well.

While groups of QA agencies will always have some special interests that would bring them together, one is left to wonder whether what we are witnessing is a proliferation of networks and whether in the end these will be judged beneficial!

Cooperation and mutual trust in the region

Almost all agencies in the broader Asia-Pacific have been created, whether by governments or institutions, with responsibility within one economy (except for some special interest groups). However, as the HEIs of the region are becoming increasingly transnational or international in form and substance, HE quality assurance agencies are also being required to act at the transnational level. The phrase 'internationalization of QA' has been used to describe the need for QA agencies to move beyond their purely national attention and competence. Collaboration in QA of cross-border higher education is gaining particular attention due to its unprecedented growth in recent years. Quality assurance agencies have recognised the need to cooperate to manage risks such as degree and accreditation mills and to ensure that low quality providers operating across national borders are subject to appropriate oversight. To this end, QA

agencies in the region are increasingly collaborating, both within and across national boundaries.

Five years ago, interaction between agencies in different economies was at a much earlier stage of development characterized by informal contacts that occurred mainly through participation in meetings. A major reason for slow progress in regional collaboration may be diversities in methodology and the lack of mutual understanding and confidence between QA agencies. In particular, in the Asia-Pacific, lack of support systems such as a reliable source for information provision (national information centres) and national qualifications framework has been an obstacle to development of mutual interaction.

Recent years have witnessed increased discussion around collaboration and the signing of numerous memoranda of understanding between APQN members. The network has a project on Mutual Recognition of Quality Assurance Decision that aims to lead to four project member agencies making statements about the confidence they have in each other's QA decisions. Encouraging evidence exists that QA agencies are keen to strengthen cooperation among their QA activities and discussions around mutual recognition are progressing well.

National governments of the region are now showing greater interest in cooperation in QA matters. The meeting of the Asia-Pacific Education Ministers in Brisbane, Australia (2006) where the Ministers' Meeting agreed to actively encourage and facilitate regional student and academic mobility, and address barriers to those activities, are evidence to this interest. Ministers and senior officials from 27 economies from across the broader Asia-Pacific region agreed to collaborate on quality assurance frameworks for the region linked to international standards, including courses delivered online. This initiative known as the 'Brisbane Communiqué (BC) initiative' or 'the broader Asia-Pacific initiative', resulted in a number of regional initiatives. One outcome is the development of the Chiba Principles endorsed by APQN members in the 2008 APQN annual conference held in Chiba. The Chiba Principles need more discussion and some fine-tuning. APQN members have shown interest in reviewing their practices against the Chiba Principles when they are fine-tuned. This has the potential to ensure more regional alignment in QA.

Influence of Guidelines of Good Practices

In recent years, increasing attention has been paid to the question: what is a good quality assurance system? Discussions addressing this question have resulted in identifying a set of characteristics or aspects that can be expected of ideal QA frameworks. Principles of good practice, guidelines, and recommendations for QA systems to move towards this preferred framework have also been developed. Along with the terms mentioned above, the word 'standards' has been used in a few instances, but in general all these usages are about promoting good practice to assist a QA agency in improving its own quality by building on existing experiences. They are in

fact reference points, collectively agreed by a group of stakeholders and in that sense they become the standards that can be applied consistently to the members of that group.

In some cases these pointers have been developed by intergovernmental bodies such as UNESCO and the OECD, involving various stakeholders as well as experts in the field. Others have been developed by groups that have common interests such as a network of quality assurance agencies or an association of HEIs. The Guidelines of Good Practice developed by INQAAHE is a typical example of the work done by QA networks. In addition, the membership criteria of some networks serve as guidelines or standards and steer the membership towards those collective expectations as in the case of APQN. It may be valuable for APEC to review progress in this area with an eye toward emulating relevant successes.
Three notable initiatives deserve a mention for the significant impact they have made or are likely to make in the near future on the QA practices of the economies of the broader Asia-Pacific region. They are:

1. INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practice (GGP), 2007;
2. Membership criteria of APQN; and
3. UNESCO-OECD Guidelines on Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education, 2005.

Some QA agencies in the region have reviewed themselves against INQAAHE GGPs and some have demonstrated how their practices already align with INQAAHE GGPs. As mentioned before, the Chiba Principles are also gaining attention. In sum, attention to these good practice guidelines will have a positive unifying effect in the region.

SWOT of QA in the Region

While signatories to the broader Asia-Pacific initiative have embraced the goal of greater integration or exchangeability of education systems and agreed to collaborate on quality assurance linked to international standards, key developments in the field highlight the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to regional quality assurance. The following table, developed for the 2008 survey report on the QA arrangements, provides a brief summary of these issues.

Table 1: SWOT Analysis of Quality Assurance in the Asia-Pacific Region linked to international standards

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
• Strong commitment and interest in QA at Ministerial level • Broad similarity in underlying approaches in QA between economies • Presence of regional QA body in APQN • UNESCO-OECD Guidelines on CBHE • INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practice • Lessons from Bologna Process • High degree of cross-border provision and collaboration	• Considerable diversity between actual QA practices • Considerable differences in capacity of QA agencies • Weaknesses in dealing with QA of distance and CBHE • Lack of a strong Asia-Pacific regional identity.
Threats	**Opportunities**
• Insufficient commitment and resources to resolving QA issues • A focus on national approaches • A developing understanding of the benefits of QA and regional cooperation in QA	• Reach agreement on principles for QA • Build capacity of QA agencies • Share best practice and learning • Raise awareness of benefits and relevance of QA to education systems • Economies of scale and enhanced effectiveness and efficiency through a regional QA approach

The above SWOT analysis suggests that while many strengths and opportunities support the development of quality assurance arrangements for the Asia-Pacific region linked to international standards, some particular weaknesses and threats need to be managed. Based on this analysis the main challenges for the economies of the Asia-Pacific in making progress towards the objective of harmonising approaches to quality assurance in higher education lie in collaborating towards collective objectives while acknowledging and respecting the diversities particular to the economies of the region; developing the capacity of quality assurance systems within and between economies of the region; and building awareness of the benefits of and commitment to regional quality assurance arrangements.

While the commitment of individual quality assurance agencies to their respective missions is unquestioned, the shift to a regional approach will require a high level of commitment not only from individual agencies, but from governments more broadly and from other key stakeholders such as education providers, employers and students.

Achievement of a regional approach will require resources and effort based upon common understandings of the benefits to be realised from a regional approach.

A major impediment to collaboration is the lack of trust among QA agencies on QA decisions. Agencies will be able to place their confidence on each other's work if they are confident about the robustness of each other's policies and procedures. In this context, the 'quality of QA' becomes relevant to strengthen collaboration. Demonstrating alignment with the regional QA framework in higher education has to be promoted as a measure of 'quality of quality assurance'.

An associated issue is building awareness of the benefits of collaboration between QA agencies--not only the individual agencies but for the respective education systems and their clients. Advocacy of new and improved QA arrangements will be strengthened if the linkages between these arrangements and improved educational, social and economic benefits can be clearly drawn.

Developments in Europe may provide some insights into what is possible in the broader Asia-Pacific, although the major differences between the European and Asia-Pacific contexts must be borne in mind. Agreeing on clear goals, setting targets, making explicit commitments, ensuring political will, support at the highest levels, involvement of key stakeholders, improved information sharing etc. are a few positive lessons of experiences that can be drawn from the European experience for strengthening regional collaboration. Although the Bologna Process has shortcomings as a model for the Asia-Pacific, the approaches and processes initiated in Europe provide guideposts for development of a regional quality assurance mechanism.

Conclusion

As a result of the recognition by governments that quality higher education is central to economic development and prosperity, quality assurance systems have been created across the broader Asia-Pacific region. This paper acknowledges that the current QA activities of the region are highly oriented to the specific demands of respective national HE systems and therefore have developed with significant differences. But a situation is emerging where economies are required to look beyond their national needs and acknowledge the relevance of international and regional developments. To facilitate a convergence in these varying QA policies and practices, with due recognition to national contexts, this paper recommends a regional QA approach built on principles, values and codes of good practices. Irrespective of the development stage, all QA agencies and their national governments have a significant role in progressing regional alignment and strengthening cooperation in the region, and the Asia-Pacific is well positioned to move ahead in this direction.

For further reading on the regional QA developments…

Antony Stella, Accreditation for Quality Assurance in Asia-Pacific: What is at Stake? Presented in the 3rd International GUNI Conference on Higher Education in Barcelona during 27-29 November 2006.

Antony Stella, The Chiba Principles: A Survey Analysis on the Developments in the APQN Membership, Report produced for the Asia Pacific Quality Network in 2009.

Enhancement of Quality Assurance Systems in Higher Education in APEC Member Economies, Survey Report produced by the Australian Universities Quality Agency in October 2006.

Quality Assurance Arrangements in Higher Education in the Broader Asia-Pacific, Survey report commissioned by the Australian Government and carried out through the Asia Pacific Quality Network, February 2008.

Quality Assurance: Internal and External Approaches

John N. **Hawkins**

Consultant, East-West Center
Professor Emeritus, University of California, Los Angeles

Guy Neave once noted that contrary to the platitude that quality assurance (hereafter QA) in higher education (hereafter HE) is "here to stay", it, in fact, has always been with us since the rise of the modern university in Europe (Neave 1994). What has been elusive is what does it mean, who does it, why is it done, and how is it done (among other things). What has been made clear worldwide is that the quality of higher education can no longer be taken for granted, if indeed it ever was. In fact it is worthwhile to look back seven centuries or more as my colleague at UCLA, William Clark did in his amusing book, *Academic Charisma and the Origins of the Research University* (2006) to see that the current "trend" or "fad" of QA in HE has recognizable roots. It is thought that the roots of the current QA movement and its various forms, including audits, quality management, assessments and accreditation, emerged in the 13th century with the "ministerial visitation"—in Clark's words, "Such a visitation entailed that one or more ministers and/or their tools came as a commission in the name of the sovereign or state to look over, overhear, survey, spy upon, interrogate, record, and transform academic voices into a report on the university" p. 340. As Clark notes, this likely followed in the tradition of the Inquisition, the origins being both ecclesiastical and medieval. Not surprisingly, the visitation met with the kind of resistance now seen in current QA efforts. Questionnaires were utilized, surveys administered, follow-up to previous visitations revisited, metrics dominated as lists were compiled, statistics noted, things counted and personal interviews conducted. All focused on determining in one way or another the quality principally of the faculty and leadership but also of the institution and its parts. In reading the journals of these visitations Clark notes: "It reminded me most of the visitations of the angels in Hebrew Scriptures. Our visitor in 1784 was like an angel who descended from the Kafkaesque ministry down to mortals below, then returned to report." (Clark 2007 p. 355). Many of these external efforts eventually fell apart as those on the receiving end simply failed to answer questions they did not like. This particular form of QA came to an end in 1789 to be replaced by self-reporting and the gradual rise of the marketplace.

Then, later it was replaced once again in Europe by ministry level accrediting and QA forms of various sorts, and in the US by regional accrediting agencies in the 1880s, and more recently throughout Asia in a mix of these forms. What is notable, is that external and internal QA procedures are often seen as separate processes during this history, the former generally outranking the latter in credibility. In this brief paper, in the absence of any agreed upon notion of what "quality" is (other than the one we have all used, "we know it when we see it"), I would like to make some general comments about the QA movement in Asia and then to turn to a form of QA that I think combines the best

features of both internal and external evaluation: regional accreditation and the University of California (UC) internal review process.

The View in Asia

Over the past ten years, a variety of international conferences have been held in the Asian region focusing on various issues related to QA, accreditation, accountability, and so on. The context in which the heightened interest in QA occurs in Asia is worth noting. Just as we watched the "happy anarchy" of HE change in the United States in the 1970s and 1980s, universities in Asia are also experiencing a somewhat different shift in emphasis between themselves and their host societies. While HE decentralization is occurring on the one hand, a contradictory "central" (i.e. MOE or other state body) obsession with QA is occurring on the other; resulting in what some scholars are referring to as "centralized decentralization." This ambiguity has prompted both enthusiasm and cynicism for QA. The rise of QA in Asia is coincident with a number of forces and factors including the philosophies of neo-liberalism, managerialism, and corporatization, among others, all of which has contributed to the establishment of national QA or accreditation agencies, societies, associations, networks, and other schemes to measure HE quality. QA it seems is all the rage; it is ubiquitous. There are of course good reasons why HE stakeholders are concerned with how their HEIs are performing. Massification plus diversity in HE in Asia has resulted in an increased demand for more information regarding the myriad of universities and colleges that represent the higher education landscape in the region. For their part, colleges and universities can use QA for branding purposes, to find their niche in the tangle of institutions that represent the region. At the state level, governments find QA useful to increase their control and leverage over HE and increasingly, continued state funding (albeit often diminished as a result of decentralization) is often conditional, based on the results of various reviews.

What is clearly observable is that there has been a selective shift from an internal HE QA process to an increase in external influences, a shift on the continuum of control from less to more. For most nations in the region, prior to this movement, QA occurred on the front end, as part of the process by which the HEI was established, and apart from periodic demands by the MOE for quantitative data, and for approval of changes in the institution, there was little in the way of formal, regular evaluation. And as the locus of review moves toward national agencies, it has been argued that there is now more of an interest in accountability than in performance. One consequence of this movement is that "quality management" has replaced a more loosely coupled and perhaps more academic management style to assure that the ideas spawned from QA permeate the organization, and that the data that is collected and the internal assessments that occur comply with external demands. An evaluative culture has emerged in the region for better or worse.

Some Contextual Considerations

Throughout the region a number of factors influence the QA movement. HE has become more diverse, it is more available, more international, there is less money to go around, the private sector has expanded, governance has undergone dramatic changes, and all of this results in more competition. The net consequence has been a demand for more accountability. QA has in some instances replaced external controls by the state, yet the state remains very much involved in the QA process.

When one examines QA policies in the region, a variety of rationales emerge to justify the high level of interest in QA. Often first on the list is accountability of public funds. Although in most nations in the region, neo-liberalism and decentralization have resulted in an increasing withdrawal of state support for public institutions such as national universities (and for some portion of the private university sector as well), nevertheless, increased accountability for the remaining allocated funds has not lessened. Related to this concern but more focused inside HEIs is the goal of better informing funding decisions for the funds that are allocated. This has resulted in internal competition between the different HE segments and divisions. On a more ideal level, a stated goal of QA is to improve the quality of HE provision in general; and similarly, to better inform students, parents and employers of the differential quality of HEIs in their region (the various "ranking" or league tables are related to this goal). Because of the precipitous rise in new private institutions, there is a pervasive interest in controlling for the quality of these new efforts as well. Other concerns have to do with assisting the mobility of students between institutions and of course, for the general transfer of authority between the state and the institutions themselves.

Whatever the rationales, most nations in the region have been searching for a general model of QA that often includes but is not limited to: some form of national coordinating body (often linked directly or indirectly with the MOE), some form of institutional self-evaluation, external evaluation by peers, published reports, and some form of follow-up. Increasingly throughout Asia and much of the rest of the world, national QA entities are linked through various networks that promote a sharing of norms and procedures for conducting QA. The impact of new QA processes may occur on one or all of four levels: system, institutional, basic unit, or individual. And, QA may function through one or all of three basic mechanisms: rewards, changing policies or structures, and changing HE cultures. In Asia, there appears to be more of a focus on QA at the system and institutional level and less interest in basic units such as departments, colleges, and schools (although there are important exceptions).

With respect to the reward mechanisms a fundamental question being asked throughout the region is to what degree QA results should be linked to funding (a focus more concerned with persuading than with learning)[1]. One motivation to engage in a more formal QA assessment is the promise of increased funding in a climate of general reductions. Another kind of reward associated with QA is the region-wide concern with formal status allocation or some form of accreditation. State sponsored accreditation efforts are competing with independent agencies as well as trans-national accrediting associations. Finally, there is considerable interest, and consternation, in the region with

league tables and rankings. Most agree that rankings are useful and many nations in the region have as a national goal to see at least one of their universities among the top 100. However, there is disagreement on methodology and who should conduct the rankings.

An obvious goal of QA is to provide the rationale for changing HE policies and structures. As Clark (1998) and others have argued, the more the state is involved in QA the more the changes will be “fundamental” as opposed to the more familiar “incremental” changes that most HEIs are comfortable with. Fundamental policy changes can have far-reaching effects such as the merging or termination of basic units within a university, or the merger or closure of the university itself. However, some argue that institutional policy changes hardly matter as entrenched interests often find ways to subvert or go around policy directives giving credence to the notion that there are weak relationships between policies and what actually happens at an institution. Sometimes it is difficult to determine what causes what. Did the policy change because of the evaluation or was the policy environment ripe for change anyway because of existing internal forces?

Perhaps the most problematic issue that QA sometimes addresses is the culture of HEIs. All social organizations have a dominant internal culture, a symbolic side, that can either facilitate change or impede it, and universities are no exception. The shared beliefs that faculty and administrators hold help them define who they are, what they believe in and why they behave as they do. Glenny’s (1958) characterization of universities as “happy anarchies” is apt, and despite strong MOE controls in most of Asia, has been true in that region as well. QA is often meant to change that. QA seeks to change the boundaries, realign the landscape between institutions and the state, institutions and their faculties, administrators and faculty and faculty and students. QA can attempt to strengthen one factor over another; research over teaching for example, or the converse. Whatever the focus, QA often is meant to replace a more tribal culture with one focused on system-wide accountability measures regardless of institutions or the “small worlds” within those institutions.

Formal QA, especially of the external variety, is a relatively new phenomenon in Asia. About two-thirds of the QA systems and mechanisms in the region have been established in the last decade (Antony 2006). In some systems QA is as simple as recognition of a HEI as part of the national system; in others, it requires a procedure above and beyond standard regulatory measures and MOE approvals. Sometimes, the entire process is rather routine with little at stake; other times, continued or increased funding or even institutional survival is at risk. It is not at all clear that there is a unified view of what constitutes QA, although the conferences referred to above are seeking to move in that direction. A workable definition has not been agreed upon but one has been proffered by the International Network of QA Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE): “...quality assurance may be related to a program, an institution or a whole higher education system. In each case, quality assurance is all of those attitudes, objects, actions and procedures which through their existence and use, and together with the quality control activities, ensure that appropriate academic standards are being

maintained and enhanced in and by each program" (Antony, 2006: p. 1). Of course the key phrase here is "appropriate academic standards", and who is best suited to determine those standards. With respect to that, little has been written about the nature of "internal" review processes, and their relationship to the newly emerging "external" processes (Westerheijden, D. F., B. Stensaker, and M. J. Rosa 2010**)**, both tasked with assuring the quality of the institutions and their goals and objectives. Here we shall look at this relationship in the case of one institution in the US as an example of a collaborative effort to assure quality.

Internal and External QA: the Case of UCLA

UCLA, where I have spent over 35 years, recently completed an accreditation process lasting three years. As is usual during such accreditations, or as my experience recalls, questions arose about many of the issues mentioned above regarding QA: what it is, and who is best qualified to determine quality. I think the process yielded an interesting approach, assisted by our regional accreditation association, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), innovative thinking, and UCLA's rigorous internal review traditions.

UCLA is not unlike other research universities in the US in the sense that the institution can count on a regular cycle of internal review and evaluation designed to maintain quality control of the learning process, and a regular cycle of regional accreditation increasingly designed to accomplish much the same goal. If a poll were taken among HE faculty and most administrators (and possibly students) about QA measures that most impact their lives and have the capacity to improve the learning mission of the university, accreditation would not rank high on the list. In fact, an informal survey of four departments at UCLA revealed just that. Rather, within the HEIs, the numerous and various internal review and assessment processes that regularly take place would rank among the most important, effective, and participatory measures to assure quality in the institution itself and especially, the quality of the learning experience. And, faculty and departmental chairs consider themselves the best qualified to develop meaningful learning outcomes and resist the requirement that these be judged in some way by outside agencies such as regional accrediting associations (RAAs) or the US Department of Education (USDE). These internal reviews also provide an essential framework for assisting the accreditation process when it begins its cycle and in effect work closely with the WASC process. Here we will look briefly at a more or less typical breakdown of such internal reviews among the various components of the modern American research university. The University of California model will be used although it is not untypical of many tier one HEIs in the US.

The internal review process in the UC system (formalized in the 1970s) can be divided in two parts: those reviews focusing on the academic and administrative personnel area, and those that focus on the academic program area. These reviews are conducted on a regular, recurring basis and result in the involvement of most of the stakeholders in the university operating as an "accountability chain." They generate an enormous amount of data much of which is useful in the accreditation process, and

faculty, students, administrators and other staff whose very livelihood may be impacted by the result take these reviews very seriously. In this way, these measures more frequently and more directly impact the learning environment of the university and result in curricular and administrative changes in the learning effectiveness of the institution's various academic programs.

Personnel Review: From the Top Down and the Bottom Up

No one in most US HEIs escapes assessment and review. One may argue about the effectiveness of these reviews but faculty and administrators take them very seriously and are actively engaged when the review cycle comes up. Everyone from the chief executive officer (in the case of the University of California system, that is the chancellor at each of the individual campuses and the president of the entire system) to the individual faculty member undergoes periodic review, usually ranging from every three years for faculty to every five years for department chairs, deans, vice chancellors and the chancellor. Of these reviews the most directly affecting learning outcomes are those for faculty, department chairs and deans as these key stakeholders have direct influence over what is taught, how it is taught, when it is taught, how it is evaluated and so on.

As many scholars of higher education have noted, the key to the quality of a HEI is directly related to the quality of the faculty that are appointed, retained, promoted or released. In the case of the UC system, a series of guidelines are strictly followed with respect to the faculty appraisal process. Department chairs or other recommending officers generally initiate this process and it is normally upon their initiative that the assessment of an individual candidate is undertaken. All recommendations concerning faculty appointment, promotion and appraisal originate with the department chair and conclude with a lengthy and well-documented letter to the dean and ultimately to the chancellor.

With respect to the appointment of faculty, documentation opinions include data from colleagues at other institutions where the nominee has served, from other qualified individuals with knowledge of the nominee and his/her work, and from students and colleagues within the appointing department. University tradition and academic senate policy also require the full involvement of the nominee and other faculty in the review process. Letters are obtained from both within the institution and from specialists outside the institution. Such letters are not meant to be advocacy letters but critical and evaluative. In addition, for both appointment and promotion actions, student teaching evaluations are submitted, and faculty who have first-hand knowledge of the candidate also submit documentation on the faculty members' teaching effectiveness. All classes taught by the candidate in cases of promotion require regular review utilizing departmental approved review and assessment instruments. The department chair and the faculty review committee have the responsibility to discuss with the candidate both teaching strengths as well as weaknesses and to take action in the case of any weaknesses that emerge. In the case of junior faculty members (pre-tenure), a mentoring committee is formed to work with the candidate on both the research and teaching agendas including classroom visits to better assess actual teaching practice.

Thus, teaching effectiveness and therefore, learning outcomes are directly assessed at the cutting edge; that is, in the classroom and tied to appointment and promotion. Many HEIs have developed programs to assist faculty in improving their teaching effectiveness as well their ability to assess the students more effectively. All of these data collected during the appointment and especially during the review process constitute valuable data for the accreditation process (*The UCLA CALL* 2007).

The point here is that improving learning outcomes is much more related to the quality and on-going learning process of the faculty and their review than it is to any accreditation recommendations that might be proposed. Faculty listen and change their behavior when an internal review committee of their peers makes critical recommendations more so than when an outside agency such as WASC proposes the assessment of learning outcomes. This is not to say that the two processes can't work together, because clearly they do in the University of California and elsewhere, but too often the focus for policy makers, politicians, and administrators tends to be on the formal accreditation process which for many faculty appears to be far removed from their individual interests and from the real quality issues. In the end, the degree to which HEIs change their approaches to learning outcomes will depend on the degree to which the external QA agency is able to work effectively with trusted internal QA standards, and vice versa.

The next layer of review processes critical for quality assurance are those for department chairs and deans, the two academic officers with direct responsibility for maintaining the teaching and research quality of the university. As many scholars of the US system have noted, there is a strong tradition of departmental autonomy in matters of curriculum and instruction as well as faculty recruitment and retention. Department chairs, and the deans who oversee the departments, may be the most critical link in any effort to improve learning outcomes and the overall quality of the institution. How well the occupants of these roles function and are respected by their faculty peers is essential to assuring improvement in teaching and learning outcomes. The recruitment for these positions follows the same rigorous and inclusive evaluative processes as those outlined above for faculty. Once in place, chairs and deans begin their work, much of it focused on how to improve learning for their department or unit. As the UC Academic Personnel Manual states: "A performance review for academic Deans and Provosts, shall be conducted no later than the fifth year of service and at five-year intervals thereafter" (*UC Academic Personnel Manual* 2009, p.1). Department chairs are often more democratically chosen and subject to departmental faculty votes for continuation in office. In both cases, the leadership conducts formal and informal reviews every five years. For deans, the process of review is very formal with outside letters of evaluation, faculty votes, faculty letters, and a variety of input necessary to "obtain an accurate and broad understanding of the dean's activities and performance in these activities" (*UC Academic Personnel Manual* 2009, p. 2). For chairs, a faculty committee is appointed to review the chair's performance and a faculty vote is taken on reappointment. In some cases, chairs rotate every five years without review.

Finally, the chancellor also undergoes a formal five-year review similar to that of the deans except that a sub-committee of members of the Academic Senate performs the assessment with input from faculty, students, alumni, and officers from other campuses. The chancellor writes a self-assessment and has the opportunity to comment on the review committee's letter to the president. The president meets with the chancellor to discuss the report and final recommendations. It is safe to say that as QA reviews move further away from the faculty, there is less interest on the part of faculty and students and in some ways, less accountability for learning outcomes. It is rare that a chancellor is not re-appointed and much of the review focuses on his/her ability to promote legislative support and funding as well as attract external funding.

It is this "evaluative culture" that creates an environment to encourage qualitative change and improvement, especially in the learning outcome area. That, combined with a culture of trust in the integrity of the institution to do the right thing, amounts to a robust internal QA process that can work alongside the external accreditation process.

Academic Program Review[1]

As is the case with departmental chairs, the departmental review (sometimes known as program review in similar institutions) is very likely the key link to maintaining and improving the quality of the institution and its goals, especially learning outcomes. Conducted every eight years, the departmental review focuses almost exclusively on the area of student learning, curricular reform, and the improvement of teaching. The Academic Senate Executive Office conducts the review and the departmental chair has the responsibility to organize the review at the departmental level. As is the case in most reviews, the process consists of compiling a variety of data on the functioning of the department and its faculty, a self-review and inside and outside letters of evaluation. However, it is at this level that the internal and external (national accreditation agency) reviews begin to be integrated and mutually reinforce each other.

Departmental review committees and chairs are asked to take the following steps in order to blend their efforts with those of WASC:

1. State the educational goals of the undergraduate program and *publish* them so that students are aware of what they are expected to achieve.
2. Articulate how departmental goals for undergraduate education are currently being implemented and any plans the department has for considering changes.
3. Examine evidence the department thinks is relevant in order to evaluate whether goals are being met. Examples include the quality of student work in key courses, placement of students in graduate programs or jobs, students doing research with faculty and so on (*Academic Senate Executive Office Internal Memo*, May 1, 2007, p. 1).

The departmental review thus engages students, faculty, administrators and staff in a systematic effort to clarify departmental and often discipline goals and objectives, make

[1] Here I will focus only on the department, the fundamental unit of the university. However, increasingly the interdisciplinary programs run out of Organized Research Units (ORUs) are becoming critical components in the higher education knowledge/learning environment. They also undergo a review process similar to that of departments.

these transparent, rethink how well the department is achieving these learning outcomes and then blend these reports with those efforts of the regional accreditation agency, WASC, to assist that organization in its own review effort. These two QA efforts then, the internal and external, mutually reinforce each other, which thus far appears to be an improvement on past practices where they were less integrated. This approach also makes more feasible the campus-wide, institutional accreditation goals referred to below (interdisciplinary studies, the capstone experience, and the use of educational technology).

What we have in the internal review process then, is a tapestry of checks and controls, operated locally within the institution and conducted by the stakeholders themselves. When a forthcoming departmental review is announced, as it just was in my department, a notice is sent to all faculty and students and the level of interest begins to rise. They feel that this is really "their" review and that it matters to them personally. It is a symbol of the trust that the institution places in the stakeholders themselves that they are in charge of improving their own learning environment.
The argument here is that a finely honed internal review process can be tapped into creatively for value added when the regional accreditation cycle comes around as it also recently did at UCLA. WASC and UCLA worked for three years to assure that there was some value added to the process in addition to the usual collection of data and application of metrics. Most Tier I research universities in the US, such as UCLA, have adopted the thematic approach to demonstrating new learning experiences and outcomes and the RAAs have worked closely with them to assist these new efforts. While "inventories of effectiveness indicators" have, in the case of UCLA, been submitted for the latest accreditation, they are focused principally on the "themes" and the idea of learning experiences rather than learning outcomes. For example, in the recent re-accreditation process at UCLA, WASC has worked closely with UCLA to develop three thematic learning experiences: Theme 1: shaping undergraduate education via the **capstone** experience; Theme 2: facilitating **interdisciplinary education and research;** Theme 3: using **educational technology** to enhance the student academic experience.

The capstone experience is more familiar to the small liberal arts university or college than it is to a comprehensive research university such as UCLA, but for precisely that reason UCLA decided to engage in a major overhaul of its undergraduate program to provide a more inquiry and research based learning experience. Five major aspects of the experience help define its characteristics:

- The student engages in a creative, inquiry-based learning experience that deepens the student's knowledge and integration of the discipline;
- The project may be completed by a group of peers, provided that each student's contribution is significant, identifiable and graded;
- The project ends in a tangible product that can be archived for at least three years by the department or program;
- The project is part of an upper-division course of at least four units, usually within the curriculum established for the student's major or minor; and,

- Opportunities are provided for capstones to be shared within a broader community, such as presenting a paper at a student or professional meeting.

The second theme focuses on UCLA's long-standing commitment to interdisciplinary studies but goes further and outlines for the re-accreditation process three primary goals:

- Articulate a campus-wide vision for interdisciplinary education and research
- Remove barriers to faculty participation in interdisciplinary education and research, and create a porous, flexible environment that facilitates the flow of ideas and people across knowledge boundaries.
- Increase student awareness and engagement in multi- and interdisciplinary curricula, and develop tools to assess the effectiveness of interdisciplinary education. Our efforts to establish capstone requirements and improve educational technology are directly related to this goal.

And the final theme, educational technology, intends to combine and build on the institution's experiences over the past decade with technology in teaching and research to offer a richer educational experience that is based on a technology-enabled environment. This effort also has three primary goals:

- Articulate a vision and plan for transforming the role of educational technology in instruction at UCLA that leads faculty and students to conceive of ET as a natural, necessary, and integrated part of their educational environment.
- Develop scalable services for engaging, preparing, supporting and evaluating faculty and teaching assistant use of ET in evaluating the impact of ET on student learning.
- Build a research-rich educational environment for students using ET-enabled pedagogy to achieve articulated learning outcomes (*UCLA's Institutional Proposal* 2008).

These three themes are examples of a new learning experience approach adopted by WASC and other RAAs in the US for university institutional accreditation and which augment the usual inventory of educational effectiveness indicators for measuring learning outcomes. This is a major departure from the previous input model and departs as well from the more standard quantified learning outcome model.

For their part, the RAAs must work collaboratively with the HEIs to develop a common language that can explain the diverse approaches to addressing student learning outcomes. And the explanation of their approaches must be made comprehensible to the HEIs stakeholders. The internal student learning QA processes already in place at most US HEIs are seen by most faculty and some administrators to be more than sufficient. RAAs need to communicate more effectively with the HEIs on the need to go beyond these internal practices to achieve common goals. Finally, many administrators in US HEIs believe that given the time and effort involved in accreditation, some common resources in the way of sharing review approaches, techniques related to standards, tools for assessing learning, and so on, would be helpful as RAAs and HEIs continue down the road to learning more themselves about the usefulness of learning

outcomes (Ewell, P. (2010). As Martin Trow argued in 1996, the fundamental characteristic that must be present for internal QA to function well is *trust* in the institution's capabilities. When that is lacking external accountability enters and formal QA procedures begin to dominate with questionable results (Trow, M. 1996).

References

"Academic Senate Executive Office Internal Memo", May 1, 2007. UCLA, Los Angeles CA p. 1).

Antony, S. (2006) "Globalization in higher education: ensuring quality across borders," *UNESCO Bangkok Newsletter*, Issue no. 4, August 2005.

Clark, B. (1998) *Creating Entrepreneurial Universities: Organizational Pathways of Transformation*. Oxford: Pergamon.

Neave, G. (1994) "The politics of quality: developments in higher education in Western Europe 1992-1994," *European Journal of Higher Education* 29, 2, pp. 115-133.

Ewell, P. (2010), "The 'quality game': external review and institutional reaction over three decades in the United States," chapter in D. Westerheijden, B. Stensaker, and M.J. Rosa, *Quality Assurance in Higher Education*, The Netherlands: Springer Press.

Glenny, Lymen. 1958. The Autonomy of Public Colleges: The Challenge of Coordination. New York: McGraw Hill.

Trow, M. (1996). "Trust, markets, and accountability in higher education: a comparative perspective," Higher Education Policy Vol. 9, No. 4, pp. 309-24.

The UCLA Call (2007). Academic Personnel Office, UCLA. Los Angeles CA.

UCLA Academic Personnel Manual (2009). Academic Personnel Office, UCLA. Los Angeles CA.

UCLA's Institutional Proposal (2008). Academic Senate, UCLA. Los Angeles: CA.

Westerheijden, D.F., B. Stensaker, and M. J. Rosa (2010). *Quality Assurance in Higher Education.* The Netherlands: Springer Press.

Understanding Quality in Higher Education in the Andean Sub-region

Mario F. **Letelier**
Rosario **Carrasco**
Claudia A. **Oliva**

Center for Research in Creativity and Higher Education - CICES
University of Santiago of Chile

Introduction

The main purpose of this paper is to highlight relevant factors or variables that may shape a transversal concept of higher education quality across economies, mainly in the Andean sub-region. This is understood as a contribution to a broader context of analysis, i.e. the APEC region.

The senior author, and to some extent the co-authors, have been involved for 20 years in the establishment, operation and evaluation of HE quality assurance systems both in Chile and in the other economies of the region. This experience has evolved and is closely aligned to political developments. One of those was the North America Free Trade Agreement-NAFTA initiative, which joined the US, Canada and Mexico. Chile was invited to participate as an observer, and prospective candidate for NAFTA, in ongoing conversations about program accreditation. This international agreement included temporary professional licensing across the NAFTA economies conditioned to national programs' accreditation. Another regional treaty that involves program accreditation requirements is MERCOSUR, which includes Chile. Since its initiation, the Center for Research in Creativity and Higher Education (CICES) has participated in different roles in these activities (CNAP, 2007; CINDA, 2007-2005; CNA, 2010).

Drawing on the aforementioned experience, on published document results, and on national and international conferences, the main achievements so far of the quality assurance endeavors are discussed, together with some weaknesses that are still prevalent. This is followed by a proposal aimed at pointing out some gross or macro indicators that, in these authors' opinion, may be used to analyze, monitor and compare quality across the sub-region at the HE level.

Common elements in quality assurance in the Andean sub-region

Quality assurance-QA of higher education-HE has been identified as one principal concern in the Andean sub-region. However, it is possible to emphasize that in the region's economies external quality assurance is relatively recent.

Quality is a multidimensional concept that specific higher education institutions- HEI, in the absence of some national regulations, can understand and apply in ways apt to fit their particular goals. It must be noted however that in the Andean region teaching universities prevail over research universities, thus the term of high quality university almost always refers to a teaching model of university. In spite of the teaching emphasis, it seems appropriate to consider the national systems of QA-NSQA as objective expressions of the economies' commitment to QA. They can be assessed and compared, and their accreditation outputs used as a measure of a economy's relative internal education quality. This means that local accreditation is useful for getting a map of the relative quality of programs and institutions at a national level, but the same comparative assessment of the NSQAs is necessary in order to have a transnational picture of quality levels.

All sub-regional accreditation systems here considered are, to different extents, based upon the US model of QA. Therefore, many commonalities are accordingly present.

In order to guide the ensuing analysis, a typical compressed "quality cycle" is depicted in figure 1. This cycle is an adaptation of the quality cycle declared by the Chilean National Commission of Accreditation-CNA (CNA, 2010).

Figure 1. Quality cycle in accreditation of HE institutions and programs.

The cycle in figure 1 is a simplified one that is intended to reflect the QA philosophy. In practice it is rendered instrumental through a set of accreditation criteria that look for consistency among the cycle components, in a perspective of institutional effectiveness.

Relevant common elements in the accreditation agencies and their practices possible to mention are (Stella, 2006):

1. *Evaluation based on predetermined and transparent criteria*

The accreditation agencies establish a set of norms and criteria that must be covered by institutions to account for quality, and these are applied in all the study programs of higher education institutions, offered in each economy. Generally, the agencies lead national consultations and involve the participation of stakeholders in the development of standards and criteria. There can be changes between agencies, since some agencies apply the criteria to all institutions and programs in a strict manner, while others take into account the objectives and goals of each institution. However, before implementing accreditation procedures, the stakeholders are informed about the role of an institution's purposes and the norms applied by the agency.

2. *Process based on self-assessment and peer-review*

Generally, the self-assessment methodology used in these economies establishes that an institution and/or program must perform a self-assessment process and a report of the fulfillment of the standards or criteria established by the corresponding agency. The level of analysis of the report varies in depth and methodological approach. In the Chilean case of institutional accreditation, an academic audit prevails, in which the assessment focuses on the institutional capacity of self-regulation, understood as a set of policies, mechanisms, procedures and actions to determine if the institution is progressing towards the achievement of their purposes (CINDA, 2007, p.304; Maraví, 2005).

In general, the institutional preparation emphasizes a participative approach, to assure the involvement of the university community in the preparation of the report. The agencies select a team of external peers that analyzes the self-assessment institutional report and verify its content through a site visit to the institution. But, even when there continues to be debate about the objectivity of the peer reviewers, no accreditation agency has offered a better alternative. The support in preparing the peers appropriately throughout the evaluation framework and in guiding them collectively as a team is an important task, and many accreditation agencies have developed training programs for these purposes. The analysis of the self-assessment report and the validation after the site visit to the institution are the main sources of information used for elaborating their recommendations to the accreditation agency.

3. *Final decision*

Depending on the institutional and/or programs' accreditation process, and the peers' recommendations, the agency assumes all responsibility in the final decision, which takes into account these previous stages. In case there are disagreements with the conclusions, the institutions are entitled to appeal according to the procedures and mechanisms available in each economy.

4. *Publication of results*

All quality assurance systems involve some type of publication of results. These may vary according to each economy, and can go from the publication of the final result expressed in years of accreditation to the publication of the complete assessment report.

Inside the same economy, it is also possible to identify different publication formats. In Colombia, for example, the results of the Exam ECAES, which is one of the instruments of the QA system is intended to be reported in the form of rankings, in a de-contextualized form (CINDA, 2007, p. 326). In the case of Costa Rica, SINAES reports the accreditation situation according to knowledge area and university (http://www.sinaes.ac.cr/carreras_acreditadas/), and is expected to publish a bulletin of programs accredited during the previous year and the current accreditation situation of plans and programs (http://www.sinaes.ac.cr/ley_sinaes/ley_8256.pdf). In the Chilean case, the accreditation agreements for institutional, undergraduate and graduate programs, as well as a summary of accredited areas and period of accreditation are publicly available (http://www.cnachile.cl/oirs/resultados-de-acreditacion/).

5. *Validity of result during a particular period of years*

The validity of the results varies between five and ten years, although a five-year period of accreditation predominates in these economies.

6. *Uses given to accreditation processes*

In the Peruvian case, given the recent creation of this economy's law, until 2007 there were no accredited universities or institutions. There would have only been results for the case of medical programs, which would have eased the control and improvement of infrastructure, equipment, academic staff, and agreements (CINDA, 2007, p.313).

In the Mexican case, an explicit relation between individual or institutional assessment or accreditation processes with additional funds coming from programs such as the Comprehensive Institutional Strengthening Program (PIFI), or other incomes different from the wage has been noted (CINDA, 2007), which would confirm that these accreditation processes are a requisite for requiring and assigning institutional and individual resources. A limitation of this association between accreditation and resource allocation has to do with the transformation of accreditation processes in a superficial and formal process used for demonstrating the measurement of formal and de-contextualized indicators, in which the adaptability criteria would be the main priority, given the need for attracting more resources, instead of the intention for improving the quality of higher education (CINDA, 2007).

In the Chilean case, the mandatory character of accreditation applies to the cases of Medicine and Pedagogy. It has also been introduced as a requirement for allocating resources, both for applying for competitive state funds, such as the case of MECESUP[1], and for allocating scholarships for national graduate programs and for undergraduate pedagogy programs (this last type of scholarship requires that the program to which the student is applying must have a current status of "accredited", given by CNA or any of the national agencies).

[1] Program for improving quality and equity in higher education.

This scenario shows that a common concept of quality, in formal terms, operates in the sub-region. In order to proceed to a second stage of analysis, it is necessary to look for differentiating factors that are described in the following section.

Main achievements and challenges in quality assurance

Achievements
The current quality assurance systems have - without doubts - been useful for installing assessment capacities inside higher education institutions. Among the main achievements are:

1. The strictness of quality assurance criteria has progressively increased, strengthening its standards, and at the same time, leading to greater competitiveness among higher education institutions which has obliged them to innovate in some specific program aspects, such as learning outcomes explicitness, faculty qualification enhancement, and teaching methods innovation, among others.

2. Quality assurance systems have gradually contributed to a greater analytical capacity of these institutions. The participation of academic peers in self-assessment and accreditation has reinforced a sense of responsible management throughout authorities and the academic community, which means a positive contribution to the university system. According to this it would be possible to assume that accreditation processes lead to the improvement of higher education and to the adoption of a more appropriate response in relation to government and institutional management processes. On the other hand, the creation of systematic self-assessment mechanisms has provided better conditions for transparency in a highly competitive educational market.

3. The creation, standardization and improvement of information sources would be another result coming from quality assurance systems. Since the self-assessment process should be based on valid and reliable information, the institutional information systems have become essential in providing timely information for study programs and institutional accreditation processes. The organization and expansion of academic information systems, together with technical support for follow-up processes of students and alumni have started to gain importance. The maintenance of updated databases with alumni information has become essential, as well as the register of indicators, and any other information that facilitates the correct definition and measurement of indicators.
A mid-term result should be the capacity to identify all necessary information and the introduction of institutional mechanisms for recollecting, processing and analyzing data.

4. On the other hand, quality assurance systems have strengthened institutional leadership. Self-assessment requires favorable conditions for its implementation, and the existence of highly committed coordination units that provide assistance is

crucial. These units should focus on facilitating and promoting an active participation of other related departments in order to achieve the expected results.

5. In addition to the political will, a multiplicity of other resources, such as human, material, and economic resources, infrastructure, among others, are also fundamental to these processes.

6. A fundamental aspect in the implementation of self-assessment processes is the learning gained and positive externalities in higher education institutions, since they create greater awareness among authorities and the institution's community about assessment experiences that should tend towards quality outcomes and continuous improvement. These processes contribute to the development of different competencies and capacities in the institution's human resources, both in assessment issues as well as strategic planning, such as methodological and planning aspects, through which the institutions introduce an assessment culture within its processes.

Challenges

QA procedures as they are understood today assume some institutional capacities that merit close scrutiny. In order to characterize them, a modified version of figure 1 is presented in figure 2.

According to the authors' vision, NSQA in the sub-region, and possibly in many other economies, reveals an acceptable handling of two of the cycle's components: *Resources, organization and activities,* and *results and impacts.* This means that HEIs do what they are traditionally supposed to do, i.e., graduate people, investigate, and outreach, in a broad sense.

However all of the other quality cycle's components would account for a weaker performance. There is no rooted evaluation tradition, nor continuing improvement culture. They do not usually state clear and pertinent purposes beyond their routine activities. These aspects seem imposed by accreditation. Evaluation of results and social impacts against publicly declared purposes in HE seems to be a stressful process that tends to be avoided unless strong external political forces are applied. Processes externally imposed, that go against the local culture, may be prone in autonomous institutions to become formal activities that in essence do not meet official expectations. Again, implementing non-trivial improvements demands an institutional capacity for aligning knowledge and resources through leadership able to move purposely with academic and administrative units that usually tend to work separately. This is another "higher order" challenge for most HEI, especially for the bigger and more traditional ones.

Supplementary challenges come from political quarters where (as is pointed out in the précis to this conference) quality concerns, in practice, need to consider parallel policies about equity and inclusion. In the Andean sub-region, as in other parts of the world, the tertiary education population is increasing at a fast rate due to per capita increases and social awareness of higher education relevance (SIES, 2010; Espinoza, 2010). In Chile the tertiary education population has climbed from 435.884 in 2000 to 835.247 in 2009, while the economy's total population has stayed essentially static. The new cohorts come mainly from low income segments of the population, which enter higher education having experienced a distinct disadvantage in academic resources. Governments assign substantial financial resources in order to ensure access of these groups, but do not necessarily provide the funds that may be required for effectively leveling academic deficits. Limited resources determine tensions between quality, on one side, and equity and inclusion on the other (Letelier & Carrasco, 2011). The apparent lack of synchronism among these policies translates into the accreditation agencies' procedures. These entities thus face the problem of evaluating and certifying quality in contexts where many HEIs, lacking official guidance, look for a balance between quality and inclusion, highly influenced by their financial sources.

In this sub-region private HEIs and, in cases like Chile, public ones as well, obtain their total or partial external resources from student fees, which lead to a progressive admission increase, in tune with inclusion policies, but not necessarily with quality criteria. These imply more a concentration of resources per student than the opposite. Thus quality and inclusion policies lead to financial tensions unless their handling is guided by systemic policies that, in this matter, seem to be lacking.

All this considered, NSQA seem to be only relatively effective in practice. It seems convenient to consider some criteria that may help to analyze and assess NSQA effectiveness under the assumption that real quality of HE in a given economy can be identified and characterized better if related to the maturity of the local system of QA for HE.

Proposed criteria for analyzing and assessing quality in HE in the Andean sub-region

The main focus of analysis in this section is quality in HE at the economy level. Quality at the institutional level can also be considered by extending some of the proposed criteria to that level.

The effectiveness of QA efforts in a given economy, in this perspective, depends necessarily, albeit not sufficiently, on the following macro-requisites:

- Existence and enforcement of QA policies through official instances that work with established regulations, organization and resources, i.e., NSQA.
- Explicit policies for integrating quality, equity and inclusion in a systemic way.
- National laws about sources of HEI funding operating.
- National laws that regulate the structure of Higher Education as to kind of institutions, programs and other operating factors.
- Economic, social, and industrial information about a economy's state of development.

These macro-requisites are in part met by the sub-region. They need to be complemented with criteria that help to assess to what extent the weaknesses already mentioned are present and hinder QA. These criteria will here be called "effectiveness criteria".

The following criteria should be understood as means for assessing quality at a national level. They are complemented with some indicators.

The criteria are closely related both to the contextual macro-requisites previously stated and to the institutional weaknesses shown in figure 2. They refer to the NSQA. The proposed effectiveness criteria are:

1. *Effective capacity for obtaining and using actual information of current activities and resources*
   Evaluation of processes, results and impacts is usually compounded by lack of pertinent, timely and updated information of institutional operations.

   Indicators:
   - Reliable institutional data bases required
   - Procedures for information capturing installed

2. *Effective evaluation capacity*
   Evaluation implies referents, standards and procedures that many times have not been developed. This is especially evident regarding alumni performance in the professional field.

   Indicators:

- Institutional quality assurance models required and installed
- Evaluation indicators required and operative
- Periodic evaluation reports about student progression and alumni job pertinence available

3. *Effective capacity for academic innovation*
   Innovation management is a concept better known and applied in companies. HEIs in this, as in many other comparable aspects, lag behind and normally are not organized for continuous improvement, which does not seem to fit traditional HE organization.

   Indicators:
   - Evidences of major systemic innovations realized
   - HEI systemic organization for innovation management required and operative

4. *Access to sources of quality trends and best practices*
   Quality improvement depends crucially on knowledge and expertise about learning processes, resources management, research management and related matters. Without these referents, induced change may not be equivalent to improvement.

   Indicators:
   - Benchmarking networks operating
   - Inter-institutional links established
   - Expertise available through specialized units

5. *Criteria about HEI financial sustainability*
   HEI funding is determinant as to the real weight of quality policies.

   Indicators:
   - Institutional budget structure required and accessible
   - Pertinent budget indicators required and accessible

6. *Explicit criteria about integrating into accreditation procedures national policies about quality, equity and inclusion*
   This aspect being a very critical one for QA, it should be expected that NSQA provide guidelines about its management.

   Indicators:
   - Concepts of equity and inclusion explicitly incorporated in accreditation criteria
   - Retention rates
   - Employability indicators such as time for getting first job, salary, and pertinence of jobs to corresponding study programs

- Public information available about some indicators that characterize and reveal performance of HEI, considering relative weight of teaching, research and graduate programs, at least
- Investment and spending per student

7. *Explicit criteria about program`s social pertinence*
   Quality should be not an abstract, socially dissociated concept, but closely connected to the needs of social sectors (productive, government, services, etc.)

   Indicators:
   - Graduate evaluation by employers required
   - Actual information about graduate initial professional careers required

The above criteria and indicators are a first approximation aimed at highlighting macro and more specific factors that determine, condition, and characterize quality in HE in the Andean sub-region according to the authors.

The concept behind this proposal is that contextual macro-requisites, effectiveness criteria and related indicators may help to analyze, understand and compare how different economies and sub-regions manage quality assurance in higher education.

These antecedents may aid in a transit from a NSQA to a specific institution or program, in the perspective of understanding the official or institutional statements about quality levels or achievements.

A starting stage in this paper was to emphasize common aspects of NSQA that do not differentiate national scenarios and that, at the same time, hide weaknesses behind the formal aspects of the NSQA.

According to the criteria, and using only extreme instances by way of illustration, high quality in HE could be expected to exist when:

- All macro-requisites are met.
  Concerning the last one, it is expected that the level of economy development implies strong pressure over the HE national system for graduating competent professionals.
- All effectiveness criteria and indicators are met up to reasonable standards. Specific indicators related to results and external impacts are met.

Relatively lower quality should be expected when many of the indicators are not met.

This line of analysis can be pursued, if considered convenient, by a proposed stratification of NSQA or institutions within a NSQA, according to the degree of accomplishments related to the indicators. It is acknowledged that this step may need an appropriate political atmosphere.

Concluding remarks

In this paper the authors have attempted to crystallize their vision about the sub-regional Andean scenario concerning quality assurance in higher education, through some instrumental criteria.

One main assumption behind this proposal is that solid, reliable knowledge about actual quality achievements or standings in a economy or region is difficult since usually reality is clouded by formalities, unreliable data and opposing interests. Therefore, one important guiding leitmotif has been to point out factors that have to be addressed before assessing quality as such. Some criteria and indicators related to self-knowledge and institutional capacities fall into this category.

Many instances of international exchange and reliable publications available make these authors believe that the analytical approach herein presented may be also applicable in other regions.

Acknowledgments

The authors express their gratitude for the opportunity given to participate in this APEC instance of analysis.

References

CINDA, 2007. Higher Education in Latin America. Report 2007. Santiago. Chile.

CINDA, 2007. Accreditation and Strategic Management for Quality in Universities. Santiago. Chile.

CINDA, 2005. The accreditation process in the development of universities. Santiago. Chile.

Espinoza, O. (2010). The Quality Assurance Systems in Higher Education in Latin America. Revista Digital Akadèmeia. Volumen 1, Nº1. UCINF. Santiago, Chile.

Letelier, M. & Carrasco, R. (2011). Higher education, public policies and pertinent assessment. Paper presented at the Chilean Congress of Sociology PRE-Alas, Valparaíso, April 2011.

Maraví, D. (2005). Quality, Self-Assessment and University Accreditation. Revista del Instituto de Investigaciones Educativas Año 9 Nº 15. Available at: http://sisbib.unmsm.edu.pe/bibvirtualdata/publicaciones/inv_educativa/2005_n15/a08.pdf

National Commission of Accreditation-CNA (2010). Chile. www.cnachile.cl

National Commission of Accreditation-CNA . Retrieved May 30th, 2011: http://www.cnachile.cl/oirs/resultados-de-acreditacion/

National Commission of Accreditation-CNA (2010). Quality assurance in higher education: four years of CNA – Chile. Institutional Report 2007-2010. National Commission of Accreditation. Santiago, Chile.

National Commission of Accreditation-CNA (2007). The Chilean model of higher education accreditation. Ministry of Education. Santiago, Chile.

National System of Higher Education Accreditation – SINAES. Costa Rica Retrieved May 30th:
http://www.sinaes.ac.cr/carreras_acreditadas/
http://www.sinaes.ac.cr/ley_sinaes/ley_8256.pdf

National System of Higher Education Information - SIES (2010). Evolution of the national enrollment in Chilean higher education. Period 1990 – 2009. Divison of Higher Education. MINEDUC. Chile.

Stella, A. (2006). The higher education in the world 2007. Eds.: Mundi Prensa Libros S.A. España.

The Canadian Way of Quality Assurance

Alex **Usher**

President, Higher Education Strategy Association
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Introduction

The international literature on Canadian Higher Education is often very thin, and the literature on Quality Assurance (QA) is no different. Thanks to our highly decentralized federal system, Canada's education system does not make an easy one to understand and the economy's policy analysts and policy makers make little effort to explain our systems in ways that outsiders can understand it. Often, this is no great loss from the perspective of policy learning because Canada is sufficiently unique and idiosyncratic that the way it arranges its affairs holds no possible lessons for anyone else. But occasionally – and quality assurance is one such case – Canada's status as an outlier nation is a useful one. Almost no one today would choose to build a quality assurance system along Canadian lines, but a study of the Canadian QA system is nevertheless an interesting exercise because of the way it throws QA processes elsewhere into sharp relief.

My object in this paper is to describe the Canadian system of QA in higher education. To do so, however, requires a fair bit of background information about the Canadian system as a whole. Part I of this paper will therefore describe the Canadian system of higher education as it existed until about 15 years ago and why it was resistant to QA processes as they exist in much of the rest of the world. In Part II, the conditions under which new QA systems spread across the economy will be described. Part III provides a brief overview of the different styles, scopes and agents involved in Canadian quality assurance in Canada, while Part IV contains some concluding thoughts and remarks.

Understanding Canada

Before getting to details about QA in Canada, it is very important to understand four key attributes of the economy's higher education policy environment.

The first and by far the most important is that Canada is a federal country, with control of education kept very firmly in the hands of provincial authorities. Moreover, the essential reason that Canada is a federal country is education; the fundamental bargain that was struck between Upper (English, Protestant) Canada and Lower (French, Catholic) Canada in 1864 was that a national government in which Protestants would dominate was acceptable to Catholics only if their interests in the province of Quebec were safeguarded by keeping education in the hands of provincial governments. Since then, language has replaced religion as the focus of concern, but the fundamental dynamic between provinces and Ottawa has not.

The practical upshot of this is that Canada has not one higher education system but ten, and the role of national (or pan-Canadian, as we sometimes call it) initiatives in the sector are essentially restricted to research grant funding and, to a more limited extent, student assistance. Despite the decentralization, Canadian universities look pretty similar to one another across the economy and there is near-universal acceptance of credentials between provinces (acceptance of credits for transfer is less accepted, but this is less due to frictions between provinces than it is friction between institutions. Where substantial inter-provincial differences do exist is in the way that the college sectors operate. Some college systems were set up like American community colleges – to play a role in spreading higher education to the regions, and allowing students to transfer to a university after a couple of years; others were designed for a strictly vocational role, and some were designed as a compromise between the two.

The implication that is key for our purposes here is that regulation of issues like quality assurance must happen at the provincial level rather than the national one. A national institutional accreditation which involved the Government of Canada would be vigorously resisted not just by Quebec, but by a number of other provinces as well. That said, where accreditation at the program is required by a *professional* body (e.g. Engineering, Social Work, Medicine), Canadian institutions have been happy to accept the authority of North American or pan-Canadian accreditors.

The second key attribute to note is that even though Canada has ten different systems of higher education, there is very little variation in terms of the balance between public and private education. Regardless of province, Canada's public sector-universities (including both genuinely public institutions set up by provincial legislation as well as private institutions which have chosen to accept public funding and hence public regulation, such as McGill University) are extremely well-funded. Not only does Canada have a relatively generous system of government support for public higher education (roughly 33% above the OECD average), but public universities also benefit from a very substantial amount of private support through tuition fees which average about $6000 per student per year. These levels of funding apply not only to universities; Canadian provinces also collectively fund one of the largest and best-funded systems of applied or professionally-focused vocational education (what the wonks at UNESCO and OECD call level "5B") in the world.

The consequence of all this is that there has simply never been much of a need or a niche for private higher education. In fact, the reverse is the case – over the course of the twentieth century, many private universities such as McGill, Queen's and Laval began accepting public funding and became indistinguishable from public universities themselves. Private higher education elsewhere succeeds because it can offer things at a reasonable price that the public sector – usually because of insufficient funding – cannot. In Canada, there is very little that the public sector cannot do – hence the economy has traditionally had a system that leaves very little space in which private institutions can operate.

This is not to say that there are *no* private institutions. For instance, there is a fairly large industry in private training – one- and occasionally two-year programs that exist alongside the public system with very little legislation governing them – but it is very

firmly kept at the sub-baccalaureate level. There are also a number of religious institutions, which are permitted to offer theology degrees more or less without regulation (though as often as not these institutions have traded some of their independence by entering partnership arrangements with established public universities in order to obtain subsidy), and some which over time have won the right to offer degrees in Arts and Sciences as well, even though this often still requires provincial legislation. But these are relatively small islands of private education in a very large sea of public education.

The third key Canadian attribute is that even though it has a very strong “public sector” in higher education, Canadian governments do not play a particularly activist role vis a vis their institutions. Universities accept certain fairly limited rules and conditions in return for their public funding and then are more or less left alone. In terms of institutional accountability, they are in nearly all respects more autonomous than American public universities. And to be clear, this is not “autonomy” in the Mexican sense, where the word primarily implies the autonomy of faculty members from their own deans – universities in Canada are autonomous public corporations and are run accordingly.

A fourth and final attribute of the Canadian higher education system is that long before any system of external quality assurance was even dreamed of, most Canadian universities had their own systems of *internal* quality assurance that were fairly robust. Starting in about the 1970s, universities in Canada began implementing their own form of quality assessment, which took the form of individual unit (i.e. department) reviews. The adoption of this system of reviews was not centrally coordinated; nor does it seem to have come about in response to any outside pressure from governments or other external stakeholders. It was simply a matter of good practice, widely adopted.

These reviews went under different names at different universities, as did the periodicity of the unit reviews (though all were somewhere between five and ten years), but they used a remarkably common set of processes. In essence, they were a very intensive form of the self-study phase that is common to quality assurance processes everywhere, but with one important difference. In most of the world, participation in the self-study phase is limited to members of the unit in question –external participation and oversight comes in a second, separate phase. In Canada, however, unit self-assessments invite outside peer assessors, both in the sense of external to the unit and external to the institution, to join as well. Thus, a unit review in the department of history at McGill University might include the participation of external reviewers of historians from Queen’s University and the University of Alberta, as well as McGill faculty from Sociology and Chemistry. In this manner, the Canadian system of internal quality assurance has included from the start a strong element of review by peers.

The success of this home-grown system of quality assurance was certainly a factor which retarded the development of quality assurance schemes as they exist elsewhere in the world. Canadian universities – already benefitting from significant amounts of public trust – had a system of formative evaluations that were working reasonably well and which did not involve outside (read: government) intrusion. There was not, of course, a *complete* absence of external quality control; provincial governments did

some form of due diligence each time a university asked for public funding for a new program. But it did not take the form of actual independent QA agencies until the latter half of the 1990s or even later.

To recap, then: the Canadian system – until the 1990s at least - could be characterized as one which was extremely well-funded, consisting of long-established 4-year universities and 2-year colleges which covered most fields of study very well. In consequence, there was little demand for private education. The Canadian landscape was dotted with big, solid institutions with prodigious amounts of funding and a solid internal quality control system – it a never had a lot of institutions which could be called marginal or "fly-by-night". In this environment – which is radically different than the situation anywhere in Asia or Latin America - it never really occurred to anyone that external quality assessment was even necessary. QA systems, after all, are about trust – they provide external seals of approval that tell the public that they can trust a particular program or institution. In Canada, there simply was not any demand for this kind of external seal of approval because the conditions that cause *distrust* elsewhere did not exist.

The Introduction of Quality Assurance Agencies

Until the mid-1990s, the pace of policy change in Canadian higher education was glacial. For instance, no new universities were created anywhere between 1975 and 1990, and all growth during this period occurred within existing institutions. Even at the start of the 1990s, policy change remained slow. The new University of Northern British Columbia was created, Ryerson Polytechnic was transformed into a university and the Nippissing campus of the Laurentian University received its own charter. A few college-level institutions in British Columbia began being allowed to offer degree courses in partnership with more established universities. In other words, even where new university or tertiary programs were being created, it was within the framework of very well-established – and, therefore trusted - institutions.

Why then, given the absence of any significant dissatisfaction with the existing system of quality controls, did a shift towards an expanded system of external quality assurance occur? The answer differed slightly from province to province but basically, there were two catalyst issues. The first – and generally the most important - was the diversification of institutions offering undergraduate credentials. In the 1990s, both Alberta and British Columbia began experimenting in various ways with allowing community colleges to deliver degree-level programming (either on their own or in association with an existing university) and to grant degrees; since then they have been joined in this policy by Ontario and Manitoba. The second is the increasing activity of private institutions (both of the for-profit and non-profit religious varieties), and their desire to be recognized as providing education of degree-level quality. Apart from any pedagogical or equity or access considerations in allowing community colleges or private institutions to provide degrees, cash-strapped governments also had good pecuniary arguments for permitting the expansion of degree-granting, since degrees offered in these new settings promised significantly cheaper per-student costs.

This is where the trust issue came into play. Canadian public universities, which until that point held a monopoly over the granting of degrees, had an extremely good name both domestically and internationally, even in the absence of any serious external QA. But the desire to see degrees offered in new, untried, and untrusted settings threatened to damage this reputation. And so, some new means had to be created to ensure that people believed that these new degrees were "equal" to degrees offered in existing universities. Hence the need to set up independent QA systems, which have as a result spread from province-to-province over the past fifteen years or so.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to provide a blow-by-blow description of how quality assurance systems were set up in each province. Suffice to say that at the time of writing, seven provinces have some form of external quality assurance in place while an eighth (Saskatchewan) is currently undergoing a review which may result in the creation of something similar. Only Manitoba and Newfoundland have no external QA systems.

Styles, Scopes and Agents in Canadian QA : An Overview

Unsurprisingly, Canada's highly decentralized federation has given rise to a number of fairly different types of QA systems; nevertheless, some broad commonalities exist across these systems. Since considerations of time and space prevent a detailed consideration of each, this section will provide an overview of all Canadian systems simultaneously – their styles, their scopes and the agents that perform different tasks.

Styles

Broadly speaking, there are three styles of QA in use around the world: **quality assessment** (in which an external agency makes a direct assessment of quality), **quality audit** (in which an external agency assesses the internal procedures an institution uses to monitor its own quality), and **accreditation**. Canada's mixed bag of quality assurance processes contains examples of each, but with the emphasis primarily on quality assessment.

Quality assessment is by far the most common method of QA in Canada. All seven provinces with external QA systems use the quality assessment method with respect to individual programs. Quality audits are a newer phenomenon. Quebec uses such a method, the MPHEC uses it in the Maritimes, and British Columbia uses it as a way of exempting more established institutions from the program-by-program approval process. In Ontario, such a system is currently being set up to monitor general quality processes at the undergraduate level (the first audits are being done in the coming academic year and it will take eight years to complete audits of all institutions).

Though provinces in effect act as accreditation agents through their tight legislative control over the use of the term "university", accreditation at the institutional level in the American sense does not exist in Canada, at least as far as public universities are concerned (a few religious institutions receive institutional accreditation from one of two North American religious accreditation agencies). Accreditation does, however, exist for programs in a number of professional fields of study: Law, Medicine, Dentistry,

Architecture, Engineering, Nursing, Social Work, etc. The accreditation bodies are usually national in scope but occasionally are continental (i.e. mainly American).

That said, Canada does have one process at the national level which many people *believe* is an accreditation process and in many ways acts as one even though its authors and managers strenuously object to it being referred to as such; namely, the process of applying for membership in the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (which, roughly, is Canada's equivalent of the American Council on Education, or ACE). To achieve membership in AUCC, an institution must demonstrate that it:

a) has been granted a university title by the relevant crown authority,

b) has governance structures appropriate to a university, including authority for academic matters being vested in academic staff and an independent board of governors,

c) is committed to both research and teaching,

d) has as its core mission the teaching of university-level programs (this keeps out all those colleges now offering degree-level programs),

e) has sufficient physical and human resources to support undergraduate-level education,

f) is not-for-profit and

g) satisfies a Visitation Committee that it is providing education of a university standard.

AUCC membership carries with it no implications with respect to operating or capital funding. There are no provinces that require institutions to be members of AUCC, and the AUCC membership process does not play a role in any provincial decision to grant or maintain institutional status as a university. But AUCC membership does carry privileges: at many institutions, student applications for transfer credit won't be granted if the student's previous institution was not a member of AUCC, and federal research granting councils do exclude universities who are not members of AUCC from consideration. Indeed, among newer universities, receiving membership is sometimes referred to as "receiving accreditation" and AUCC is referred to as an "accrediting board". So, the source of confusion about AUCC's role is fairly simple – it looks and feels like an accrediting agent even if it swears it isn't.

Scopes

Essentially, the scope of the various QA systems line up with the styles. Where Canada has accreditation, it is done at the program level (AUCC notwithstanding). Where Canada has quality audits they are done on an institutional basis. And where it has quality assessment, only programs are assessed, though since it is impossible to assess programs in isolation of the institution in which they are delivered, some aspect of institutional review usually occurs here as well.

There is an important caveat here, though. Quality audits, naturally, cover entire institutions. Accreditation, conducted as it is by professional association, cover all programs which come under their purview. But quality assessment is for the most part restricted only to *new* programs; in all seven provinces which use this mechanism, existing programs were essentially grandfathered when new quality assurance arrangements came into place. Thus, even in the seven provinces where QA exists, the vast majority of programs have never undergone any kind of external QA (though in Quebec and the Maritimes, they will indirectly have been covered via an institutional quality audit).

To international observers, this may seem more than passing strange: what, they might well ask, is the point of a higher education quality assurance system that excludes most higher education programs? The answer comes back to a point made earlier about trust. Quality assurance measures were for the most part introduced either simultaneously with or in anticipation of the widening of degree-granting powers to non-universities or to private providers. In a sense, quality assurance was primarily meant for them, not for existing universities, who (arguably) were only included in the new QA regime for reasons of "fairness" and "level playing fields". In Ontario, not even this was true – public universities were exempted completely from scrutiny when the Post-Secondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) and allowed to set up[1] their own system. In any case, there was no substantial degree of distrust of public universities' decisions with respect to program establishment, and so there seemed little point in expending the money and effort required to do full reviews of hundreds of programs that had been running successfully for years.

Agents

In British Columbia, Alberta, and the three Maritime provinces, the quality assessment/audit agency (MPHEC plays both roles) is a body created by and accountable to provincial governments. They consist of a lay board, with a chairman, all appointed by government and a permanent secretariat headed by an Executive Director. In Quebec, program quality assurance and quality audits are handled by the Conférence des Recteurs et Principaux des Universités du Québec (i.e. the provincial Rectors' Conference). In Ontario, as noted above, there are two quality assurance agencies – one for universities which is run by the Council of Ontario Universities (like CREPUQ, essentially a rectors' conference though with a greater role for faculty) and one for everyone else. The fact that in Canada's two largest provinces, universities are essentially collectively self-regulating again speaks to the very high degree of trust that Canadians have in their universities.

Conclusions

The Canadian experience is obviously not one that makes a great deal of sense for anyone to emulate – it comes from a particular set of historical and constitutional

[1] Technically, Ontario universities already had a collective, self-regulated system for quality control, but only for graduate studies. Only subsequently did the Council of Ontario Universities then introduced a similar system for undergraduate studies.

circumstances which are not present almost anywhere else in the world. But there are nevertheless three important points that can be drawn from it.

The first is that quality in higher education is not dependent on QA; rather, quality flows from a set of habits that QA can encourage, but can also exist independently of QA. If Canada was late to the external QA party in the 1990s, that was in part because its universities were – without external compulsion - early to the internal QA party in the 1970s.

The second is that quality assurance can be very helpful in transitioning from a simple, binary system of higher education to one which is more complex and differentiated. The shift to allow public colleges or private to provide degrees, beginning in the late nineties and carrying over into the following decade, was a response to the pressure of significant new demand for higher education coupled with a general crisis in public finances. To the extent that QA – and particularly quality assessment – has been helpful in providing a “good house-keeping” seal of approval to new degree providers in this transition, it has helped to provide the public assurances that standards are being maintained even as delivery methods are changing.

The third and final point is that trust matters. The introduction of QA in Canada was enormously simplified by the decision to exempt already-in-place programs and – in Ontario and Quebec at least - to allow the universities to come up with acceptable forms of self-regulation. There are drawbacks to this decision; technically, the vast majority of Canadian programs are not quality assured in the way they are in most other economies, and this may yet come to be seen as a drawback in our attempts to recruit foreign students. But the benefits in the short-term at least were considerable in that it made the introduction of some kind of QA process – which was needed for system diversification purposes as much as anything else – much easier.

Quality Assurance and Transformation of Higher Education: The Mexico Experience

Javier de la Garza **Aguilar**

Inter Institutional Committees for the Evaluation of Higher Education
(CIEES)
Mexico

Summary

The diagnostic evaluation to encourage the quality of higher education in Mexico has been performed for nearly two decades, during which the Inter Institutional Committees for the Evaluation of Higher Education (CIEES) have evaluated and supported the quality improvement of almost three thousand undergraduate programs; therefore the CIEES have ample experience with assurance processes focused on securing the quality of higher education at national and international levels.

Higher Education Quality Assurance

Evaluation and accreditation in higher education are mechanisms for its regulation to ensure that universities fulfill a series of criteria which can be applied to the institution as a whole and/or to their academic and career programs. The results, of course, must be communicated to society.

Whenever good use comes from them, effective evaluation and accreditation processes will contribute to the improvement of higher education quality. This means that the universities must assume responsibility for adapting all their services to the new conditions, and be conscious of their social commitment. (Cruz López, Escrigas y López Segrera, 2006)

Currently, the concern for quality also acquires singular relevance based on the globalization phenomena and international competitiveness which demand professionals with the highest qualification, preparation, and training. These circumstances have caused the matter of higher education quality to occupy an important place in the international discussion of policies applicable to this educational level. Therefore, it is recognized that the present crisis in higher education is a crisis of quality and relevance; so the fundamental challenge is to substantially improve the quality and relevance of higher education. (Tünerman, 2006)

Along those same lines, it must be recognized that quality and fairness are not exclusive terms. Rather, the lack of social fairness characterizes low quality educative systems. The impetus towards educative quality must necessarily include its equitable character. Quality is the most desirable characteristic in all government programs in order to advance higher education standards, particularly when programs expand

coverage. Based on the above, it can be stated that an indispensable element of social justice, in regards to the extension of the coverage of higher education, is its required link with quality. The concept of higher education quality can be conceived as the convergence of four criteria that usually are applied as evaluation references in the development of education: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and fairness. (Latapí, 1994)

Quality is a key element in the processes of university transformation that includes accountability to society for relevance and strategic management, as well as the international dimension of university work and its function as a responsible autonomy. Quality, its evaluation, and accreditation represent the backbone and articulator axis of modern policies of higher education. (Tünerman, 2006)

Prior to the 1990's, the predominant approaches in the planning and development of higher education emphasized quantitative aspects and the link with economic and social factors, while the theme of educative services quality was put aside. The 1990s are identified as the decade of higher education quality in Latin America, as they are in Europe as well. (Fernandez Lamarra, 2006)

Quality Assurance in Mexico

In the past six decades, higher education in Mexico has experienced accelerated growth. From 29,892 students enrolled in 39 higher education institutions in 1950, the number has grown to almost 3,000,000 students enrolled in more than 2,000 public and private institutions distributed throughout the economy.

The Mexican system of higher education grew more than one hundred times, whereas the population grew four times in the same period. Taking into account this information, the impact of national and state policies of extension and diversification of the educative resource are clear, and the great efforts made by society and government have achieved access to higher education for a greater number of Mexican young people.

However, the remarkable expansion of the higher education system and the accelerated growth of its registration have not managed to extend benefits to students from a full range of social strata, since it has not been possible to assure to all Mexicans the accomplishment of their studies through quality-recognized educative programs. Educative fairness means everyone has equal access to a quality education. The evaluation and accreditation of higher education acquire a strategic importance in the achievement of this objective when detecting inequalities in educative programs while simultaneously promoting continuous improvement and quality assurance. (Rubio, 2005)

The organization of higher education's evaluation and accreditation systems in most economies is part of the agenda of governments, academic organizations, associations of institutions, professionals, and employers. Increasing numbers of people agree that evaluation and accreditation are processes that effectively help improve national

systems of higher education on a global scale so these institutions can respond to their nations' demands of social and economic development with greater opportunity. Effectual evaluation and accreditation also further quality levels in an intricate context influenced by globalization processes, the development of an information and knowledge based society, the evolution of labor markets and occupations, and the conformation of new fields of knowledge, among other factors. Additionally, the achievement of recognition for quality through evaluation and accreditation methods is identified by institutions as one of their more suitable means of obtaining social recognition and prestige.

Currently, the evaluation and accreditation of higher education in Mexico is done by an extensive group of organizations and specialized institutions. This group has built a vast system of reference frameworks, criteria, indicators, standards, measuring instruments and promotional strategies; with a main objective of contributing to continuous improvements and to assure quality in higher education institutions; and, with this, the achievement of educational fairness.

Agencies that investigate and assess the quality of **student evaluation** scopes include: [Higher Education Institutions (IES), National Center of Higher Education Evaluation (CENEVAL)]; **graduates**, (IES, CENEVAL); **academic personnel** [IES, Researchers National System (SNI)]; undergraduate **educative programs**, [IES, Inter Institutional Committees for the Evaluation of Higher Education (CIEES); authorized organizations recognized by the Council for the Accreditation of Higher Educación (COPAES)]; **postgraduate educative programs** (IES, CIEES, National Postgraduate Registration SEP-CONACYT); and **institutions** [IES, CIEES, Mexican Federation of Particular Institutions of Higher Education (FIMPES)]. These agencies provide evaluation of undergraduate educative programs offered by institutions in Mexico.

Inter Institutional Committees for the Evaluation of Higher Education (CIEES)

The first evaluations of higher education in Mexico were conducted in the 1970s as part of government programs and initiatives of the National Association of Universities and Higher Education Institutions (ANUIES).

In order to achieve this objective, in 1989 the National Coordination for the Planning of Higher Education (CONPES) established the National Commission of Evaluation of Higher Education (CONAEVA), which designed the national strategy for the integration and operation of the National System of Evaluation of Higher Education, sustained in three action lines; one of them, novel for the economy, was the inter-institutional evaluation, applied for the first time in Mexico.

To this inter-institutional evaluation, two conditions were added: it has to be external so it can be differentiated from self-assessment processes, and it has to be performed by academic peers. In 1991 the CONPES integrated the Inter Institutional Committees for the Evaluation of Higher Education (CIEES), as a non-government related organization.

Seven of the nine CIEES committees function as academic or disciplinary, charged with evaluating programs according to their corresponding area of knowledge: 1) Architecture, Design, and Urbanism; 2) Arts, Education, and Humanities; 3) Farming sciences; 4) Natural and Exact sciences; 5) Health sciences; 6) Social and Administrative sciences; and 7) Engineering and Technology. The other two committees evaluate the institutional functions of: 1) Diffusion, Entailment and Culture Extension, and 2) Administrative Institutional Management.

From 1991 through the current era, an accelerated process of evaluation has advanced by means of methodologies and frameworks, providing an ample repertoire of categories and components to which international criteria and standards have been applied. By 2000, CIEES had accumulated over ten years' experience to constitute the base on which the Council for the Accreditation of Higher Education (COPAES) was established in Mexico; hence the great methodological coherence resulting in the support of the CIEES to impel the IES accreditation processes.

The CIEES rely on their academic and logistic capacity to integrally evaluate higher education institutions (IES), and are therefore qualified to determine the individual and overall quality of postgraduate academic and degreed programs. The CIEES also evaluate the optimal performance and efficiency of administrative functions and supportive institutional management, as well as the knowledge generated by academia and its relationship with society and culture.

CIEES: Objective and Functions

The objective of the CIEES is the external inter-institutional evaluation of higher education as performed by academic peers. The main assigned functions include: the ***diagnostic evaluation*** and accreditation of academic programs, and the provision of assessment and advice to the IES in order to improve the quality of these programs. During almost 20 years of dedicated effort, the CIEES have directed their activities to diagnostic evaluation rather than program accreditation. With the creation of the COPAES, program accreditation was assigned to the suitable organizations recognized by the Council.

As promoted by the CIEES and impelled by the Ministry of Public Education (SEP), in 2002 a clear delimitation was made regarding auto-evaluation actions, and integrated diagnostic evaluation was consolidated as a specific function of the CIEES in order to support the improvement of quality and accreditation in academic programs.

The CIEES utilize both a *Framework* and a *General Methodology of Evaluation* to promote self-evaluation processes and to clearly and rigorously assess the components and requirements a program must satisfy to be recognized for its superior quality. These elements include academic personnel, curriculum, methods and instruments to evaluate student learning, institutional services for student learning, infrastructure and equipment to support program development, and research areas and activities.

Prerequisites for quality program instruction involve institutional regulation for program operation, academic/administrative cohesion, planning and evaluation processes, administrative management and financing; as well as criteria, indicators, and associated evaluation standards for each program. *The fulfillment of all the requirements established in this framework and emphasized in the Methodology of the CIEES is essential for program quality recognition and for the achievement of Level 1 classification in the register of programs evaluated by the CIEES.*

With such actions, the CIEES impel in the national scope: a) the constant improvement of higher education program quality by means of recommendations that help the IES to identify and prioritize actions to secure such quality and guarantee accreditation through organizations recognized by the COPAES; b) dual control of academic program quality through positive recognition by the CIEES and accreditation by organizations recognized by the COPAES whose coherence guarantees a solid, rigorous system of evaluation and accreditation of higher education in Mexico; c) collaboration with national education authorities with the purpose of elevating and assuring the quality of higher education; and d) to inform society regarding the indicators applied for the recognition of quality higher education programs.

CIEES Main Advances

Between 1991-2011, the CIEES evaluated more than 4,000 academic programs and generated at least 6,300 evaluation reports, issuing in excess of 121,000 recommendations to improve or to assure the quality of institutional programs and functions. These recommendations were classified by category of the methodology of CIEES. As seen in Figure 1, educational model and study programs; facilities, equipment and services; and academic personnel, are the three main opportunity areas. Institutions must make an effort in order to improve these important areas. Additional work was required to increase the logistic capacities of the CIEES without compromising its processes, so the training of almost 5,000 distinguished academic peers from higher education institutions was conducted.

As requested in 2001 by the Ministry of Public Education (SEP) the CIEES initiated the classification of ev*aluated programs in order to encourage continuous improvement and quality assurance through a set of combined policies that would support the accreditation of academic programs. In the first year to follow, the CIEES evaluated more than 1,000 degree programs and recognized 290 as high quality.* By August of 2011, the CIEES recognized 2,217 of almost 3,000 programs evaluated (Figure 2). In Mexico, we have 29,395 higher education programs (undergraduate 21,138) so, for integral analysis, it is necessary to consider the enrollment of around three million students in 2011. Student registration in higher undergraduate education programs of CIEES-recognized quality increased from 138,000 to 1,456,031 between 2001-2011 (Figure 3). The CIEES also strives to improve the strategic planning processes that have commenced the formulation, periodic update, and development of Institutional Fortification Integral Programs (PIFI) in the Public IES, as impelled by the SEP. Degree programs evaluated and recognized for their good quality are geographically distributed

in all regions of the nation.

These data are only a token of the advances obtained in the improvement of higher education in Mexico and moreover, the Mexican Government ratified these policies in the 2007-2010 Development National Plan (PND, 2007) and the Ministry of Public Education, in its 2007-2010 Education Sector Plan (PSE, 2007). Both of them establish, among others, the following action lines: a) to promote the fortification of the planning and self assessment processes by the CIEES; b) to promote diagnostic evaluation of the academic programs and the functions of management and extension by the CIEES; c) to impel the recognition of good quality of the educative programs through classification in Level 1 in the CIEES registration and/or its accreditation through organizations recognized by the COPAES; d) to assign extraordinary resources to the public institutions in order to improve the quality of their educative programs within the framework of its Institutional Fortification Integral Programs (PIFI) in order to support the quality assurance of such.

Higher Education Quality Assurance in Mexico and its International Link

The implementation of external evaluation and accreditation of higher education in Mexico has surmounted inertia, unconformities, and obstacles, improving continuously. The tensions that arose in the first years (the 1990s) during the acceptance of “evaluation culture” were overcome as regards to university autonomy and its relation with the evaluation and accreditation processes. In parallel, public policies have shown effectiveness in helping achieve fairness in higher education.

The integration of the Inter Institutional Committees for the Evaluation of Higher Education (CIEES) was the action of greatest impact within the framework of the strategies impelled by the National Commission for the Evaluation of Higher Education (CONAEVA). These committees have produced and disseminated information and support material for the auto-evaluation, evaluation and accreditation processes, and have effectively helped improve the quality and management of higher education in Mexico through the diagnostic evaluation of institutional functions and the educative programs that institutions offer. (Rubio, 2007)

The incorporation of external evaluation and accreditation processes as strategic means for the continuous development and quality assurance of higher education services exemplifies the maturity of the institutions and validates the importance granted for the search of prestige and social recognition. A remarkable consensus had been constructed that has allowed for expanding and generalizing the culture of inter-institutional external evaluation, characterized by an emphasis on institutional improvement. In this process, the contribution of the Higher Education University Association and Institutions (ANUIES) has been fundamental. The nearly two decades required to create the current evaluation and accreditation schemes are evidence of the complexity associated with their establishment and of the acceptance by the institutions and their communities, and the necessary continuity of public policy to achieve the system’s ongoing objectives.

In spite of these advances, the journey is still long in order to standardize the programs' external evaluation and accreditation to the public and private institutions that make up the higher education system in Mexico. Presently it is recognized that policies and actions must be oriented to the reevaluation of higher education institutions' mission, the affirmation of autonomy, and the diversity and promotion of democratic values: evaluation must be understood as public policy to guarantee an expansion of higher education with academic quality and social relevance. (Luce and Morosini, 2005)

As long as the results of external evaluation and accreditation are widely known by society and those with more direct influence on financing the institutions, there will be greater certainty of the deep roots of institutional management schemes for the continuous improvement and quality assurance of educative programs and, therefore, for the effective promotion of fairness.

The Mexico National Evaluation and Accreditation System has played an important role in the construction of the Higher Education Common Space within Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Unión (ALCUE). In the meeting of Ministers of Education convened in Mexico in 2005, an agreement was reached about the ALCUE 2015 Vision, which will have to be characterized in that year, among other things by: a) an important development of cooperation and interchange mechanisms and networks between academic institutions and academic bodies that help the scientific, technological and cultural advances of higher education and the management of knowledge, and b) comparison of efficient mechanisms that allow the recognition of studies, degrees and competitions, sustained in national educative programs' evaluation and accreditation systems with mutual recognition. In order to achieve this objective the following strategies have been implemented: a) to stimulate the creation of evaluation and guarantee mechanisms for higher education in the economies where they do not exist, based on comparable criteria and codes of good practice and b) to promote the mutual knowledge of existing educative programs' national evaluation and the accreditation systems of educative programs, and to induce its recognition among different economies. (Rubio, 2007)

The Iberian and Latin American Network for Higher Education Accreditation (RIACES), was constituted in 2003 with the objective of promoting cooperation and facilitating the exchange of information and good practices among the different organisms and organizations of higher education quality accreditation in Iberia and Latin America in order to impel regional cohesion in regards to quality evaluation to lead to the recognition of programs and institutions with the purpose of favoring the mobility and exchange of students and professors. The CIEES maintain a recognized leadership in RIACES and in the region, which has motivated requests to support the nations that are building their accreditation systems, document exchange, methodologies, procedures, and experiences.

In the construction of this common space of higher education, the same as in the case of the European Union, it has been recognized that if no solid national systems of

evaluation and accreditation of educative programs are available that are comparable to each other and have good practices codes which are widely recognized among the economies, it will be difficult to sustain the programs for mobility and recognition of studies and degrees.

Appendix: Figures and Tables

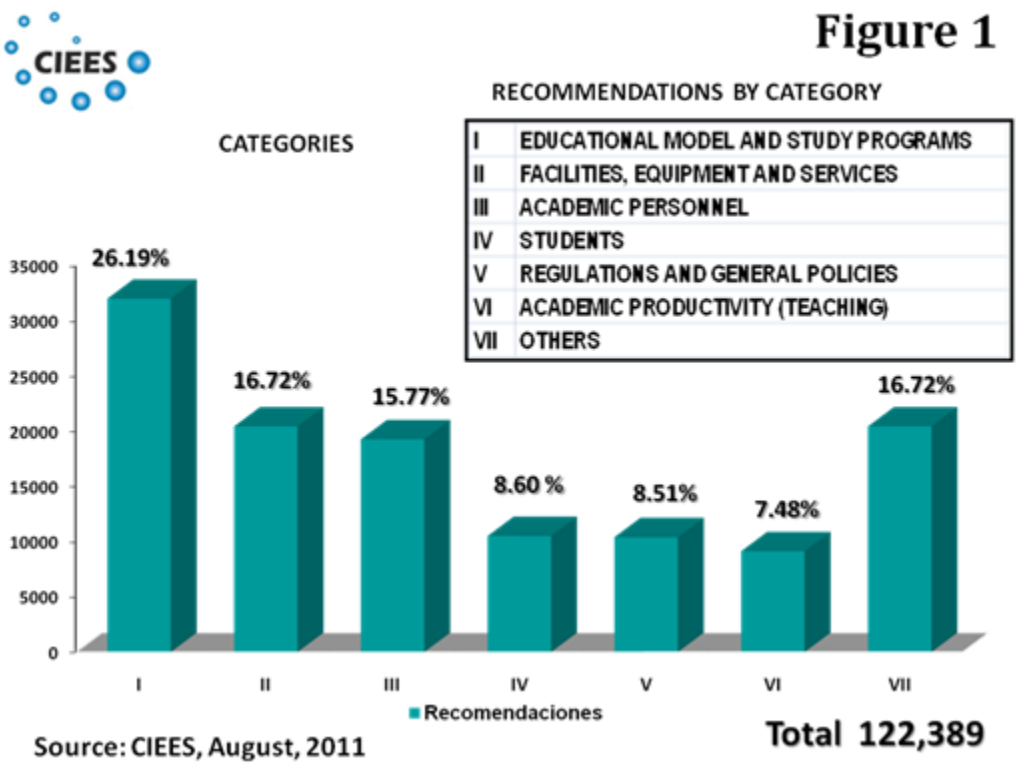
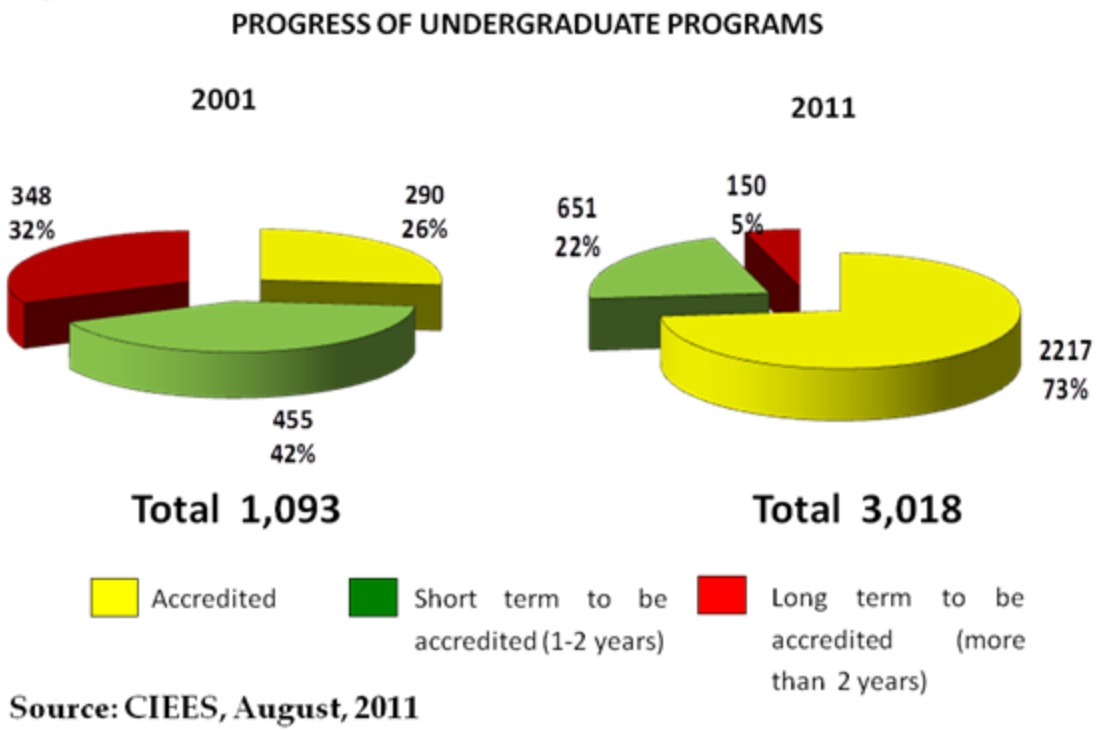


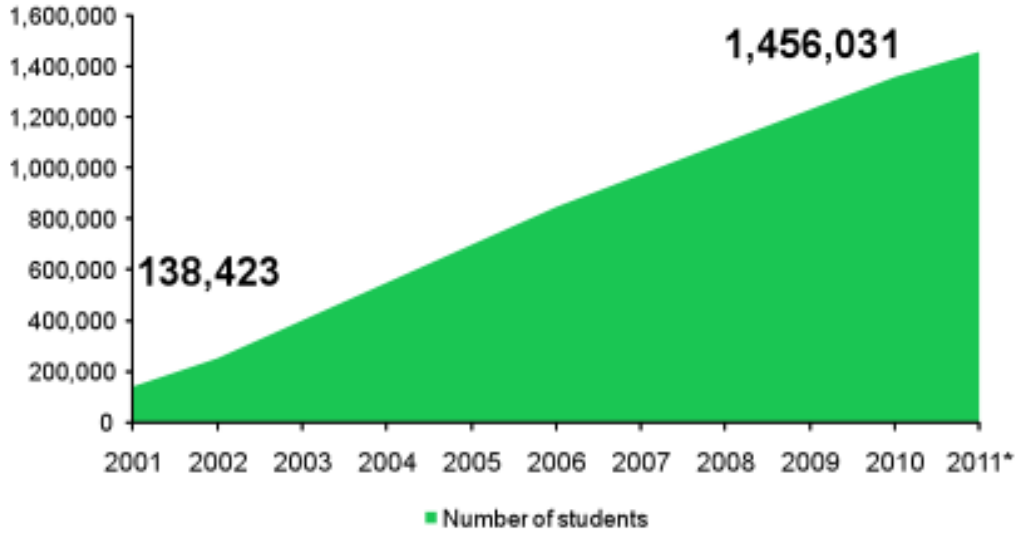
Figure 2



Source: CIEES, August, 2011

Figure 3

ENROLLMENT OF STUDENTS IN UNDERGRADUATE ACCREDITED PROGRAMS



*Total enrollment: 3,071,643
Source: SEP (Public Education Secretary) & CIEES. August 2011

REFERENCES

Cruz López Y, Escrigas C, López Segrera F. La educación superior en el mundo en 2007. Acreditación para la garantía de la calidad y el compromiso social de las Universidades ¿Qué está en juego?. Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI). España 2006, p. xxviii.

Fernández Lamarra Norberto. La evaluación y la acreditación de la calidad situación, perspectivas y tendencias. Informe sobre la Educación Superior en América Latina y el Caribe 2000-2005. La metamorfosis de la educación superior. Ediciones IESALC/UNESCO. Caracas, Venezuela. Cap.2, p 33-42, 2006.

Latapí Pablo. La educación latinoamericana en la transición al siglo XXI, Documento preparado para la reunión de la Comisión Delors y el Grupo de Trabajo sobre Educación, 26-30 de septiembre de 1994.

Luce, María Beatriz y Morosini, Marilia, “La evaluación y acreditación de la Educación Superior en Brasil”, en Mora, José-Ginés y Fernández Lamarra, Norberto, (Coords), Educación Superior. Convergencia entre América Latina y Europa, Comisión Europea / EDUNTREF; Buenos Aires, 2005.

Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2007- 2012. Poder Ejecutivo Federal. Ed. Gobierno de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, Presidencia de la República, México, 2007, p. 323.

Programa Sectorial de Educación 2007- 2012. Secretaría de Educación Pública. Ed. SEP, Comisión Nacional de Libros de Texto Gratuitos, México, 2007, p. 64.

Rubio Oca J. La evaluación y acreditación de la educación superior en México: un largo camino aún por recorrer. Reencuentro. Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, México, 2007:36-44.

Rubio Oca J. La Política Educativa y la Educación Superior en México. 1995-2006. Un balance. Fondo de Cultura Económica, México, 2005 p. 230.

Tünerman Bernheim Carlos. La calidad de la educación superior y su acreditación: la experiencia centroamericana. Foro Nacional sobre Calidad de la Educación Superior. Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana. México. 28 de febrero de 2006.

The Phenomenon of Academic Ranking of World Universities Model: Future Directions

Nian Cai **Liu**

Professor and Dean, Graduate School of Education, Shanghai Jiao Tong
Shanghai, China

Introduction of Academic Ranking of World Universities

History

In order to meet the challenges of globalization and knowledge-based economy and push forward China's modernization, the Chinese leadership placed its hopes on the higher education field, including a number of national research universities. At the 100th anniversary of Peking University in May 1998, the then president of China declared that the economy should have several world-class universities resulting in the 985 Project, which is meant for building world-class universities in China. In the same year, Shanghai Jiao Tong University was selected by the Chinese government to be among the first group of nine universities in the 985 Project. At that time, many top Chinese universities drew up their strategic goals as world-class universities, and most of them set up timetables. Shanghai Jiao Tong University was no exception. As a professor and Vice-Dean of the School of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering of the university, I was accidentally involved into the strategic planning process of building Shanghai Jiao Tong University into a world-class university and later on appointed as the Director of Office of Strategic Planning of the university.

During the process, I asked myself many questions: What is the definition of a world-class university? How many world-class universities should there be globally? What are the positions of top Chinese universities in the world higher education system? How can top Chinese universities reduce their gap with world-class universities? In order to answer these questions, we started to benchmark top Chinese universities with world-class universities, which eventually resulted in a ranking of world universities.

From 1999 to 2001, Dr. Ying Cheng, two other colleagues and I worked on the project of benchmarking top Chinese universities with four groups of U.S. universities, from the very top to the lesser-known research universities, according to a wide spectrum of indicators of academic or research performance. The main conclusions include that top Chinese universities were estimated to be approximately in the position of 200 to 300 in the world. The results of these comparisons and analyses were used in the strategic planning process of Shanghai Jiao Tong University. Eventually, a consultation report was written and provided to the Ministry of Education of China.

The publication of the report resulted in numerous positive comments, many of which involved the possibility of doing a real ranking of world universities. During the time,

friends from different parts of the world who visited us for other purposes, learned about our study and encouraged us to do world rankings. They reminded us that not only but also universities, governments, and other stakeholders in the rest of the world are interested in the quantitative comparison of world universities. Therefore, I decided to undertake the ranking project and we spent another two years on the project until the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) was first completed in early 2003. In June 2003, ARWU was published on our website (http://www.arwu.org).

Methodology

ARWU uses six objective indicators to rank world universities (Shanghai Ranking Consultancy, 2010). The six indicators (and their weights) are the number of alumni winning Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals (10%), number of staff winning Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals (20%), number of highly cited researchers selected by Thomson Scientific (20%), number of articles published in journals of Nature and Science (20%), number of articles indexed in Science Citation Index - Expanded and Social Sciences Citation Index (20%), and per capita performance of an institution (10%).

We have scanned every institution that has any Nobel Laureates, Fields Medals, Highly Cited Researchers, or articles published in Nature or Science. In addition, major universities of every economy with a significant amount of articles indexed by the Science Citation Index-Expanded (SCIE) and the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) are also included. In total, more than two thousand institutions have been scanned, and about 1,200 institutions have actually been ranked. A list of the top 500 institutions has been published on the website. Considering the significance of differences in the total score, ARWU is published in groups of 50 institutions in the range of 100 to 200 and groups of 100 institutions in the range of 200 to 500. In the same group, institutions are listed alphabetically.

ARWU-FIELD and ARWU-SUBJECT

Ever since its publication, ARWU has attracted attention from all over the world. Numerous requests have been received, asking us to provide a ranking of world universities by broad subject fields/schools/colleges and by subject fields/programs/departments. We have been trying to respond to these requests.

In February 2007, the Academic Ranking of World Universities by Broad Subject Fields (ARWU-FIELD) was published. The five broad subject fields include Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Engineering/Technology and Computer Sciences, Life and Agriculture Sciences, Clinical Medicine and Pharmacy, and Social Sciences. Arts and Humanities were not ranked because of the technical difficulties in finding internationally indicators with reliable data. Psychology and other cross-disciplinary fields were not included in ARWU-FIELD because of their interdisciplinary complexity. Similar to ARWU, institutions in each broad subject field are ranked according to their academic or performance. Besides the indicators used in ARWU, two new indicators were First, the percentage of articles published in the top 20 percent of journals of each broad subject field and, second, the research expenditures (for engineering ranking only). The

list of top 100 universities in each broad subject field was published.

In October 2009, the Academic Ranking of World Universities by Subject Fields (ARWU-SUBJECT) was published, which ranked institutions in five subject fields, including Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Computer Sciences and Economics/Business. The list of top 100 universities in each subject was published.

Impact

Although the initial purpose of ARWU was to find the global standing of top Chinese universities in the world higher education system, it has attracted a great deal of attention from universities, governments and public media worldwide. ARWU has been reported by mainstream media in almost all major economies. Hundreds of universities cited the ranking results in their campus news, annual reports and promotional brochures. A survey on higher education published by *The Economist* commented ARWU as "the most widely used annual ranking of the world's research universities" (A world of opportunity, 2005). Burton Bollag (2006), a reporter at *Chronicle of Higher Education* wrote that ARWU "is considered the most influential international ranking".

One of the factors for the significant influence of ARWU is that its methodology is globally sound and transparent. It uses a few carefully selected, objective criteria and internationally comparable and verifiable data. The *EU Research Headlines* reported "The universities were carefully evaluated using several indicators of research performance." (Chinese study ranks world's top 500 universities, 31.12.2003). Chancellor of Oxford University, Chris Patten, said "the methodology looks fairly solid ... it looks like a pretty good stab at a fair comparison." (Chris Patten's speech, February 05.02.2004).
ARWU has been widely cited and employed as a starting point for identifying national strengths and weaknesses as well as facilitating reform and setting new initiatives (e.g. Destler, 2008). Martin Enserink (2007) referred to ARWU and argued in his paper published in *Science* that "France's poor showing in the Shanghai ranking ... helped trigger a national debate about higher education that resulted in a new law... giving universities more freedom".

Phenomena of Global University Rankings

The booming of global university rankings
Nearly one year and a half after the first publication of ARWU, the Times Higher Education Supplement published its “World University Rankings” in November of 2004. Since 2005 the ranking was co-published by Times Higher Education and the Quacquarelli Symonds Company every year as THE-QS World University Rankings. THE-QS ranking indicators include an international opinion survey of academics and employers (40% weight for academics and 10% weight for employers), student faculty ratio (20%), citations per faculty member (20%) and proportions of foreign faculty and students (5% weight for each) (THE-QS, 2009). In 2010, *Times Higher Education* terminated its collaboration with Quacquarelli Symonds and both began to publish their

own global ranking lists. While the new QS ranking fully retained the methodology of previous THE-QS ranking, the *THE* ranking increased its number of indicators to 13 and *Thomson Reuters* became its data provider (Times Higher Education, 2010).

Bibliometric indicators have been widely used to measure research productivity and performance of universities, and several global university rankings were made by this approach. They include the “Performance Ranking of Scientific Papers for World Universities” published by the Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan since 2007 (Huang, 2007), “Bibliometric Rankings of World Universities” by Moed (2006), and “World Top Universities” by the Research Center for Chinese Science Evaluation of Wuhan University (2006).

There have been other global university rankings. The “Ranking Web of World Universities” by Cybermetrics Lab of CSIC (2004) uses a series of web indicators to rank 16,000 universities worldwide. A French higher education institution, École des Mines de Paris (2007) published the “Professional Ranking of World Universities” by calculating the number of alumni among the Chief Executive Officers of the 500 leading worldwide companies. In December 2011, the University Ranking by Academic Performance Center of Middle East Technical University (2011) announced the world top 2,000 universities based on six indicators of research output. Up to now, more than a dozen global university rankings have been published.

Methodological problems of global university rankings

Different global rankings have different purposes, and they only measure parts of universities’ activities. Bibliometrics rankings focus on research output, and ARWU emphasizes the research dimension of universities also. The fundamental role of universities - teaching, and their contributions to society are not well taken into account in these systems. Although the THE-QS ranking tries to measure the multi-faceted universities by combining indicators of different activities including some proxies of teaching quality, its practice hardly convinced others and the ranking was taken as a ranking about reputation and “not about teaching and only marginally about research” (Marginson, 2007). Therefore, none of current global ranking systems can provide a complete view of universities, taking any single ranking as a standard to judge a university’s whole performance is improper.

For the moment, none of the ranking indicators can be seen as perfect, while some practically acceptable, some others have serious flaws. The so-called “Academic Peer Review”, used by THE-QS ranking, might be the indicator that is most often criticized. First, it is an expert opinion survey other than a typical peer review in the academic community; the respondents, even as they are experts, can hardly make professional judgments to large entities due to cognitive distance (Van Raan, 2007). Second, as an opinion survey, the results were affected by some psychological effects such as the effect” (Woodhouse, 2008) and the “leniency effect” (Van Dyke, 2008) so that there is a bias towards well-known universities and the universities from which the respondents come. The bibliometric indicators such as publications and citations were relatively credible in measuring research performance of large entities, but there are still problems

and shortcomings when they are used to compare universities worldwide. Many global rankings choose *Thomson Citation Indexes* as their bibliometric sources; therefore only publication output and only those published on indexed journals are taken into account. This inevitably leads to some bias against universities with strong humanities and social science and universities from non-English-speaking economies. The teaching-related indicators such as student faculty ratio and percentage of international faculty and students were also criticized by Marginson (2007), mainly because they cannot be used to adequately measure teaching quality. Some indicators can be seen as proxies of teaching output, for example, number of alumni among CEOs of top 500 companies and number of alumni who get Nobel Prize or Fields Medals, but the measured objects were restricted within a tiny group, then it can say little about the general quality of teaching output.

Some general criticisms of ranking practices hold true for global rankings. A common phenomenon in global ranking is the arbitrary decision of weights of indicators. Another doubt is that for universities with different global ranks, the difference between their scores may be statistically insignificant.

Use of global university rankings

Global university rankings, although of interest to prospective students and employers, get most of their attention from governments and universities themselves. With the emergence of a knowledge-based economy, research universities are expected to play a key role in building the core competiveness of economies. Therefore national governments are eager to know the strength and weakness of their universities on a global level, but such information was not readily available until the appearance of global rankings. Global rankings provide comparative information on university performance in different economies, which helps governments realize the international standings of their universities. While some nations were satisfied with the global ranks of their universities, more nations began to feel crisis. As Mr. Jan Figel, the European Commissioner for Education, said to the media, “If you look at the Shanghai index, we are the strongest continent in terms of numbers and potential but we are also shifting into a secondary position in terms of quality and attractiveness” (Blair, 2007). Nowadays an obvious trend is that more and more nations clearly show their ambitions of having certain number of universities among the top tier in the world in the future, whatever the current standings of their universities are. Furthermore, more and more nations are using rankings as policy instruments for higher education reform and even resource allocation.

Whether universities admit it or not, they care about rankings. For those universities that were better placed, global rankings are effective tools in building and maintaining reputations, which are important to attract talent and resources and to gain support from the general public. On the contrary, universities’ poor performance (as compared with expectations) and absences in global rankings may have a negative impact. Because of the great influence of global rankings, climbing up on the ladder became a common desire of universities. In a survey of leaders and senior managers of higher education institutions in 41 economies, Hazelkorn (2008) found 82% of respondents wanted to improve their international position and 71% wanted to be in the top quarter in the world.

At the same time, over 56% of respondents said their universities had established a formal internal mechanism to monitor rankings and their own performance, and 63% already taken strategic, managerial or academic action in response to rankings.

Future Directions of Academic Ranking of World Universities

Updating the rankings annually

As the first multi-indicator ranking of global universities, ARWU has been providing trustworthy performance information on universities in different economies for 8 years. The ranking results have been used by students to choose places to study, by universities to benchmark themselves with their peers and to set up strategic priorities, by national policy-makers to compare education strengths and impulse reforms, and by researchers to select samples for various analysis and studies. In order to continue meeting these needs, we will update ARWU, ARWU-FIELD and ARWU-SUBJECT every year. In addition, we will keep the changes in ranking methodology to a minimum so that one can compare the performance of particular universities or economies across years.

Improving the methodology

ARWU has tried to rank research universities in the world by their academic or research performance based on internationally comparable third-party data that everyone could check. Nevertheless, there are still many methodological and technical limitations. Methodological limitations include the balance of research with teaching and service in ranking indicators and weights, the inclusion of non-English publications, the selection of awards, and the experience of award winners. Technical limitations exist in the definition and name expression of institutions, data searching and cleanup of databases, and attribution of publications to institutions and broad subject fields. We have endeavored to study the above-mentioned limitations and to improve our ranking.

In order to better consider the education function in ARWU, we are collecting the education experiences of senior executives in *Fortune Global 500* corporations, the number of senior executive alumni could be a good indicator of education outcome of an institution. For the purpose of solving the field imbalance in the statistics of international academic awards, we selected a list of around 80 international academic awards and are trying to classify them according to their academic prestige and degree of internationality; some of them are expected to be included in the calculation of awards. Furthermore, we keep a close eye on the development of advanced ranking techniques and new international databases; feasibility studies are carried out whenever possible.

Diversifying the ranking

We are studying the possibilities of providing more diversified ranking lists, particularly rankings for different types of universities with different functions, disciplinary characteristics, history, size, and budget, as well as other factors. These studies are done not by designing new methodology or introducing new indicators, but by various classifications of universities. For instance, we have published a classification of ARWU top 500 universities by their disciplinary characteristics, in which universities were classified into types of dominance in certain fields such as engineering or medicine

(Cheng & Liu, 2006). Based on such a classification, separate lists of universities of the same type can be extracted from ARWU. Following the same idea, we are going to develop classifications of universities from different perspectives so that various comparisons among similar universities can be expected.

ARWU provides a list of 500 universities, which can only cover less than 5% of all 15,000 higher education institutions in the world (the number of higher education institutions was reported in the World Higher Education Database 2011, see http://www.unesco.org/iau/directories/index.html). Hence, 95% of the higher education providers especially those in less developed economies are invisible in the ranking. We plan to develop regional university rankings such as rankings of universities in Eastern Europe, South America, Africa and China. These regional rankings will not only adopt the indicators used in ARWU, but also consider other indicators relevant to the region that may reflect universities' global competitiveness directly or indirectly.

Profiling research universities

Since January 2011, we have engaged the Global Research University Profile (GRUP) project, which aims to develop a database on the facts and figures of around 1,200 global research universities ranked by ARWU annually. An online survey tool is designed to collect the basic information of universities such as number of academic staff, number of students, total income, and research income and so on. We sent survey invitations to 1,200 universities and promised to provide participating institutions with an analysis report based on data collected from all respondent institutions. In the invitation letter we also explain that their data may be used to develop new rankings, particularly customized rankings. The number of universities participating in the survey has been very encouraging so far. Besides the survey, we have managed to get data from national education statistics agencies in major economies, such as National Center for Education Statistics in United States, Higher Education Statistics Agency in United Kingdom, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations in Australia.

Although the comparability and quality of the survey data may not be as good as that of data obtained from third-parties, more useful indicators can be developed, which will meet the increasing demand to compare global universities from various perspectives. We plan to employ the survey data and third-party data to design a web-based platform in which users will be allowed to compare concerned universities with a large variety of indicators and weights of their choice. In addition, we will do in-depth analysis of the survey data in order to describe the characteristics of World-Class Universities and research universities in different economies and worldwide. We hope the results will enhance our understanding towards World-Class Universities and will be helpful when initiating or adjusting relevant policies.

Contributing to the optimal development of university ranking in general

We have been doing theoretical research on rankings in general, seeking to contribute the understanding of rankings. We have also been actively participating in international societies related to ranking such as the IREG - International Observatory on Academic Ranking and Excellence (http://www.ireg-observatory.org). An ongoing effort of this

organization is to conduct audit of existing ranking systems. It is expected that the audit will urge rankers to compile and publish rankings more responsibly and help users to identify the quality of different rankings and wisely use rankings to make various decisions.

We are volunteering to be one of the first few rankings to be audited.

References

A world of opportunity. (2005). *The Economist*, 376(8443), 14-16.

Blair, A. (2007). Asia threatens to knock British universities off the top table. *The Times* (2007, May 21), Retrieved April 15, 2011 from: http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/education/article1816777.ece.

Bollag, B. (2006). Group endorses principles for ranking universities. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved April 15, 2011 from: http://chronicle.com/article/Group-Endorses-Principles-for/25703.

Cheng, Y., & Liu, N. C. (2006). A first approach to the classification of the top 500 world universities by their disciplinary characteristics using scientometrics. *Scientometrics*, 68(1): 135-150.

Chinese study ranks world's top 500 universities. (2003, December 31). *European Commission<Research<Headline*s. Retrieved April 15, 2011 from: http://ec.europa.eu/research/headlines/news/article_03_12_31_en.html.

Chris Patten's speech. (2004, February 5). *Guardian*. Retrieved April 15, 2011 from: http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2004/feb/05/highereducation.tuitionfees1.

Cybermetrics Lab of CSIC. (2004). *Ranking Web of World Universities*. Retrieved April 15, 2011 from: http://www.webometrics.info/index.html.

Destler, B. (2008). A new relationship. *Nature*, 453(7197), 853-854.

École des Mines de Paris. (2007). *Professional Ranking of World Universities*. Retrieved April 15, 2011 from: http://www.mines-paristech.fr/Actualites/PR/Archives/2007/EMP-ranking.pdf.

Enserink, M. (2007). Who Ranks the University Rankers? *Science*, 317(5841), 1026-1028.

Hazelkorn, E. (2011). *Rankings and the Reshaping of Higher Education: The Battle for World-Class Excellence.* Palgrave Macmillan: London.

Huang, M. H. (2007). *2007 Performance Ranking of Scientific Papers for World*

Universities. Retrieved April 15, 2011 from: http://ranking.heeact.edu.tw/.

Marginson, S. (2007). Global university rankings: Implications in general and for Australia. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 29 (2), 131-142.

Moed, H. F. (2006). *Bibliometric Rankings of World Universities*. Retrieved April 15, 2011 from: http://www.cwts.nl/hm/bibl_rnk_wrld_univ_full.pdf.

Research Center for Chinese Science Evaluation of Wuhan University. (2006). *World Top Universities*. Retrieved April 15, 2011 from: http://apps.lib.whu.edu.cn/newbook/sjdakypj2006.htm.

ShanghaiRanking Consultancy. (2010). Ranking Methodology. *Academic Ranking of World Universities - 2010*. Retrieved April 15, 2011 from: http://www.arwu.org/ARWUMethodology2010.jsp.

THE-QS. (2009). *World University Rankings 2009*. Retrieved April 15, 2011 from: http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/hybrid.asp?typeCode=438.

Times Higher Education. (2010). *World University Rankings 2010-11*. Retrieved April 15, 2011 from: http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings/2010-2011/analysis-methodology.html

University Ranking by Academic Performance Center of Middle East Technical University. (2011). *World Ranking*. Retrieved April 15, 2011 from: http://www.urapcenter.org/2010/index.php

Van Dyke, N. (2008). Self- and peer-assessment disparities in university ranking schemes. *Higher Education in Europe*, 33(2/3), 285-293.

Van Raan, A. F. J. (2007). Challenges in the ranking of universities. In J. Sadlak & N.C. Liu (Eds.), *The World-Class University and Ranking: Aiming beyond Status* (pp.87-121). Bucharest: UNESCO-CEPES.

Woodhouse, D. (2008). University rankings meaningless. *University World News* (2008, September 7), Retrieved April 15, 2011 from: http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20080904152335140.

Rankings: Help or Hindrance to Quality Assurance? From a Perspective of Asian Accrediting Agencies

Angela Yung-chi **Hou**

Director, Center for Faculty Development & Instructional Resources,
Associate Professor, Graduate School of Educational Leadership and Development, Fu Jen Catholic University, Chinese Taipei

Dean of the Office of Research & Development,
Higher Education Evaluation & Accreditation Council of Chinese Taipei

Abstract

Higher education quality assurance and global competitiveness have become intertwined into the complicated issue of balancing of the teaching and research missions of an institution. The quality assurance movement has caused widespread discussions of the appropriate use of various assessment instruments on overall higher education quality and an individual university's performance. The purpose of this paper is to aim for an understanding of the functions of different quality assessment tools in higher education and to examine the conflicting roles and function of QA agencies in operating these tools.

Key words: quality assurance, ranking, accreditation, higher education

1. Introduction

Globalization in the 21st century presents universities and states with a number of challenges and opportunities. Currently, a major concern for both of them is how to assure quality in higher education and how to enhance global competitiveness through a variety of polices and actions. As a result, quality assurance mechanisms and rankings, which emphasize output monitoring and measurements and systems of accountability and auditing, have become more popular worldwide (Marginson, 2007).

Up to the present, nearly 90 % of the governments in Europe and the Asian Pacific region have successfully developed a national quality assurance system. Some accrediting agencies in Pakistan, Malaysia, Kazakhstan and China Taipei, being both a quality assurance agency and a producer of rankings, were expected to assist governments to promote academic excellence and international competitiveness of higher education (Salmi, 2009). Currently, several quality assurance organizations and networks have begun to pay more attention to the impact of rankings on higher education, such as the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) *and* Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN), Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), and so on.

The Accreditation Council of China Taipei (HEEACT) was established in 2005 and began to accredit 76 four-year comprehensive universities and colleges in China Taipei in 2006. In addition, HEEACT was commissioned officially to conduct various ranking projects, including global and national ones starting in 2007. One of HEEACT's most influential rankings is "Performance Ranking of Scientific Papers for World Universities".

As a matter of fact, HEEACT's dual roles were challenged by many China Taipei universities and confused the public because of its different aims and approaches while it was conducting both assessment and ranking activities together. For example, as an accrediting agency, HEEACT mainly adopted the "fitness for purpose" approach to carry out the reviews. On the other hand, as a global ranker, it applies the standard–based approach with a number of predetermined criteria to all institutions owing to China Taipei's national academic excellence policy. Its dual missions have led to conflicting roles and misperceptions about the methods and processes of both assessment tools. The purpose of this paper is to aim for an understanding of the functions of different quality assessment tools in higher education and to examine the conflicting roles and function of QA agencies in operating these tools. HEEACT's experience will be analyzed as a case at the end of the study.

2.1. Quality assurance and global competitiveness

Today, with the rapid expansion of higher education institutions throughout the world and education's increasingly market-based orientation, students, parents, higher educators, employers and governments have a much greater interest in the actual academic quality of universities and colleges. Definitely, universities and colleges are beginning to take on accountability toward related members of the school and societies in the same way that private enterprise does. In this way, universities are supposed to act as an effective organizer and a good learner on how to improve their quality, particularly in research and teaching quality, through several assessment tools (Henard, 2010).

To reflect these global competitions, more and more nations, no matter whether they are developed or developing ones, are eager to build at least one top research university, and it is now called a “world class” institution. Consequently, “policymakers in many economies have prioritized building research universities that would help their economies obtain a superior position in the global competition” (Shin, 2009, p. 669). Marginson (2010) indicated that accelerated public investment in research and “world-class’ universities” has forged a unique education investment culture called the “Confucian Model” in the region.
Nowadays, the quality assurance movement and global competitiveness have been intertwined into a complicated issue to a certain extent, since they deal with the balancing of the teaching and research missions of an institution. This has caused widespread discussions over the appropriate use of various assessment instruments on overall higher education quality and on an individual university’s performance.

2.2 Quality Assessment Instruments of Higher Education

Several types of tools for assessing quality in higher education have been developed recently based on purposes and processes, including quality assurance, auditing, accreditation, evaluation, ranking, benchmarking, and so on. They are all among the most common forms of accountability (Salmi & Saroyan, 2007). A study by the European Network for Quality Assurance (ENQA) identified eight main types of evaluation across ENQA member states (ENQA, 2003) (see figure 1)

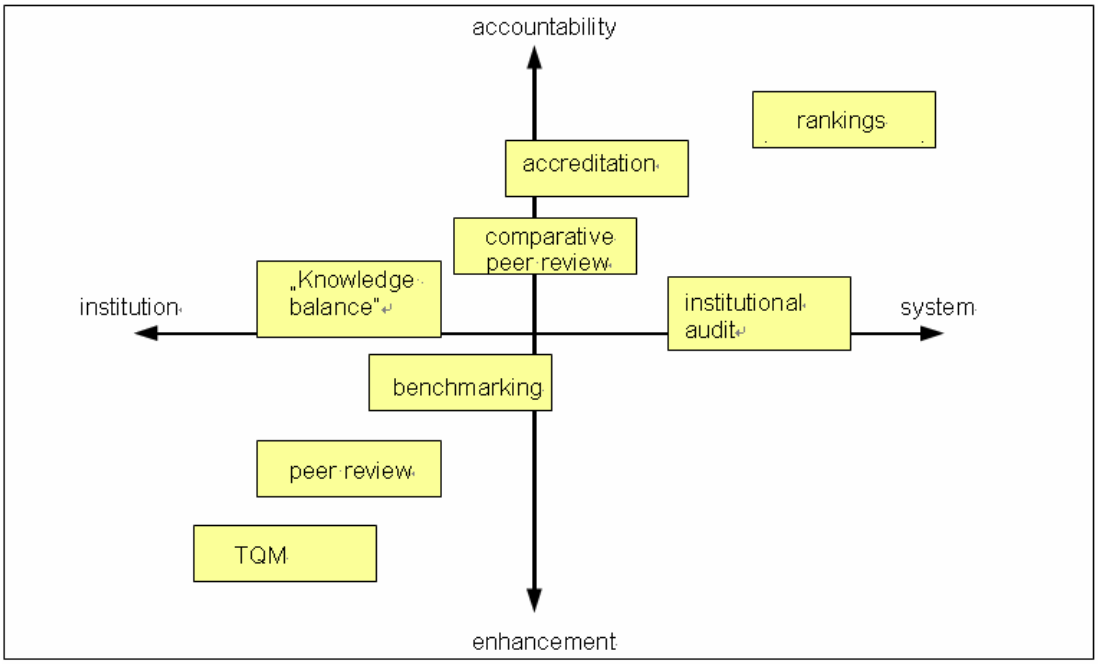


Figure 1: Eight Main Types of Evaluation

The study showed that all assessment instruments can be grouped along two dimensions: One is the assessment unit (institution vs. system); the other refers to the main purposes of the instruments, which depends on whether the assessed unit used

the assessment tool for internal self-enhancement or regarded them as external *accountability* (Federkeil, 2007).

Most of the time, these tools, however, can not be understood clearly due to their different functions and purposes, particularly the difference between accreditation and evaluation. According to CHEA, “accreditation” means “a process of external quality review created and used by higher education to examine colleges, universities and programs for the purposes of quality assurance and quality improvement” (CHEA, 2008, p.12). In other words, accreditation, in most nations, “is a voluntary process of approval of an institution or program by an accrediting agency or body” according to its own mission and goal. (WASC, 2008). “Evaluation”, involves decisions by peers and/or stakeholders concerning an individual institution's achievement, excellence and/or potentials. “Evaluation” clearly “focuses more on how successfully the institution is achieving its goals and objectives” (National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation, 2007, p.4). Both them often “involve a culture of self reflection and self-improvement” (Marginson, personal communication, Nov. 30, 2009).
Compared with “accreditation” and “evaluation”, “ranking”, as a kind of measurement tool for quality is more debatable. According to Jan Sadlak, ranking can be “defined as an established approach, with corresponding methodology and procedures, for displaying the comparative standing of whole institutions or certain domains of its performance, is now fast becoming a world wide phenomenon” (2006, p.3). It is becoming an accepted component of an external tool for “quality assurance” because it can provide important information to everyone interested and involved in higher education and also help to provide effective independent analysis of what higher education is and does in certain aspects (Merisotis, 2002; The Centre for Higher Education Research and Information, 2008).

3. Development and Impact of Global Rankings

3.1 Rationale and Pitfalls of Global Rankings

Since the start of the 21st century, the development of university rankings has become internationalized. Global rankings have a variety of uses, levels of popularity and rationales and they are here to stay. When one examines the results of the current global ranking, he or she can find that well-reputed world class universities are usually among the top ranked schools. The first such system, developed in 2003, is the Shanghai Jiao Tong Academic Ranking of World Universities, intended to measure the peak of academic performance as defined by measures such as the Nobel Prize. The second, the QS World University Ranking, uses a range of measures including opinion surveys, citations analysis, and attempts to measure the teaching environment (Hou & Morse, 2010). The global ranking entitled “***Performance Ranking of Scientific Papers for World Universities”*** by the Higher Education Evaluation & Accreditation Council of China Taipei, calculated on the basis of the quantity and quality of papers on SCI and SSCI journals, has been published annually from 2007 (Hou & Morse, 2009). Other ranking systems such as “Webometrics Ranking of World Universities”, the “New Global University Ranking”, “SCImago Rankings”, and Times Higher Education’s “World University Rankings” also draw international attention (CSIC, 2011; SCImago Research Group, 2011; Times Higher Education, 2011).

Each ranking has its own features and characteristics due to its different objectives and organizational nature. According to Hou & Morse (2010), the QS ranking focuses on the international reputational dimension by evaluating an institution mainly on academic peer review measures. The ARWU ranking, by using quantitative indicators such as numbers of Nobel Prize winners and highly cited researchers, tends to favor universities with extraordinary research output and award-winning faculty. Similarly, the HEEACT ranking employs objective bibliometric indicators that evaluate both the quantity and quality of a university's scientific papers, and incorporates the assessment of long-term and short-term achievements in its composite measures. It focuses on the research outputs of an institution more than other rankings do. Despite major differences in the methodologies, there is a level of agreement on which universities are regarded "the best" (Usher & Savino, 2007).

It is evident that these rankings have common methodological limitations. Global rankings are fundamentally of a simplistic nature, and have led to an unbalanced campus culture of emphasizing research over teaching. They measure only a reduced part of a university's many functions, because of their emphasis on publication indexes and the use of reputational surveys. Truly, no list of the strongest universities can capture all the intangible, life-changing and paradigm-shifting work that universities undertake. For example, no ranking can ever fully capture some of the basics of university activity – learning and teaching quality. Besides, "using citation counts as a way of measuring excellence also presents serious problems" because these data "emphasize material in English and journals that are readily available in the larger academic systems", such as the UK and the US (Altbach, 2006, pp.1-2). Many studies also show that those with medical schools and departments in the hard sciences generally have a significant advantage because these fields generate more external funding, and researchers in them publish and cite more articles (Altbach, 2006). Even worse, rankings might likely marginalize institutions in the non-English speaking developing economies which remain on the knowledge periphery (Portnoi, et al., 2010). All in all, ranking may be misleading the public towards the reductionist concept that a limited range of indicators represents the overall quality of an institution (Neubauer, 2010). As Salmi & Kosaraju (2011) clearly point out , "accompanying the proliferation of rankings have been intense reactions, ranging from disagreements about the very principle of rankings, criticism about the methodology of rankings, boycotts, political pressure, and even court actions to stop the publication of rankings" (unpublished, p.3).

3.2 New Approaches

As was mentioned in the previous section, methodological problems with league tables, and their lack of relevance to the needs of domestic and international students, have led some groups to launch a non-traditional, student-oriented ranking system called "personalized college rankings" that can provide information about universities for students without a well-defined ranking outcome presentation. Generally speaking, personalized college rankings target students and their families as major users, which current league tables do not. They respect users' needs by allowing them to choose indicators and weightings through web-based platforms. The goal of the information system is to lead to a match between students and the institution or program in which

they are most interested. Hence, some have suggested that, instead of the term "ranking", an appropriate term for this student information service system would be "matching" (Hou, 2009). The new interactive and user-based approach to ranking was first developed by the Center for Higher Education in Germany in 1998 (Federkeil 2009).

In addition, another new initiative known as AHELO, the Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes, is being developed by OECD to measure both quality and quantity in higher education. It is intended to focus on teaching and learning instead of research, which will "shed light on whether the considerable resources invested in higher education are being used effectively, and on the capacities of graduates to enter and succeed in the labor market" (OECD, 2010, p.1).

3.3 The Impact of Global Rankings on Institutional Behaviors

Despite several methodological flaws, many reports illustrate that institutions use rankings to know where they stand and with whom they can partner. More and more institutions have started to include the achievement of "world class status" in their mission statements and have adopted a long-term strategic goal of becoming a world class university as measured by the global rankings.

Ten years ago, a survey of US college presidents indicated that over 50% of institutions thought rankings were very important for them and had used rankings as an internal benchmark (Levin, 2002). Recently, two other influential studies also demonstrated how institutions are affected by rankings and use them for policy making. According to the OECD-supported survey of higher education leaders and senior managers, over 50% of respondents regarded rankings as having a positive impact on the institution's reputation and helping its development in the areas of student recruitment, academic partnerships and collaborations, and staff morale. The majority of institutions surveyed were found to incorporate the outcomes of rankings into their strategic planning processes at all levels of the organization and to take policy actions based on them. In addition, 70% wanted to be in the top 25 internationally (Hazelkorn, 2007; King, 2009). The other survey, an on-line UK study focused on English universities' attitudes toward rankings, also showed that rankings often reflect the views of what properties a good university should develop. There was also a high level of agreement that the reputation of an institution might be affected by rankings (Lock, et al., 2008). However, many institutions further down in the rankings do not care too much about global rankings (Lock, et al., 2008; King, 2009).

The rankings are having an increasingly prominent impact on institutions' strategic planning and positioning. Many of them use ranking metrics to guide their own goals (Hazelkorn, 2008). However, owing to the different goals and methodological approaches in the rankings, it will be dangerous if institutions do not understand the key methodological features of the world rankings when they are identifying one or more of the global rankings to be included as part of their strategic planning. Hou & Morse (2010) found that the Webometrics' indicators are more appropriate for short-term planning, the QS rankings are for mid-term planning, and the ARWU rankings are for

long-term planning. The HEEACT ranking can be used as a tool for the annual check on the quantity and quality of research output of an institution. If some evidence of the adequate use of global rankings could be provided for policy makers before setting a specific global numerical rank as a benchmark of success, the goal may become more easily achievable (Sadlak, 2010). But it should be understood that this approach can only provide very rough guidance and clues to institutions as to which road to take to achieve academic excellence. Institutions still have to be very careful in making educational policy choices that could potentially result in moving up in the ranking (Hou & Morse, 2010).

4. Conflicting Roles of Accrediting Agencies in Quality Assurance and Rankings

Most rankings used to be published by the mass media, such as the *U.S. News & World Report.* Currently types of ranking providers have become quite diversified. In some economies, "the ranking exercise is undertaken as part of the accreditation process, either by the accreditation agency itself, in countries where one exists, or by the authority in charge of tertiary education" (Salmi and Saroyan, 2007). Take the Independent Quality Assurance Agency of Kazakhstan (IQAA) for example. As an accrediting body, it has published ranking outcomes for over 60 Kazakhstan colleges and universities since 2008 based on quantitative as well as qualitative criteria (IQAA, 2010).

Given the fact that an increasing number of national accrediting bodies have developed ranking systems, their dual roles have led to many discussions and even raised severe criticism in the quality assurance community because of their different aims and approaches. INQAAHE defined an accreditation body as "an organization delegated to make decisions, on behalf of the higher education sector, about the status, legitimacy or appropriateness of an institution, or programme" (Harvey, 2011). According to UNESCO-CEPES, an accrediting body is a "non-governmental or private educational association of national or regional scope that develops evaluation standards and criteria and conducts peer evaluations and expert visits to assess whether or not those criteria are met" (Vlãsceanu, *et al*., 2007, p. 28). Accrediting bodies, as external quality agencies, recognize the value of an analytical and self-critical process. Through the self-assessment report, the onsite visit team will try to understand and evaluate the institution or the program tentatively. Then, based on the report of the institution and the program and the recommendations of the review team, the accrediting bodies make the decision and likely give advice to the government (Martin & Stella, 2007). No matter whether the accreditation operated by accrediting bodies is voluntary or compulsory, the "fitness for purpose" of that school or program in regard to the accreditation standards (not a comparison to other schools or programs) is the focus of the accreditation operation.

Differing from accrediting bodies, Rankers refer to being a producer of college rankings. Ranking "refers to the rating and ordering of higher education institutions or programs of study based on various criteria" by rankers (Harvey, 2011). In other words, all institutions are compared to each other using a set of indicators determined arbitrarily by the rankers. Some rankers have invited institutions to provide them with quantitative

data, and some have only used public databases. Rankings are not voluntary such as accreditation, because academic competition between schools and programs is their main objective (see table 1).

Table 1: Comparison between accrediting bodies and rankers

	Accrediting Bodies	Rankers
Agency	Governmental or non governmental/	Media/ institutions/ governmental units
Approach	Fitness for purpose Self study/ On-site visit / peer assessment	Comparison by a number of predetermined indicators
Type of Data	Qualitative	Qualitative and Quantitative
Nature	Voluntary/ compulsory	Compulsory
Outcome presentation	Descriptive and qualitative report	Simple and sequentially numbered ranked
Purpose	Self –enhancement	Academic competition and provide public with information

Source: author

Based on the analysis above, obvious differences exist between accrediting and ranking agencies. So, the dual roles played by an accrediting agency will be likely challenged and questioned by those who are under their review. However, whether an accrediting agency can be a ranker or not has pros and cons. Morse (2009) emphasized that, “it can be complicated when a governmental accreditor does both. It raises the question of independence and whether a governmental accreditor is picking winners and losers among schools.” (personal communication, Nov. 23). In fact, there is one advantage if a ranking is done by an accrediting agency which is that the ranking could probably have a higher acceptance within universities. As Federkeil states, “there is trust in the fairness and objectivity” (personal communication, Nov. 22, 2009). Besides, there might be conflicts between ranking and consulting in the context of quality assurance. Compared to other types of rankers such as a university or mass media, there is much less difficulty in a position of conflict of interest for quality assurance agency (Marginson, personal communication, Nov. 30, 2009).

4.1 The HEEACT case

The two quality assessment tools—accreditation and ranking—were developed by, in some aspects, HEEACT which was trusted as an independent assessor by the government and the public provided with some transparent information and clues in terms of how to become a world class university or a teaching-oriented institution. In other words, HEEACT was successfully recognized nationwide as a reliable information provider. Marginson agreed that,

> "HEEACT ranking has been of high quality. The quality of media ranking tends to be poor, because mass media do not feel an obligation to perform the task rigorously, tend to use a market research approach rather than social science approach to the process, and are inclined to cut costs whenever possible" (personal communication, Nov. 30, 2009).

In some sense, HEEACT's dual roles indeed have been challenged by both groups of research-type and teaching-oriented institutions when it comes to purposes and processes of the two assessment tools. HEEACT's accreditation applies the "fitness for purpose" approach based on the mission and goal of an individual institution. Because Institutional features are respected, HEEACT doesn't rate the review outcomes of all institutions. On the contrary, the elements of HEEACT's global ranking characterize academic competitions and quality of research output, which has provoked severe criticism over its indicators and purposes from China Taipei college presidents and some board members of HEEACT. Those universities that are not in the top 500 were worried that the very research-oriented indicators in HEEACT ranking would be adopted as the only criteria in the selection process for the governmental funding allocation. Several social sciences and humanities colleges severely challenged the legitimacy of HEEACT as a ranker when it claimed the accreditation model aims at assisting the institutions to enhance their overall quality of education, not comparing them based on a set of research criteria and indicators.

The President of Faculty Union of National Cheng-Chi University, Chuing Prudence Chou, criticized HEEACT severely: " HEEACT's ranking indicators misled institutions to an unbalanced academic development and hurt the diversity and autonomy of higher education institutions because of the strong link between the number of publications and governmental funding" (Chou, 2011). However, HEEACT's former President Roger Chen responded that, "different from global ranking in which research outputs count only, HEEACT accreditation mainly focused on teaching quality. I am hoping that universities will not misuse them, being misled by both tools" (Chen, personal interview, Feb 22, 2010). Yet, when most institutions can not differentiate clearly between the two assessment tools, HEEACT's dual roles will continue to be questioned in China Taipei society.

5. Conclusion

Quality assurance and excellence in higher education have become major concerns in international society. As higher education globalizes, the pressure from international competition and public accountability will accelerate the importance of accreditation and ranking in higher education. More importantly, some quality assurance agencies, like

HEEACT, are engaged in developing university rankings, which leads to a major concern over its twin roles in dealing with the conflicting purposes of accreditation and rankings simultaneously. Compared with the mass media's market approach to the ranking process, QA is a more reliable and independent way of providing transparent information to institutions. The reliability and credibility of college rankings are regarded as more important factors than other concerns even when the agencies producing them are playing dual roles.

Many institutions have started to develop a self-enhancement mechanism with a rooted quality culture as a way of guaranteeing "accreditation" and to position their academic status and long term mission in terms of national or global rankings. At the same time, some governments are setting targets that a certain number of their institutions should develop into world-class universities, while promoting the quality of the national higher education system. The different goals and methodological approaches of these assessment tools mean that institutions and governments need to understand accreditation and rankings when they are identifying one or more of the global rankings for use in their planning, or when they are doing their strategic planning and goal setting on the basis of a quality assurance system. Therefore, if some evidence of the adequate use of accreditation and rankings could be provided for educational policy makers, both assessment tools will definitely better enhance the overall quality of institutions.

References

Altbach, P. G. (2006, winter). The dilemmas of ranking. *International Higher Education*, *42*. Retrieved Feb. 22, 2006, from http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/soe/cihe/newsletter/Number42/p2_Altbach.htm

CHEA (2008).Quality review 2007. Washington, D.C.: CHEA.

Chen, R. (Feb.9, 2010). Personal interview.

Chou, C. P. (May 12, 2011). Against quantity over quality in higher education-termination of controlled by SSCI and SCI database. *China Times.*

CSIC (2011). Ranking web of world university. Retrieved Feb. 22, 2011, from http://www.webometrics.info/

European Network for Quality Assurance (ENQA) (2003). Quality procedures in European higher education. *ENQA Occasional Papers 5, Helsinki, 2003.*

Federkeil, G. (2007). Rankings and quality assurance in higher education. *The 3rd Meeting IREG Meeting* , Shanghai, 346-364.

Federkeil, G. (2009). Rankings and Quality – A European Perspective, in Bigalke, T. and Neubauer D., eds. *Higher Education in Asia Pacific: Quality and the Public Good.* New York: Palgrave

Federkeil, G. (Nov.23, 2009). E-mail interview.

Harvey, L. (2011). *Analytic quality glossary*. Quality Research International. Retrieved May 26, 2011 from http://www.qualityresearchinternational.com/glossary/

Hazelkorn, E. (2007). The impact of leagues tables and ranking systems on higher education decision making, *Higher Education Management and Policy*, 19, 81-105.

Hazelkorn, E. (2008). Learning to live with league tables and ranking: the experience of institutional leaders. *Higher Education Policy*, 21, 193-215.

Henard, F. (2010). *Learning our lesson: review of quality teaching in higher education.* Paris: OECD

Hou, Y. C. & Morse, R. (2009). Quality assurance and excellence in China Taipei higher education-An analysis of three major China Taipei college rankings., *Evaluation in Higher Education*, 3(2), 45-72.

Hou, Y. C. & Morse, R. (Oct 19-22, 2010). The Effective Implication of Global Rankings in Making Institutional Strategic Plans and Positioning for Building a World Class University. AC21 Consortium, Shanghai, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China.

Hou, Yung-chi. (2009. Personalized rankings: A new ranking system for China Taipeiese universities, *Asian Journal of University Education*, 4(1) June 1-16.

IQAA (2010). The methodology of ranking higher education institutions in Kazakhstan 2008. Retrieved Jan, 2010 from http://nkaoko.kz/en/rating.

Korea 21 project, *High Education,* 58, 669–688.

King, R. (2009). Governing universities globally: Organization, regulation and rankings. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Levin, D. J. (2002) *The uses and abuses of the US News rankings*. Priorities 20 (Fall/ Autumn).

Lock, W., Verbik, L., Richardson, J., & King, R. (2008). *Counting what is measured or measuring what counts? League tables and their impact on higher education institutions in England*. Bristol: Higher Education Funding Council for England. Ma, W. (2007). The ‘‘flagship’’ university and China’s economic reform. In P. G. Altbach & J. Bala´n (Eds.),World class worldwide: Transforming research universities in Asia and Latin America (pp. 31–53). Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Marginson, S. (2007). The public/private divide in higher education: a global revision. *Higher education*, 53(3), 307-333.

Marginson, S. (2010). Higher education in the Asia-Pacific: Rise of the Confucian model. *Evaluation in Higher Education,* 4(2), 21-53*.*

Marginson, S. (Feb 9, 2009). Personal communication.

Merisotis, J., (2002), Summary report on the invitational roundtable on statistical indicators for the quality assessment of higher/tertiary education institutions: rankings and league table methodologies, *Higher Education in Europe*, 27(4) pp.475-480.

Morse, R. (Nov. 23, 2009). Personal communication.

National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation (2007). *Glossary of quality assurance in Japanese higher education*. Tokyo: National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation Neubauer, D. (2010). Ten Globalization Challenges to higher education quality and quality assurance. *Evaluation in Higher Education*, 4(1), 13-38.

Neubauer, D. (2010). Ten globalization challenges to higher education quality and quality assurance. *Evaluation in Higher Education, 4*(1), 13-38.
OECD (2010). AHELO: Project Update. Paris: OECD.

Portnoi, L.M., Bagley, S.S. & Rust, V.D. (2010). "Mapping the terrain:The global competition phenomenon in higher education. In J. Portnoi, L.M., et, al. (Eds.), *Higher Education Policy, and the Global Competition Phenomenon (pp.1-14).* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Sadlak, D. (2006). Policy context and organizational arrangements of university ranking*. Paper* presented at *The challenges of university ranking conference*. Retrieved February, 16, 2006, from
www.leidenslatest.leidenuniv.nl/content_docs/leiden_js_finaltextla.doc

Sadlak, J. (2010). Quality challenges in a changing landscape of higher education: place and impact of academic rankings. *Evaluation in Higher Educatio*n, 4(1), 1-12.

Salmi, J. (2009). *The challenges of establishing world class universities.* Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.

Salmi, J. & Kosaraju, S. (2011). If Ranking is the Disease, Is Benchmarking the Cure? (unpublished)

Salmi, J. & Saroyan, A. (2007). League tables as policy instruments: uses and misuses. *Higher Education Management and Policy,* 19 (2), 31-68

SCImago Research Group (2011). SCImago Institution Ranking. Retrieved Feb. 19, 2011, from http://www.scimagoir.com

Shin, J. C. (2009). Building world-class research university: The Brain Korea 21 project. *Higher Education, 58*, 669-688.

The Centre for Higher Education Research and Information (CHERI) (2008). Counting what is measured or measuring what counts? England: HEFCE.

Times Higher Education (2011) World University Rankings. Retrieved Jan. 19, 2011, from http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings/

Usher, A & Savino, M. (2007). A global survey of university ranking and league tables. *Higher Education in Europe,* 32(1), 5-16.

Vlãsceanu, L., Grünberg, L., and Pârlea, D. (2007). *Quality assurance and accreditation: A Glossary of basic terms and definitions*. Retrieved January 29, 2011 from http://www.cepes.ro/publications/pdf/Glossary_2nd.pdf.

WASC (2008). *Handbook of accreditation 2008*. Alameda: WASC.

How Might University Rankings Contribute to Quality Assurance Endeavors?

Deane Neubauer

Emeritus Professor, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
Senior Consultant, East-West Center, Honolulu, Hawai'i
United States

In this brief paper I wish to address two problematics contained within the contemporary higher education ranking phenomenon. To some extent these have been touched on by Dean Liu and Professor Hou in their presentations, as well as in other conference papers. To make my argument, I have borrowed liberally from these presentations, as I have from a recent book on the subject edited by Kaur, Sirat and Tierney (2010). The problematics I wish to address are: (a) the nature of the ranking phenomenon and what it does and does not accomplish, particularity from the standpoint of constituting good social science; and (b) the extent to which ranking phenomena either are or could be useful adjuncts, or indeed components of accreditation and quality assurance.

Problematic A: what are university rankings when viewed from a social science perspective—and what might the significance of this be?

This question has drawn considerable attention, not only from the primary creators of the current university ranking system, Professor Liu and his colleagues at Shanghai Jiao Tong University, but others such as Simon Marginson who has been an acute and insightful critic and interpreter of such rankings (Marginson, 2010). Indeed, in his paper to this conference Liu cites Marginson to the effect that a singular virtue of the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) compared with other ranking systems that rely on reputational or other "soft" data, is its construction utilizing firm empirical data available from other public data sources, and available equally to all investigators—attributes that lead to the "objectivity" of the data. These arguments are well presented in Liu's clear and thoughtful presentation of the ARWU, as are a host of limitations, both methodological and practical, that arise from the particular selection of indicators on which this ranking structure is based: for example, the premiums paid to "hard" science disciplines, the significant bonus provided to scoring given to Nobel Prize winners, and the utilization of citation indexes that give a substantial bias to English language publications.[1] In his own review of other university rankings Liu makes clear two points: (1) "different global rankings have different purposes, and they measure only parts of universities' activities," (2011: 5); and (2) whatever their limitations they are "are here to stay". In elaborating on the first of

[1] From Liu: "Methodological limitations include the balance of research with teaching and service in ranking indicators and weights, the inclusion of non-English publications, the selection of awards, and the experience of award winners. Technical limitations exist in the definition and name expression of institutions, data searching and cleanup of databases, and attribution of publications to institutions and broad subject fields."

these points he emphasizes that within all of these various ranking systems, "(T)he fundamental role of universities—teaching, and their contributions to society are not well taken into account" (2011:5).

Each of these points tends to inform this problematic, first by delineating the social science dimension and second by implying its consequence. As to the first, Marginson's interpretation of global university rankings focuses on the functions performed by them within the global system of exchanges increasingly represented by the knowledge economy and society (which he shorthands as the k-economy) for which they exist as a critical partway for exchanges of both material (economic) and symbolic (status) import.

"'In the k-economy, knowledge flows are regulated by a system of status production that assigns unequal values to parcels of knowledge and arranges them in ordered patterns.' The new means of assigning status value to parcels of knowledge are league tables and other institutional and research rankings; publication and citation metrics; and journal hierarchies. These processes together create and sustain the standard of value. This standard of value is a key mediating factor enabling the k-economy to interface with the financial and industrial economies, and with the systems for policy and regulation. It also enables the global k-economy to be mapped on a worldwide basis, identifying the concentrations of knowledge power, guiding investments in innovation by governments and businesses, and providing measures for the global k-economy comparisons that all nations seem impelled to make" (Marginson, 2010, p. 31).

From the standpoint of conventional social science Marginson makes a case for rankings based on their exchange utilities as both status and economic indicators. In doing so he, like Liu, accepts that given the range of methodological challenges to generating rankings posed both by the complexity of the phenomenon involved and the accessibility and reliability of available data, the ARWU ranking is "the best" available: that is, it does the better job focusing on non-reactive indicators (which cannot be influenced by universities themselves as might those based on survey data) and it generates a "symbolic" entity fit for global exchange purposes. To repeat, these become the basis for according it the label of "good social science."

But what of the consequences of so doing? I would argue that from another social science perspective, that of the social constructionist school, what the ARWU does, and what all other rankings do, is to invent a social construction for which they have then sought utility (Berger and Luckman, 1967; Potter, 1996). But in doing so, the constructors have created a bit of a "muddle" intellectually both in terms of what they purport and measure by their indicators—and what they do not: namely the "fundamental role of universities—teaching and service to the community which are not well taken into account". By these actions, I suggest, the inventors of higher education league tables have engaged a process of social effects, which is consequential on several important grounds. The recently invented construct tends to colonize others, and for a very important reason. In this regard the league tables tend to operate as a

social variant of the famous Greshman's Law that bad money drives out good. In this variant, simplicity drives out complexity.[2]The league tables invent a way to render the significant complexities of universities "simple" by creating that phenomenon to which all societies seem vulnerable—ordering by rank. The result is that despite the disclaimers made on behalf of the derived rankings and the limitations of the indicators, within the perspective of the social construction school *they come to stand* for that which they signify, and in so doing perform a radical, welcome and necessarily "economizing" function through what can only be regarded as radical simplification.

One might argue that such observations are of little matter inasmuch as the originators of the rankings, none so much as the Shanghai Jiao Tong University effort itself, are both generous and forthright in their disclaimers for what the ranking is not (as cited above). But matter they do, because as we can see in the policy behavior of nation states throughout the world, especially those whose universities are not well represented in the rankings, such indexes do create powerful simplifications of complexity that then give them a valuable currency within multiple channels of exchange, precisely as Marginson asserts. Expressed in familiar policy terms, they come to dominate the policy space within which the discourse is situated, and by so doing they devalue other—and competing—forms of discourse (cf. Richardson and Jensen, 2003; Stone 2001). And, this is consequential in that by devaluing other discourses, the effect is to restructure them positionally within all other policy discourses.

This interpretation may be contested by the objection that if in the construction of such indexes, rankings, or tables the authors are clear about the limitations of their instruments, then no "harm" is done. Again, I would suggest that this view may be insensitive to the kinds of claims made within the social construction perspective when one examines the effect of the index—any index—on the value of the "thing" that it is meant to represent, in this case universities! It is very much the case that all the disclaimers to the contrary notwithstanding about the limitations of a given index, it is of critical importance as to what the received or sought-after social value of the object or entity *is* to which the index draws attention—and to the degree that this is signified in the symbolic representation within which it stands. To say that a given ranking is that given to universities, and then make the case that in "reality" what is being measured is the research capacity, capability, and actuality of research is to colonize the value of the root concept at the expense of all its other differentiations, no matter how much they are acknowledged as important but not represented in the value label. The truth of this observation lies, I think, in asking ourselves what the possible effect might be on any such index or ranking

---

[2] "**Gresham's law,** observation in economics that "bad money drives out good." More exactly, if coins containing metal of different value have the same value as legal tender, the coins composed of the cheaper metal will be used for payment, while those made of more expensive metal will be hoarded or exported and thus tend to disappear from circulation. Sir Thomas Gresham, financial agent of Queen Elizabeth I, was not the first to recognize this monetary principle, but his elucidation of it in 1558 prompted the economist H.D. Macleod to suggest the term *Gresham's law* in the 19th century." Encyclopedia Britannica eb.com. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/245850/Greshams-law, retrieved July 15, 2011.

within the channels of status, economic, or policy currency if they were labeled as rankings of "research universities" rather than as top or leading universities. I submit for discussion that the kinds of conversations to which one would apply such data would be markedly different.

By way of illustration, permit me to cite an analogous experience of political science scholars (myself included) engaged in a project some years ago in which the subject at issue was an effort to define, measure, scale, and rank democracies. Without reciting the whole of that experience, let me say that a critical juncture in the endeavor was the theoretical efforts on the part of the primary scholar, Robert A. Dahl, to make clear the range of social/structural activities involved in the "democratic" construction and then to specify with some precision those that might submit to empirical examination of a rigorous sort (Robert A. Dahl 1956). The upshot of the effort is that Dahl realized, in part through the burden of his own analysis, that the set of institutions he was most interested in examining, namely institutions of government and the structures of choice and election that populated them, were only one aspect of democracy, that part which he believed represented the essential relationship of how those who were governed sought to control those who so governed. This particular relationship he chose to call "polyarchy" and to define it and measure it with some precision, taking care not to claim the entirety of property space for "democracy" in the process. In the end one could make the relevant and justifiable social claim that polyarchy refers to an essential and perhaps determinative aspect of the democratic process and experience, but hardly its whole (Dahl, 1956; 1971). The effect, I believe was good, productive, creative social science, which has stood the test of time. But as a source of evidential data to the political process, with all its rhetorical components, it is less attractive in framing discourse, in part precisely because it eschews the temptation to claim the whole of the property space of democracy for the measurement of only one of its functions, no matter how critical and important.

I raise these points precisely because of the primary focus of this paper, which is to try to situate ranking within the overall context of accreditation and quality assurance. The simple, but important, question is: do rankings assist us in forwarding the enterprise commonly viewed as constituting higher education quality? The answer is a bit yes and a bit no. Yes, to the extent that one can make the argument that those universities that score high on research based indicators will also—more than likely—do well on other indicators of higher education quality. (As many suggest, but one needs to recognize that from the same place of critical judgment both Liu and Maginson make positive claims about the ARWU's social science veracity. Ultimately this is an empirical question begging for studies that demonstrate those correlations). No, to the extent that for the vast, vast majority of higher education institutions in the world research has relatively little to do with either their efforts to achieve quality for themselves and of others to assess it. This is the second problematic to which we now turn.

Problematic B: the extent to which ranking phenomena either are—or could be—useful adjuncts or (indeed) components of accreditation and quality assurance.

Throughout much of the world, the primary quality assurance task is to make some assessment of capacity within context—the so-called input functions of quality assurance. It is clear to all that capacity has a critical relationship to any degree of quality that might follow from it, and for many accreditation or quality assurance endeavors the effort to describe and analyze such capacities, to put them within relevant historical contexts, and to determine their probable future trajectory, is much of what the exercise is about. Early in such assessment processes, some notion of standards emerges with which to compare institutions, accompanied by a variety of methodologies for obtaining data and applying them to standard approximations. Such assessments and the standards that enable them are developed within contexts that are both internal to the system involved, and external--as the "institutional horizon" of other higher education endeavors is consulted to make the determination of quality built into whatever standards are created and applied. Such endeavors (accepting the significant differences that emerge comparatively in the context of varying national and regional circumstances) are organized around potential. Input-based standards are statements of what an organization may do based on some consensual assessment of the relevance of the standards. In many, many instances, especially in the early historical experiences of accreditation and quality assurance, the articulation and measurement of such input characteristics produces effective markers, or proxies for what institutions actually do as higher education entities.

It has been here that both the strengths and limitations of the ranking endeavor lie for quality assurance. Accepting for the moment most of the limitations expressed above in the effort to measure research and scholarly production, the effort itself clearly shifts the focus of institutional assessment from what *it is capable of doing*, to what it *does do* in these particular and specified areas. And, as suggested above, the critique of the current ranking systems is replete with admission on the one hand and finger pointing on the other as to what they do and do not do with respect to efforts to assess other higher education functions. Again to cite Professor Liu, if only because his explanation of the ARWU system is so forthright:
"…none of current global ranking systems can provide a complete view of universities, taking any single ranking as a standard to judge a university's whole performance is improper…Methodological limitations include the balance of research with teaching and service in ranking indicators and weights, the inclusion of non-English publications, the selection of awards, and the experience of award winners. Technical limitations exist in the definition and name expression of institutions, data searching and cleanup of databases, and attribution of publications to institutions and broad subject fields." (Liu, 2011)

It is useful to recognize that this apt critique of rankings applies equally in many instances to more extensive efforts of accreditation and quality assessment. If one swaps out in the previous statement the words "…any single ranking as a standard to judge a university's whole performance…" with any single set of standards to judge the whole of a economy's higher education institutions, one arrives at the dilemma of most higher education quality assessment endeavors. The critical question becomes: how can any one set of standards account for and effectively measure the vast differences that exist within the range of institutions that constitutes

a nation's higher education institutions, given the vast range of variability that exists among them? And, I would argue, this question is daunting enough without admitting to two of its entailments: (a) efforts to gain consensus on what higher education quality is, especially in the rapidly changing environments of the emergent knowledge society and economy,[3] and (b) developing a reliable focus on what higher education institutions do as opposed to what they may do or may have the capacity to do.

This was precisely the query that the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) raised in 1999 when it undertook to revise its existing accreditation handbook. Under the direction of Ralph Wolff, the executive director and president of WASC, and the final keynote speaker at this conference, WASC saw itself challenged by its legacy of a conventional, but ultimately unwieldy, set of nine standards and in excess of 260 sub-standards that it was seeking to apply to its institutions. Over time it had become clear that the effort to impose this body of largely stipulative standards and sub-standards was (a) unwieldy and ultimately arbitrary (no visitation team was able to systematically apply all the sub-standards); (b) almost entirely input oriented; (c) amounted to a one-size fits all approach to assessment irrespective of the mission or purpose of the institution; (d) gave little systematic attention to what an institution did in the vast majority of its activities (and by and large this meant provided little systematic attention to teaching and student outcomes); and (e) created an evaluation frame that was almost completely compliance-oriented and insensitive to the rapid changes that were already occurring in the overall higher education environment, both domestically and internationally. (This process has been described in detail by Wolff, 2009, and Neubauer, 2008).

The process revolved around these two critical questions: what do we mean by quality in higher education (and how can we build an assessment process around what we take to be an answer to this question), and how can we deal with the complex diversity and differences between institutions to which we would want an assessment to apply? While simultaneously focusing in an authentic representative manner on what it is that such institutions actually do. Through generous grant funding from the Pew and James Irvine Foundations, WASC was able to assemble over 200 participants for more than a year from throughout the world to engage this discussion and review other (then-) novel review mechanisms in Hong Kong, Britain and the Netherlands. A critical turning point in this endeavor was the introduction of the notion of organizing the "output" side of the higher education review process within the framework of educational effectiveness. Such effectiveness was viewed as the result of an engagement with institutions in which they were asked to respond to a set of "standards" tailored to permit the full articulation of institutional diversity, but tied directly to the requirement that institutions commit

[3] I have found no better source for explorations into this question that the GUNI conference volume of 2007, *Higher Education in the World 2007: Accreditation for Quality Assurance: What is at Stake?* Of particular note is the piece by Sanyal and Martin.

to the proposition[4] that however they defined their mission or purpose, it was their obligation within the accreditation process to demonstrate the ways in which they achieved effectiveness. The task was equivalent to saying to institutions, "it is your contention that these are the purposes of your institutions…demonstrate to us that you can effectively identify evidential outcomes that support that contention." In short, a higher education institution of quality is one able to identify outcomes that demonstrate its educational effectiveness—an institution of high quality is one able to demonstrate superior or relatively superior performance on indicators that measure such outcomes.

Given the kinds of institutions that WASC accredits, from the large, powerful, famous, complex doctoral institutions on the one hand (e.g. Sanford, Berkeley, UCLA, USC, UCSD, etc.) to small special purpose institutions, two outcomes of this process were unsurprising: (a) most of the burden of demonstrating education effectiveness came to reside in one way or another within the frame of learning outcomes; and (b) this was as true, paradoxically, for the complex doctoral institutions as it was for smaller so-called "teaching focused" institutions and specialized graduate professional schools. Thus, as John Hawkins relates in his paper to the conference that focuses on the multiple review processes within UCLA, asking questions about what students learn and how they learn it, have become a common part of the two stage process WASC developed: the first focused on capacity, and the second on educational effectiveness (Hawkins, 2011). (Descriptions of the entire process as well as the whole of the WASC Handbook are available at: www.wascsenior.org/)

In short, complex research organizations, including some of the most illustrious within the multiple global ranking systems, such as the APRW, are subject to the same set of standards and requirements as are small, teaching-oriented special purpose institutions, even through the "product" they produce is significantly different. What allows this, and to the extent that it succeeds, is the meta-shift within the older style of capacity review which tended to stipulate the kinds of attributes institutions should have, to invitations for institutions to engage the review process such that they can demonstrate the ways in which they understand and develop educational effectiveness within their own culture, self-understanding, circumstances, and aspirations.

At some levels this re-conceptualized process has worked well, evidence the above. At others, it has worked less well than intended, flawed in part by all the things that burden virtually all systems of extensive review: costs in terms of time and labor; "review" fatigue on the part of both accreditation and HEI staffs; the amount of effort required to continually socialize new participants into the process (especially those recruited for peer review); and the gradual decline in the currency of this model with institutions. (For an external review of the Commission itself see: *www.**wascsenior**.org/findit/.../ERC_Educational_Effectiveness_Report.pdf)* In the formative

[4] They were literally termed "core commitments" and stood at the heart of the revised process.

years the complex doctoral institutions had been recruited to the process in part through a sense that it would add significant value to their own institutional self-understandings. However, as a new senior level leadership generation has come into power, and as the US higher education landscape is dominated—particularly for public institutions—by funding issues, the contribution of the added value of these reviews to such institutions has waned. To put the issue back into the language introduced by Marginson above, their currency of such reviews within their chosen status markets is less impacted by such processes than others, notably rankings.

My purpose, however, in presenting this example is to suggest that what in principle is readily taken as a task of perhaps insurmountable proportions (namely the identification of a process whereby the complexity and individually distinctive aspects of learning outcomes as a meaningful representation of student/faculty relations, teaching and learning) may in fact be susceptible to various forms of defensible measurement. My view is that the burden of the WASC experiment is to suggest that these complex elements may be given responsible measurement and that some version of the meta-structure that has propelled it may be suitable for such an endeavor in other settings.

With a major caveat! And that lies, ironically, within the research endeavor itself. I believe it is true to assert that WASC staff, commissioners, and those who serve as external peer reviewers tend to agree that the manner in which this model has developed pays increasingly less attention to research and related “productivity” than it does to various capacity and other output dimensions, including finance, learning outcomes, planning and review, etc. In my view this is a result less of deficiencies in the model itself, which could include a standard organized around demonstrations of research and productivity effectiveness in those institutions where these are relevant, than it is of the undue attention having been paid to the newer, less familiar, and less developed areas of student learning—the one endeavor (student learning) has detracted from the other (research value). I see no reason, however, *in principle* why the two cannot be compatible within the model. And—it could be the surprising and somewhat ironic impact of an endeavor such as that of Shanghai Jiao Tong University to create an instrument that defines and measures research productivity and reach in a manner sufficiently consensual within its effective reference groups to work within a generalized quality assurance system.

From this perspective, and with much more to be necessarily added to the argument, I would suggest that a partial response to this problematic could be a qualified yes. What Shanghai Jiao Tong University does, and to a lesser extent what HEEACT does, could be useful tools within quality assurance schemes suitable for comparative use. At the very least combining this kind of endeavor with something like the educational effectiveness endeavor—or to make the stronger case: focusing the research measurement endeavor as an integral part of an educational effectiveness review—is certainly possible.

I am less sanguine—for the reasons stated above—about the value of adhering to ranking as a phenomenon within such an expanded conceptual and empirical frame…again for all the reasons specified above. Moving in this direction I have outlined would, I suspect, serve as an important if partial antidote to the kind of critique of rankings that Ka Ho Mok has made in his paper to this conference:

However, the meaning of higher education quality extends beyond university league tables and their inherent limitations. Student learning experiences are critical to broader notions of quality. In fact, many scholars, whether of Asian origins or not, have in recent years pointed out the danger of blind adherence to international university rankings. President Anthony Cheung of The Hong Kong Institute of Education has remarked:

'Indeed, with today's obsession on world rankings, which more often than not, are methodologically-biased, there is a risk of our universities becoming one-dimensional. Research assessment is driven more by citation indices than a balanced evaluation of the impact on scientific discovery and knowledge creation, as well as contribution to social progress and the enlightenment of humanity. Some eye-catching ranking exercises have the tendency to measure mostly tangible and quantifiable performance, but ignore equally important dimensions of a university's role and mission, such as teaching quality, students' learning experience, the nurturing of students' social and global awareness, and the university's contribution towards community and human development.'" (Cheung, 2010: 2).

At the very least, I hold that such an antidote is not beyond our collective reach should we choose to address it with the same will, enthusiasm, resources, and determination as has been the case with global university rankings.

References:

Berger, Peter L. and Thomas Luckman, 1966. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Social Construction of Reality.* New York: Doubleday

Cheung, A. B. L. (2010) "President's 16th Congregation Address 2010", retrieved on 21 June 2011 from http://www.hkied.edu.hk/upload_main/main/file/20101119_speech.pdf

Dahl, Robert A. 1956. *A Preface to Democratic Theory.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

-------1971. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Hawkins, John 2011. "Quality Assurance: Internal and External Approaches**,** paper presented to the APEC Conference on Quality in Higher Education: Identifying, Developing and Sustaining Best Practices in the APEC Region," Honolulu, Hawaii, August 4-6, 2011.

Kaur, Sarjit, Morshidi Sirat and William G. Tierney, 2010. *Quality Assurance and University Rankings in Higher Education in the Asia Pacific: Challenges for Universities and Nations.* Pulau Pinang: Penerbit Universiti Sains Malaysia.

Liu, Nian Cai 2011. "The Phenomenon of Academic Ranking of World Universities Model: Future Directions," paper presented to the APEC Conference on Quality in Higher Education: Identifying, Developing and Sustaining Best Practices in the APEC Region, Honolulu, Hawaii, August 4-6, 2011.

Marginson, Simon 2007. "Global University Rankings," in S. Marginson (Ed.) *Prospects of Higher Education: Globalization, Market Competition, Public Goods and the Future of the University.* Rotterdam: Sense Publications.

Marginson, Simon 2010. "The Global Knowledge Economy and Culture of Comparison in Higher Education," in Sarjit, Sirat and Tierney eds., 2010.

Mok, Ka Ho, 2011. "Enhancing Quality of Higher Education: *Approaches, Strategies and Challenges for Hong Kong,"* paper presented to the APEC Conference on Quality in Higher Education: Identifying, Developing and Sustaining Best Practices in the APEC Region, Honolulu, Hawaii, August 4-6, 2011.

Neubauer, Deane 2008. "US Higher Education Accreditation Old and New: The Emergence of a New Paradigm," *Evaluation in Higher Education*, Vol. 2, No. 2, December: 23-49.

Potter, Jonathan 1996. *Representing Reality: Discourse, Rhetoric, and Social Construction.* Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Richardson, Tim and Ole B. Jensen, 2003. “Linking Discourse and Space: Towards a Cultural Sociology of Space in Analysis in Analysing Spatial Policy.” *Urban Studies,* Vol. 40, No. 1, 7-22.

Sanyal, Bikas C. and Michaela Martin 2007. “Quality Assurance and the Role of Accreditation: An Overview” in Global University Network for Innovation, *Higher Education in the World,* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Stone, Deborah 2001. *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making.* New York: W.W. Norton.

Wolff, Ralph A. 2009. “Future Directions for US Higher Education Accreditation,” in T. Bigalke and D.E. Neubauer, eds.*Higher Education in Asia Pacific: Quality and the Public Good.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Enhancing Quality of Higher Education: Approaches, Strategies and Challenges for Hong Kong

Ka Ho **Mok**

Associate Vice President (External Relations)
Dean, Faculty of Arts and Sciences,
The Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong SAR, China
Changjiang Chair Professor, Zhejiang University, China

Introduction

In the last two decades, higher education in Hong Kong has experienced significant transformations driven by both local and global forces. Globalization, rising costs of public services in general and the evolution of the knowledge-based economy have caused dramatic changes to the character and functions of higher education in many economies around the world (Mok and Welch, 2003) although the local dimension also remains important (Deem, 2001). Similarly, higher education systems in Europe and Asia are going through significant restructuring processes to enhance competitiveness and hierarchical positioning nationally and in the global market place. One outcome is the intensified competition among universities to prove their performance through global university league tables or ranking exercises (Liu and Cheng, 2005; Merisotis and Sadlak, 2005; Marginson, 2006). University ranking and league tables, including various measures of quality, also used in other kinds of organizations (Jarrar and Mohamed, 2001), are becoming highly influential in shaping how contemporary universities are governed and what core activities they undertake, especially as many universities worldwide come under pressure to become more entrepreneurial (Clark, 1998; Marginson and Considine, 2000). This paper examines how the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) has reformed its higher education quality enhancement system and improved performance. More specifically, this paper focuses on the major approaches and strategies adopted by the HKSAR in assuring higher education quality, critically examining the challenges and reflecting on the policy implications of various forms of quality assurance exercises being implemented.

Policy Background: Major Drive for Quality Enhancement

The massification of higher education is one of the major factors leading to the rise of quality assurance in Hong Kong. In the early 1990s, several colleges were upgraded to universities and a new university was built, producing a larger pool of university graduates. Despite the fact that the HE enrollment rate of high school has not been high when compared with higher education institutions in other neighboring economies like Chinese Taipei, Korea, Japan and Singapore, the significant increase in numbers for higher education enrollment from the late 1980s to the early 1990s had caused the concern of quality assurance in higher education (Mok and Chan, 2002). From 1991 to 1995, the number of first degree students increased 66%, and the number of postgraduate students 123% (Massy and French, 1997). Meanwhile, government has demonstrated its care about the use of the increased public resources, while employers express concern about the quality of the university graduates, a majority of whom would not have the chance to receive university education had the higher education sector not been expanded.

Hong Kong's higher education is closely related to the strong conviction of the HKSAR to transform the city-state as regional hub of education in Asia and the government's policy agenda to develop education as service (industry), goals for which quality assurance is critical. With outstanding teaching and research performances recognized overseas (e.g. having ranked high in international university league tables), Hong Kong's universities can attain world-class status which helps attract funding and talents worldwide (Mok, 2005). In 2009, Chief Executive Donald Tsang of the HKSAR proclaimed that education services would become one of the six new economic pillars of Hong Kong (alongside with testing and certification, medical services, innovation and technology, cultural and creative industries, and environmental industry).

With strong interest in enhancing their global competitiveness, governments and universities in Asia take university-ranking exercises very seriously. Recent studies have repeatedly shown that universities in Hong Kong are increasingly under pressure to compete internationally and research has obviously become one of the major yardsticks in measuring university performance (Mok and Cheung, 2011; Kennedy, 2011). University league tables are popular not only in the USA and the UK but also in Asia. In order to complete globally, Asian university systems have launched their own university ranking movements (Liu and Cheng, 2005; Research Center of Chinese Scientific Evaluation of Wuhan University, 2005; Zhejiang University, 2006). Higher education in Hong Kong, similar to other systems in the world, has been confronted with intensified pressure to enhance its quality through various forms of performance-driven quality assurance mechanisms since the early 1990s. University ranking exercises increasingly influence how universities are managed and the academic profession is organized (Currie, Peterson and Mok, 2006; Mok and Cheung, 2011).

In the last decade, higher education providers under the direction of the HKSAR to diversify education services have proliferated with the growth of private universities and colleges. University Grants Committee published a review report in December 2010,

urging the government to set up a new structure to oversee quality assurance matters of both public and private higher education institutions (UGC, 2010), linking the proliferation of higher education providers with enhancement of higher education quality.

The Impact of Neo-liberalism and Managerialism on Quality Assurance

Implementation of quality assurance mechanisms in Hong Kong's higher education has been concomitant with the rise of managerialism around the world since the 1980s, with its stresses on concepts such as "competitiveness", "efficiency", "accountability", "value for money", "marketization" and "corporatization", etc. (Mok, 1999 & 2000). Under managerialism, university operations are increasingly run like an enterprise to boost productivity and cost-effectiveness. Senior academics are required to act like company managers overseeing resource allocation and budget, rather than scholars who mainly care about teaching and research. Externally, public universities have to respond to the heightened demand for accountability over the use of public money in face of stringent government budgeting. Quality assurance systems play an important role in measuring HEI performances (Ntshoe and Letseka, 2010; Davidson-Harden and Schugrensky, 2009).

The rise of managerialism and other practices promoted by neo-liberalism have heavily influenced public sector restructuring. Pro-market ideas and practices such as privatization, marketization, commodification, and corporatization have been increasingly adopted in public management throughout the public HE, including Asia. Neo-liberal thought and policy strongly privilege market approaches to public policy issues. Many Asian states have decentralized much power to the market, families and individuals, resulting in a reduction of importance of the state and public education compared to the private sector, along with a decrease in public HE funding. Universities are required to search for more non-state financial sources for survival and future development (Mok, 2011).

It is in this context that universities have been corporatized and incorporated, and academic entrepreneurship increasingly prevalent. Neo-liberalism holds that engaging in entrepreneurial activities is beneficial to HEIs, promoting close ties with the private sector for research networks and funding, which help generate profits, strengthen research capacity and establish reputation (Mok and Hawkins, 2010).

In light of this shift of higher education landscape many governments, while having gradually retreated from the provision and funding of higher education, have nonetheless emphasized the importance of regulation and benchmarking. These are viewed as important for assuring the quality of all higher education, and to facilitate and generate fair and healthy competition among HEIs. Quality guarantees are vital to HEIs and to those host economies that aspire to become education hubs in a knowledge economy (Mok, 2006). This paper traces the development of different quality assurance exercises of Hong Kong's higher education since the 1990s, and the newly-established

quality assurance exercise. It concludes with the challenge for quality assurance posed by the rise of private higher education.

Approaches and Strategies for Quality Assurance Exercises since the Early 1990s

Positioning itself as a regional hub of higher education, Hong Kong has placed heavy weight on research performance. Since the 1990s, Hong Kong HE has gone through several Research Assessment Exercises (RAEs), modelling the UK approach to monitoring research performance. Hong Kong universities have undergone major review exercises requiring that they differentiate themselves in terms of roles and missions, identify major strengths and develop centres of excellence. Hong Kong academics are confronted with increasing government pressures to engage in international research, produce high quality teaching and contribute to professional and community services. In the last two decades, Hong Kong HE has experienced different forms of quality assurance, from the research assessment exercise launched in the early 1990s to teaching audits in the mid-1990s and most recently holistic institutional academic reviews of institutions through Quality Audits run by the Quality Assurance Council (QAC).

Research Assessment Exercise (RAE)
With formal quality assurance beginning in the early 1990s, the Research Grants Council (RGC) was established under the aegis of University Grants Committee (UGC), a non-statutory body overseeing the overall development direction of Hong Kong's public higher education. RGC's primary task is to manage government allocated research grants. The Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) was introduced in 1993, and continues to be the most important research quality assurance exercise. Originally conducted on a 3-year cycle, the first RAE was conducted in 1993, then in 1996 and 1999, then changing to a 6-year cycle of which 2006 was the latest. RAE's function is to measure the research index (ratio of "active researchers") of a cost centre (e.g. an academic department, or a research centre, etc.). Research indices are compiled for cost centers to determine an overall HEI index score calculated as:
$p = 100\% \times A / T$

p = Research index
A = The total number among those who are judged by the Panel to have reached or surpassed the quality threshold, including fractional counts
T = The total number of academic staff (in full-time equivalent) in a cost centre…regardless of whether they submit research output items for assessment (UGC, 1996)

The emphasis on "cost centers" underscores the aim of RAE to assure the cost-effectiveness of research grants offered by the government. For HEIs to attain a higher research index, requires the proportion of research staff to be increased. RAE relative scores influence their level of government research funding. For example, the RAE conducted in 1996 affected the allocation of research resources for the 1998-2001 triennium, and the RAE in 1999 affected the allocation of research grants for the 2001-

2004 triennium, and so forth. Such a reward mechanism has provided an incentive for academic research, illustrated by the increasing number of research outputs submitted for review. In the 1999 RAE, more than 4,200 staff submitted more than 18,000 outputs for review, a 30% increase over 1996 (UGC, 2000). In the 2006 RAE, research outputs jumped to 18,700, submitted by a somewhat smaller number of some 3,500 researchers. The research indices of most HEIs exceeded 70% with the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) (87.12%), the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) (86.95%), and the University of Hong Kong (UHK) (85.47%) being the top three (UGC, 2007a).

Good research performances also elevated these top universities in those regional and international university rankings that place heavy emphasis on research productivity. For example, in *Times Higher Education*'s World University Rankings 2010-2011, the UHK was ranked the 21st, and HKUST the 41st, among the best of HEIs from Asia (Times Higher Education, 2010). In QS's Asian University Rankings 2011, HKUST was named the best university in Asia, with UHK second, and the CUHK) fifth (QS, 2011). These rankings enhance the reputation of these HEIs and buttress Hong Kong's plan to become a regional education hub.

Since its inception in 1993, RAE has altered the academic ethos of Hong Kong's HEIs. With levels of government funding ties to the research performance of the academic staff, HEIs have started to emphasize research over teaching. Complaints are frequently raised by academic staff about the seemingly disequilibrium between teaching and research. Teaching staff appear to believe that a tradeoff between teaching and research is inevitable, and as they devote more time and resources to research, and as less teaching-only instructors are retained by the university, increased teaching loads will inevitably be at the expense of quality. However, from the perspective of university management, teaching and research are compatible and good combinations of both will trigger synergistic effects.

Research performance has also become an essential requirement for staff promotion, making the notion of "perish or publish" commonplace. Complaints that employment benefits (e.g. salaries or other contract terms) are now increasingly skewed towards research-oriented research staff are increasingly common. In response UGC since the 1999 RAE has adopted the broader and inclusive definition of academic "research" that includes scholarship of "discovery", "integration", "application", and "teaching" (UGC, 2005: 6). As Hong Kong universities seek to benchmark with top universities throughout the world, they struggle to compete for limited resources, much like universities in other places, for example, central Europe (Kwiek, 2004). In a "publish or perish" context, Hong Kong academics are becoming more "instrumental" in choosing publication venues cited in journals included in international Social Science (SSCI) and Science Citation (SCI) indexes, while university presidents/vice-chancellors are increasingly concerned with their institutions' ranking in the global university league tables (Mok, 2005; Chan, 2007). Having reviewed the research performance of HEIs in Hong Kong, the UGC has recently announced another round of RAE will come in 2013, while

placement of research degree students is increasingly linked with research performance, especially external grant records of institutions in the city-state.

Teaching and Learning Quality Process Reviews (TLQPR)

In response to a growing concern that the implementation of RAE would drive universities to over-emphasize research and neglect teaching, the UGC launched the Teaching and Learning Quality Process Reviews (TLQPR) in 1996. TLQPR has the following goals:

- To focus attention on teaching and learning as the primary mission of Hong Kong's tertiary institutions;
- To assist institutions in their efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning; and
- To enable the UGC and the institutions to discharge their obligation to maintain accountability for the quality of teaching and learning (TLQPR Review Team, 1999)

TLQPR and RAE differ. RAE makes graded judgments of research quality level (e.g. the calculation of "active researcher" ratio), whereas TLQPR is a process review with "an externally driven meta-analysis of international quality assurance, assessment and improvement systems" (Massy, 1997:253). As Cheng (2002: 56-57) notes, "instead of directly assessing the quality of teaching, which was often seen as a formidable task, the TLQPR reviewed the mechanisms for assuring quality of teaching in institutions." Major areas of TLQPR include curriculum and pedagogical design, implementation quality, outcomes assessment, and resource provision:

- Curriculum design - By what processes are curricula designed, reviewed, and improved?
- Pedagogical design - By what processes are the methods of teaching and learning decided upon and improved?
- Implementation quality - How well do faculty members perform their teaching duties?
- Outcomes assessment - How do staff, departments, schools, and the institution monitor student outcomes and link outcomes to the improvement of teaching and learning processes?
- Resource provision - Are the human, technical, and financial resources needed for quality made available when and where needed? (Massy, 1997: 257-258)

Thus, TLQPR aims to ensure the validity of the process by which quality is assured internally by the HEIs themselves. TLQPRs were conducted in two phases, the first between 1995 and 1997, and the second from 2001 to 2003. After the first TLQPR, the UGC published a few articles reviewing TLQPR and UGC was generally satisfied with HEI performances. The successful implementation of TLQPR confirmed the idea "that the efficacy of educational quality processes can be determined through self-study corroborated by interviews at the institutional, faculty, and departmental levels" (Massy

and French, 1997). To further ensure that TLQPR has met its stated goals, QAC conducted an external review of TLQPR in 1999, commissioned to the Center for Higher Education Policy Studies of the University of Twente (Netherlands) for the sake of independence and impartiality.

The Center's major conclusion is that the "TLQPR was the right instrument at the right time", since it signaled to HEIs that focusing on teaching and learning was their primary goal and it concretely assisted the improvement of internal quality assurance exercises. However, a shortcoming of TLQPR was the absence of consequences for reviewed HEIs and the lack of promotion and sharing of good practices among the higher education community after the review (TLQPR Review Team, 1999). The second round of TLQPR for the eight UGC-funded HEIs started in 2001 and ended with all review reports being published in 2003. UGC published the report entitled *Education Quality Work: The Hong Kong Experience* in 2005 to conclude the works of the second round of TLQPR.

Management Review (MR)

The Management Review (MR) is the third quality assurance exercise for Hong Kong's higher education. MR is concerned with the overall management and governance performance of HEIs. UGC notes that:

> The reviews cover all the management processes and systems in the areas of academic administration, research administration, maintenance and development of the estate, procurement, student support services, human resources, IT and finance. They are qualitative in nature and seek to promote self-assessment and self-improvement within the institutions through dialogue, discussion and analysis of issues with the consultants and members of the Review Panels. They also seek to promote the sharing of experiences and best practice. (UGC, 1999: Annex C)

MR has six areas of concern: (1) strategic planning, (2) resource allocation, (3) implementation of plans, (4) roles, responsibilities and training, (5) service delivery, and (6) management information and systems. The introduction of MR grew out of concerns for resource allocation. Against a background of financial constraints and surging average student costs in the mid-1990s, MR was conducted in 1998 and 1999 on the seven UGC-funded HEIs to help promote good management and enhance public accountability.

Towards Total Quality Control: Quality Assurance Audit (QAC) in late 2000s

In the face of stronger calls for better HEI quality assurance, the government has developed an institutional response by establishing in April 2007 the Quality Assurance Council (QAC) as a semi-autonomous non-statutory body under aegis of UGC. One important task is to audit the teaching and learning performances of the UGC-funded HEIs on a 4-year cycle. The first round of QAC audits started in 2008 and is expected to complete in 2011. The missions of QAC Audit, which replaced the TLQPR, are:

- To assure that the quality of educational experience in all first degree level programs and above, however funded, offered in UGC-funded institutions is sustained and improved, and is at an internationally competitive level; and
- To encourage institutions to excel in this area of activity (UGC, 2007b)

The assurance of "quality for money" is a primary reason for QAC audits. As Dr. Alice Lam, former QAC Chairman, said:

> "The young people who attend our higher education institutions are entrusting us with three (soon to be four) years of a prime period of their lives, in the expectation of receiving a quality educational experience. In so doing, our students and their families will often expend considerable financial resources. The Administration provides even greater resources of public funding to our institutions. Public accountability is therefore a common and primary rationale for audit regimes across the globe." (UGC, 2007c)

To establish the representativeness of QAC and also because QAC is by nature a semi-autonomous body, its members comprise not only UGC staff but also local and overseas academics, and well-respected persons in the community. The Registry of Auditors is composed of senior educators from within and outside Hong Kong.

In regard to the audit approach, QAC makes it explicit that the audit it conducts is not an intrusion or interference with HEIs' autonomy. The audit is a collaboration between QAC and HEIs as can be illustrated by the characteristics of the audit model that QAC itself proclaims:

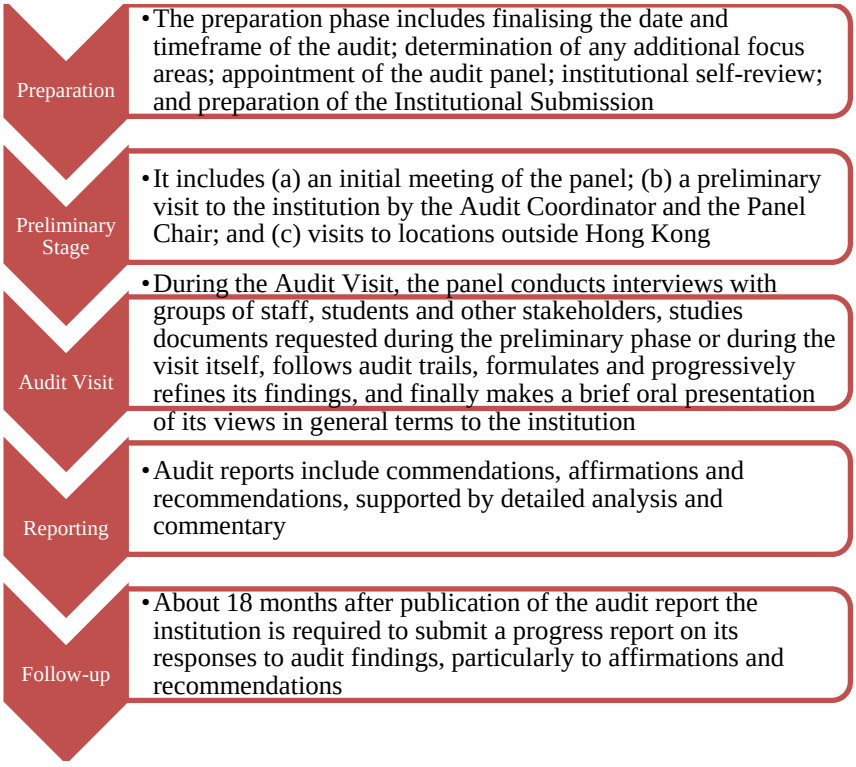
- The quality of student learning is the centerpiece
- There is an emphasis on quality enhancement: audits are intended to help institutions enhance quality rather than penalize them for perceived weaknesses. The QAC constructively engages with institutions and does not position itself to find fault in institutions
- An audit is viewed as a collaboration between the QAC and the institution: the institution is fully involved in all stages of the audit process
- An institution's self-accrediting status is recognised: audits are not an exercise in validating or re-accrediting programmes
- The audit process involves institutional self-evaluation, followed by peer review which makes evidence based findings
- There is no attempt to make comparisons among institutions
- Audits attempt to avoid excessive intrusiveness (UGC, n.d.: 10-11)

QAC adopts a "fitness-for-purpose" approach, recognizing that each HEI has its distinct and differentiated role. QAC does not intend to impose a uniform standard over all HEIs and insists that their performances should be appropriately measured against their own missions and roles. Nevertheless, QAC has identified eleven common focus areas for all UGC-funded HEIs. All the stages of the "teaching and learning" process – planning,

production, content, execution, delivery, and feedback – are covered in the Audit, with eleven common focus areas:

- Articulation of Appropriate Objectives
- Management, Planning and Accountability
- Programme Development and Approval Process
- Programme Monitoring and Review
- Curriculum Design
- Programme Delivery
- Experiential and Other 'Out of Class' Learning
- Assessment
- Teaching Quality and Staff Development
- Student Participation
- Activities Specific to Research Degrees (UGC, n.d.: 14-15)

The QAC auditing process consists of five stages: (1) preparation, (2) preliminary stage, (3) audit visit, (4) reporting, and (5) follow-up.



Source: UGC (n.d.: 18-19)

The most important core stages of the auditing process are the audit visit (the third stage) and reporting (the fourth stage). During the audit visit, the audit panel:

- interviews staff, students and other stakeholders
- peruses documents requested at the Initial Meeting, the Preliminary Visit, or during the Audit Visit itself
- progressively reflects on and discusses the written and verbal material so far presented
- progressively refines findings and draft recommendations
- gives a brief oral presentation of its findings during an exit meeting with the institution's leaders (UGC, n.d.: 31)

Accountability and transparency are two principles promoted by the QAC audit. In determining accountability, the interviews during the 3- to 5-day audit visit are conducted with internal stakeholders (management, senior staff, department heads, student representatives, etc.) within the HEIs, and with external stakeholders, such as graduates, employers and related professional bodies. For transparency subsequent to audits, QAC will publish a public *Report of a Quality Audit* that analyzes the performances of HEIs and makes commendations, affirmations and recommendations. To date the *Report of a Quality Audit* of seven UGC-funded HEIs has been released, attracting widespread media coverage. Subsequent to the release of the audit report, a fifth and final stage occurs, wherein HEIs are required to submit a progress report to QAC detailing improvements incorporated following the audit report. By March 2011, all publicly funded higher education institutions have gone through QAC audits, with the QAC review panel reports outlining achievements and identifying areas for improvement for each institution.

Even though the UGC has made it explicit that QAC audits are intended to induce a quality culture through critical self-reflections rather than ranking institutions with reward or penalty packages, academics within the institutions believe the results of QAC audits would inform funding allocation of the UGC to all publicly funded institutions. In a recent press release, the UGC announced that "[it] intends to achieve greater competition on the basis of merit in the three key funding areas of research: the research portion of the block grant; the Research Grants Council; and research postgraduate places. The heads of the eight institutions are in support of enhanced competition. The UGC has the agreement from them on the need for the new funding arrangement, since the UGC has addressed their concerns and will review the scheme before the end of the 2012-15 triennium" (UGC, 2011a). Intensified competition for public funding in the context of the quest for performance and quality enhancement is most likely.

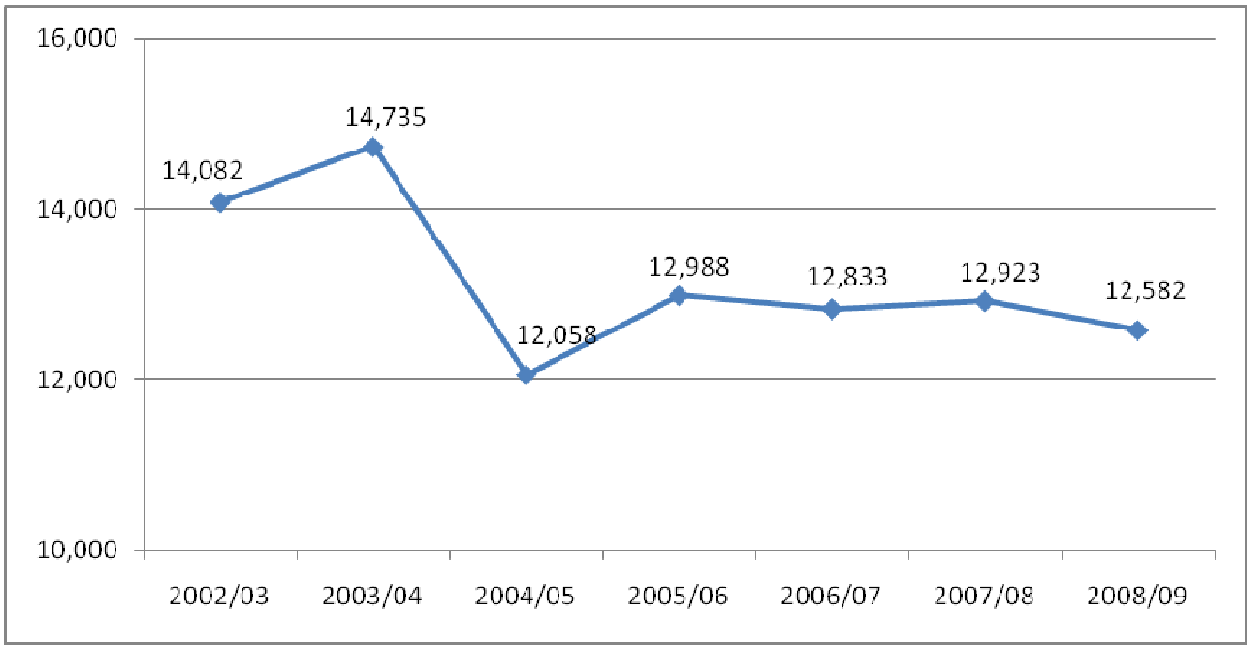
Discussion: Major Challenges and Policy Implications

Quality Assurance for Private Higher Education

Hong Kong higher education has been dominated by the eight UGC-funded HEIs for years, a scenario expected to change amidst its increased privatization. The first trend of privatization has been in self-financing community colleges. Over the past decade,

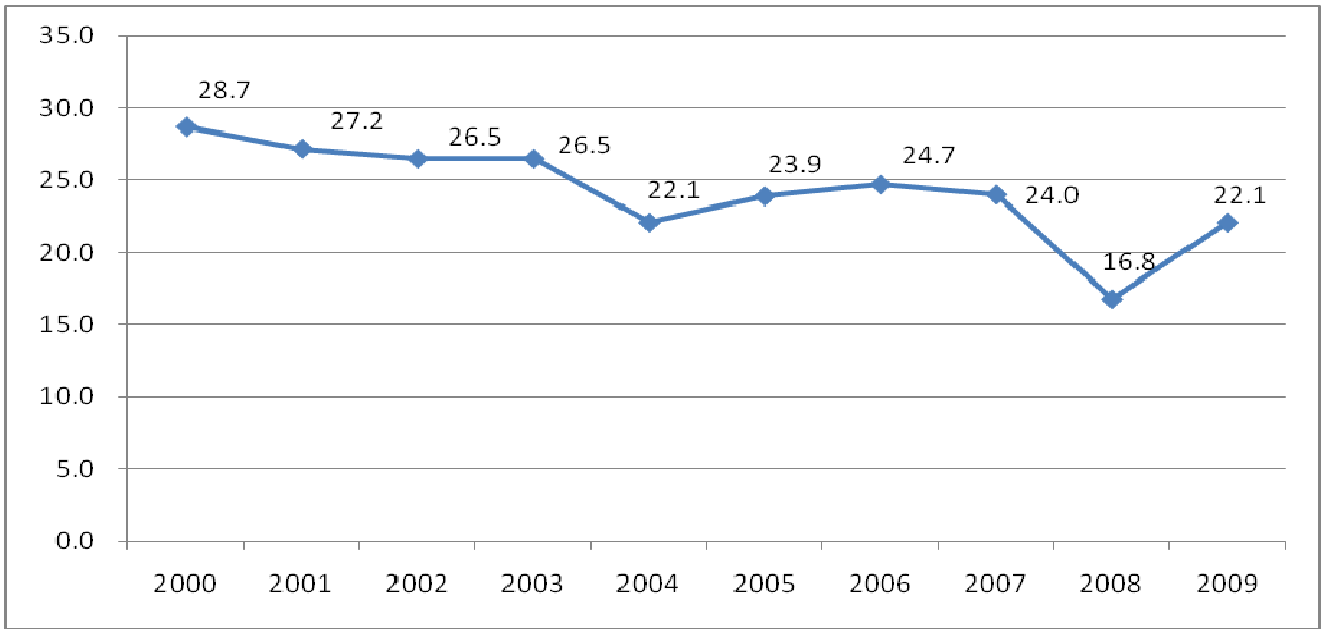
government expenditures for UGC-funded HEIs have declined, in both absolute amounts (Figure 1) or as a share of total government education expenditure (Figure 2). With decreased public resources, HEIs have recently explored various means to secure financial sustainability and prospects for further development. One such is self-financing community colleges that cater to those students failing to enter universities (Table 1).

Figure 1: Grants for UGC-funded Institutions as a Whole, 2002/03 – 2008/09 (HK$m)



Source: UGC, http://cdcf.ugc.edu.hk/cdcf/statIndex.do

Figure 2: Total Amount of Approved Grants as % of Total Government Expenditure on Education, 2000/01 – 2009/10



Source: UGC, http://cdcf.ugc.edu.hk/cdcf/statIndex.do

Table 1: Hong Kong HEIs' Branch Schools Offering Associate Degrees

The University of Hong Kong	HKU School of Professional and Continuing Education HKU Po Leung Kuk Community College
The Chinese University of Hong Kong	Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Community College
The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology	College of Lifelong Learning
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University	Hong Kong Community College
Hong Kong Baptist University	College of International Education
City University of Hong Kong	Community College of City University
Hong Kong Institute of Education	School of Continuing and Professional Education
Lingnan University	Community College at Lingnan University

Source: compiled by the author

The second trend is the emergence of a private university. The Hong Kong Shue Yan University (HKSYU) became the first and only private university in December 2006. Initially called the Hong Kong Shue Yan College, it offered diploma programs to students failing to gain admission to public universities. However, since 2001, before formally recognized as a university, Shue Yan College already offered bachelor degrees. HKSYU now offers twelve degree programs, ranging from arts and social sciences to business. Other potential private university candidates such as Chu Hai College of Higher Education (CHCHE) and the Hang Seng School of Commerce (HSSC) have appeared. CHCHE was approved by the government to confer the bachelor degree from 2004, and in 2009 for a new campus, paving the way for becoming the second private university. Similarly, HSSC now offers top-up courses for students in partnership with the Conventry University in Britain. In early 2010 HSSC established Hang Seng Management College (HSMC) to begin offering bachelor degree programs starting from September 2010.

For these developments, quality assurance mechanisms merely designed to measure the performance and ensure cost-effectiveness of public higher education are deemed inadequate and outmoded. In *Aspirations for the Higher Education System in Hong Kong* of December 2010, UGC voices concerns about the operation of self-financing community colleges by publicly-funded HEIs, noting,

> Public funds should not be used by UGC-funded institutions as cross-subsidies for self-financing educational activities. There should be greater transparency in the financial relationship between UGC-funded institutions and self-financing courses either within the institution or in an affiliate, such as a community college (UGC, 2010: 10).

UGC suggests a clear separation of regulation over public and private higher education and advocates establishing a private version of UGC for quality assurance of self-financing HEIs.

Internationalization undermining Local Scholarship

To date educational restructuring reforms in Hong Kong have been significantly influenced by western managerial-oriented doctrines and neo-liberalist ideologies and practices. Responding to the growing impact of globalization, many Asian states have reviewed their education systems and launched reforms focused on marketization, privatization and corporatization with the intention of improving governance and management (Mok, 2006). In addition, international benchmarking and intensifying competition for ranking in the “Global University League” has inevitably influenced the way that Asian universities are governed. “Internationalization” in Asia means more than following American or Anglo-Saxon standards and practices. Although academic communities in Europe and the United States have been regarded as more “advanced” than their Asian counterparts, HEIs in general and academics in particular must critically reflect on how the so called “good practices” identified from the West can really integrate well with non-western education systems.

Since the return of sovereignty to China in 1997, Hong Kong has not really "de-colonized" in practice, since most of its practices have been influenced by Anglo-Saxon standards or ideologies. The introduction of English as the medium of instruction, the adoption of curricula from Australia, the UK and the USA, sending students abroad to study and establishing international exchanges, coupled with the quest for world class university status as predominately defined by the Anglo-Saxon world, have created a new "dependency culture." An American dominated "hegemony" prevails particularly in relation to league tables, citation indexes and the kind of research tapped by such indexes. Hong Kong and other Asian societies have treated "internationalization" as "westernization" and "modernization" or "Americanization" since the 19th century (Mok and Hawkins, 2010).

European and Asian states alike need to be aware of the differences between policy learning and policy copying. If Asian societies copy policy practices without proper adaptation and careful contextualization, they may easily encounter problems, including a process of re-colonization, resulting in reproducing learning experiences that do not fit the specific cultural and political environments in the East.

The following questions concerning internationalization deserve critical examination: Can the standards and practices commonly available in the West be coherently adapted to Asian traditions and cultures? Would the adoption of such western practices be distorted especially without properly contextual analysis? Most important, would there be only one "international standard" as defined solely by or even dominated by, the Anglo-Saxon paradigm? Who should be involved in defining "international benchmarks"? Without proper contextualization, the adoption of such "global trendy strategies" or "global reform measures" may be proved to be counterproductive in terms of public sector reforms (Fukuyama, 2004).

Enhancing Excellence without a Soul?

The evidence on improving quality assurance in Hong Kong seems to suggest the quality of higher education in the city-state has improved significantly from the early 1990s to the present, especially when the public universities of Hong Kong keep improving in global university ranking exercises. However, the meaning of higher education quality extends beyond university league tables and their inherent limitations. Student learning experiences are critical to broader notions of quality. In fact, many scholars, whether of Asian origins or not, have in recent years pointed out the danger of blind adherence to international university rankings. President Anthony Cheung of The Hong Kong Institute of Education has remarked:

> "Indeed, with today's obsession on world rankings, which more often than not, are methodologically-biased, there is a risk of our universities becoming one-dimensional. Research assessment is driven more by citation indices than a balanced evaluation of the impact on scientific discovery and knowledge creation, as well as contribution to social progress and the enlightenment of humanity. Some eye-catching ranking exercises have the tendency to measure mostly tangible and

> quantifiable performance, but ignore equally important dimensions of a university's role and mission, such as teaching quality, students' learning experience, the nurturing of students' social and global awareness, and the university's contribution towards community and human development." (Cheung, 2010: 2).

Similarly, Professor Steven Schwartz, Vice-Chancellor of Macquarie University has argued that universities have become too focused on imparting knowledge (Macquarie University, 2010). Living in the age of money, modern universities are trying their best to fit in, so that university education is being reduced to vocational training. University of Chicago Professor Martha Nussbaum in *Not For Profit*, (2010) argues that modern tertiary education has lost its way for being too possessive about turning graduates for the labor market rather than nurturing "citizen(s) of the world" able to comprehend, articulate world problems and committed to offer solutions to transform the modern world. Harry Lewis (2006), a Harvard professor for more than thirty years and Dean of Harvard College for eight years, has concluded that our great universities have abandoned their educational mission.

Despite Hong Kong's efforts to develop its range of quality assurance endeavors, we must be frank and critically reflect upon how far the quality enhancement exercises implemented in the last two decades have really enhanced students' learning experiences by nurturing them as excellent graduates and global citizens with a soul.

Conclusion

In the quest for higher quality, broader recognition, more efficient use of resources, Hong Kong's higher education has embarked on a series of quality assurance exercises since the 1990s addressed to teaching and learning (TLQPR and QAC Audit), research (RAE), and management and governance (MR) of publicly-funded HEIs. These various exercises share one basic feature—they are not entirely top-down measures forcefully imposed upon the HEIs by the government. Rather, HEIs are heavily involved in the process and some of their comments (certainly not all) have been taken into account by the government for continuous revision of the quality assurance mechanisms. In a nutshell, UGC mainly sets the quality assurance framework, while leaving many details open to negotiation with HEIs. This kind of "self-regulation" (Neave and Van Vught, 1991) and "steering at a distance" (Kickert, 1995) approach is well-embraced in Hong Kong, for it can uphold the accountability of the HEIs on the one hand while preserving academic freedom and institutional autonomy on the other hand. Most important of all, quality enhancement of higher education is not only about ranking or directed by accountability and a public finance efficiency drive. Even though modern universities could perform well in these exercises with flying color results, whether universities would nurture citizens with global perspectives and caring responsibilities also matters. Running higher education with excellent results but without a soul would fail the core missions of universities.

References

Chan, D. (2007) “Global Agenda, Local Responses: Changing Education Governance in Hong Kong”, *Globalization, Societies & Education* 5(1): 109-124.

Cheng, K. M. (2002) “The Quest for Quality Education: The Quality Assurance Movement in Hong Kong”, in Mok, K. H. and Chan, David K. K. (eds.) *Globalization and Education: The Quest for Quality Education in Hong Kong*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, pp.41-65.

Cheung, A. B. L. (2010) “President’s 16th Congregation Address 2010”, retrieved on 21 June 2011 from http://www.hkied.edu.hk/upload_main/main/file/20101119_speech.pdf

Clark, B. (1998) *Creating Entrepreneurial Universities: Organizational Pathways of Transformation*, New York & Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Currie, J., Petersen, C., and Mok, K. H. (2006) *Academic Freedom in Hong Kong*, Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books.

Davidson-Harden, A. and Schugurensky, D. (2009) “Neoliberalism and Education in Latin America: Entrenched Problems, Emerging Alternatives”, in Hill, D. and Rosskam, E. (eds.) *The Developing World and State Education*, London: Routledge.

Deem, R. (2001) “Globalization, New Managerialism, Academic Capitalism and Entrepreneurialism in Universities; Is the Local Dimension still Important?’, *Comparative Education* 37(1): 7-20.

Deem, R., Mok, K. H., and Lucas, L. (2006) “East Meets West Meets ‘World-Class’: What Is a ‘World-Class’ University in the Context of Europe and Asia and Does It Matter?”, Paper presented at the Consortium of Higher Education Researchers Conference, Kassel, Germany, September 7-9.

Fukuyama, F. (2004) *State-Building: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University.

Jarrar, Y., and Mohamed, Z. (2001) *Becoming World Class Through A Culture of Measurement*, Bradford: Bradford University Management Centre.

Kennedy, K. J. (2011) “Conceptualising Quality Improvement in Higher Education: Policy, Theory and Practice for Outcomes Based Learning in Hong Kong”, *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 33(3): 205-218.

Kickert, W. (1995) “Steering at a Distance: A New Paradigm of Public Governance in Dutch Higher Education”, *Governance*, 8(1): 135-157.

Kwiek, M. (2004) “The Emergent Educational Policies under Scrutiny: the Bologna Process from a Central European Perspective”, *European Educational Research Journal*, 3(4): 1-24.

Lewis, H. R. (2006) *Excellence without a Soul: How a Great University Forgot Education*, New York: Public Affairs.

Liu, N., and Cheng, Y. (2005) “Academic Ranking of World Universities”, *Higher Education in Europe*, 30(2): 127-136.

Macquarie University (2010) “Wise Up: Restoring Wisdom to Universities Lecture”, *Vice-Chancellor’s Annual Lecture*, retrieved on 21 June 2011 from http://www.mq.edu.au/mqvideos/vcLecture3.html.

Marginson, S. (2006) “Dynamics of National and Global Competition in Higher Education”, *Higher Education*, 52(1): 1-39.

Marginson, S., and Considine, M. (2000) *The Enterprise University: Power, Governance and Reinvention in Australia*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Massy, W. F. (1997) “Teaching and Learning Quality-process Review: the Hong Kong Programme”, *Quality in Higher Education*, 3(3): 249-262.

Massy, W. F., and French, N. J. (1997) “Teaching and Learning Quality Process Review – A Review of the Hong Kong Programme”, retrieved on 17 June 2011 from http://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/ugc/publication/prog/tlqpr/twfm_njf5.htm#dynamics

Merisotis, J., and Sadlak, J. (2005) “Higher Education Ranking: Evolution, Acceptance, and Dialogue”, *Higher Education in Europe*, 30(2): 97-101.

Mok, K. H. (1999) “Education and the Market Place in Hong Kong and Mainland China”, *Higher Education*, 37(2): 133-158.

Mok, K. H. (2000) “Impact of Globalization: A Study of Quality Assurance Systems of Higher Education in Hong Kong and Singapore”, *Comparative Education Review*, 44(2): 148-174.

Mok, K. H. (2005) “The Quest for World Class University: Quality Assurance and International Benchmarking in Hong Kong”, *Quality Assurance in Education*, 13(4): 277-304.

Mok, K. H. (2006) *Education Reform and Education Policy in East Asia*, London, Routledge.

Mok, K. H. (2011) “When Neoliberalism Colonizes Higher Education in Asia: Bringing the ‘Public’ Back to the Contemporary University”, in Rhoten, D. (ed.), *Knowledge*

Matters: The Public Mission of the Research University, New York: Columbia University Press, pp.195-230.

Mok, K.H. and Chan. (2002) *Globalization and Education: The Quest for Quality Education in Hong Kong*, Hong Kong Hong Kong University Press.

Mok, K. H., and Cheung, A. B. L. (2011) "Global Aspirations and Strategising for World-class Status: New Form of Politics in Higher Education Governance in Hong Kong", *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 33(3): 231-251.

Mok, K. H., and Hawkins, J. (2010) "The Quest for World-Class Status: Globalization and Higher Education in East Asia", In Lazin, F. et al. (Eds.) *Higher Education and Equality of Opportunity: Cross-National Perspectives*. Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers Inc, pp.123-143.

Mok, K. H., and Welch, A. (eds.) (2003) *Globalization and Educational Restructuring in the Asia Pacific Region*, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Neave, G., and Van Vught, F. A. (1991) "Conclusion", in Neave, G., and Van Vught, F. A. (eds.) Prometheus Bound: The Changing Relationship between Government and Higher Education in Western Europe, Oxford: Pergamon.

Ntshoe, I. and Letseka, M. (2010) "Quality Assurance and Global Competitiveness into Organizational Actors", in Portnoi, L.M., Rust, V.D. and Bagley, S.S. (eds.) *Higher Education, Policy, and the Global Competition Phenomenon*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Nussbaum, M. C. (2010) *Not For Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Research Center of Chinese Scientific Evaluation of Wuhan University (2005) *How Do We Rank the Scientific Research Competition of the World Universities?*, Wuhan: China, Research Center of Chinese Scientific Evaluation of Wuhan University.

QS (2011) *Asian University Rankings 2011*, retrieved on 21 June 2011 from http://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/asian-university-rankings/2011

Times Higher Education (2010) *World University Rankings 2010-11*, retrieved on 21 June 2011 from http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings/2010-2011/top-200.html

TLQPR Review Team (1999) *A Campaign for Quality: Hong Kong Teaching and Learning Quality Process Review*, retrieved on 15 June 2011 from http://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/ugc/publication/prog/tlqpr/tlq_fr_r.htm

University Grants Committee (n.d.) *Quality Assurance Council Audit Manual*, retrieved on 16 June 2011 from http://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/doc/qac/publication/auditmanual.pdf

University Grants Committee (1996) "Research Assessment Exercise 1996 – Guidance (issued on 29 April 1996)", retrieved on 17 June 2011 from http://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/ugc/publication/prog/rae/rae96gn.htm

University Grants Committee (1999) *Management Review of City University of Hong Kong*, retrieved on 17 June 2011 from http://www.cityu.edu.hk/op/Management_Review/English/Report/report.pdf

University Grants Committee (2000) "Research Assessment Exercise 1999 – Local Universities Achieve Remarkable Research Results", retrieved on 17 June 2011 from http://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/ugc/publication/press/2000/pr170500.htm

University Grants Committee (2005) "RAE 2006 – Guidance Notes", retrieved on 17 June 2011 from http://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/doc/ugc/publication/prog/rae/rae_2006.pdf

University Grants Committee (2007a) "Excellent Results from the Research Assessment Exercise 2006", retrieved on 17 June 2011 from http://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/ugc/publication/press/2007/pr02032007.htm

University Grants Committee (2007b) "Mission Statement", retrieved on 16 June 2011 from http://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/qac/about/mission/mission.htm

University Grants Committee (2007c) "Seminar on Quality Assurance for Higher Education", retrieved on 17 June 2011 from http://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/ugc/publication/speech/2007/sp20070519.htm

University Grants Committee (2010) *Aspirations for the Higher Education System in Hong Kong – Report of the University Grants Committee*, retrieved on 16 June 2011 from http://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/ugc/publication/report/her2010/her2010.htm

University Grants Committee (2011a) "Broad Agreement from Heads of Institutions on New Arrangements to Allocate Research Funding", retrieved on 21 June 2011 from http://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/ugc/publication/press/2011/pr10062011.htm

University Grants Committee (2011b) *UGC Annual Report 2010-11*, retrieved on 21 June 2011 from http://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/ugc/publication/report/AnnualRpt_2010-11.htm

Zhejiang University (2006) *A Report on the First Session of the International Academic Advisory Committee for University Evaluation*, Hangzhou, Zhejiang University.

Massification and Quality Assurance in Korean Higher Education: Market Competition and Government Policy

Sunwoong **Kim**

Department of Economics
University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee

Introduction

In these early years of the twenty first century, Korea has quite an extensive system of higher education (HE) with more than three million students enrolled in about 400 higher education institutions (HEIs). The HE enrollment rate is one of the highest in the world. More than 80% of high school graduates advance to higher education institutions, and about 50% of them head to four-year universities. According to Trow (2005), who classifies higher education systems (HES) as elite, mass, and universal, Korea's higher education would be certainly regarded as "universal." Such a high rate of participation is a result of very rapid expansion of the system, as it was only about 1% in 1950 (see Kim 2008 for more detail on the expansion).

In the international comparison, Korea is in an enviable position in terms of its achievements in higher education during its relatively short period of modernization. In addition to the high participation rate, gender inequality in higher education has been virtually eliminated. Also, Korea's top universities climb up steadily in the well known international rankings of universities such as Academic Rankings of World Universities (www.arwu.org) by Shanghai Jiao Tong University and the Times-QS University Rankings (www.topuniversities.com). Both in quality and quantity, Korea's higher education system (HES) has been moving forward very nicely.

As the expansion of higher education is a worldwide phenomenon (Windolf 1992), Korea's experience provides an interesting case for policy-makers in many developing economies. How did Korea achieve such a rapid expansion in record time while improving the performance of its top universities? What were the main challenges that Korea had to deal with? What were the major policy trade-offs? To what extent can Korea's experience be duplicated in other economies? This paper attempts to answer those questions by analyzing the Korean experience in more detail.

Objectives and Trade-offs in Higher Education Policy

Before we explore Korea's case, it would be useful to examine common policy objectives of educational planners in the era of massification of higher education. In virtually all economies, government plays important roles in HES. It provides not only financial support to HE institutions and student/parents, but the regulatory environment in which incentives and overall performance of HES are determined. At the same time,

as in most economies, the private sector plays important roles in the system as well. (See Kim et al. 2007 for more discussion on the issue).

HES provides several important socio-econo-political functions in the national economy. First, from the human resource development perspective HES educate and train future workers. The quality and quantity of the graduates determines future labor supply and growth potential of the economy. In an age of globalized knowledge economy, it is important for a nation to produce not only the quantity but the quality workers in order to stay or become competitive. Second, education in general and higher education in particular has been recognized as a key mechanism of upward social mobility. Therefore it is important to devise a HES in which students of lower socio-economic status can reasonably gain access to and succeed in the system. Third, HES is a backbone of political development, as universities often provide forums where non-mainstream ideas are tolerated. The recent democratic uprising of several Arabic countries attests to the fact that HES is an important element of building democracy.

As such diverse functions of HES are well recognized, various policy objectives such as access, equality, excellence, low cost, democratic governance, or academic freedom arise. However, many higher education policy goals often conflict with each other and importance of any particular goal may change over time. Therefore, it is important to evaluate policy priorities periodically within the context of the existing socio-econo-political environment. In particular, excellence and equity of HES often surface as a fundamental trade-off.

In an elite higher education system, providing excellence is a relatively straightforward goal. High quality higher education can only be obtained by the combination of good students, good faculty, and good facility (Winston 1999). In the publicly funded elite system (such as in Meiji Japan era) where government finances most HE expenditures, quality can be obtained through rigorous student selection. Equity can be maintained as long as a wide range of students (including those from low socio-economic status) can successfully be admitted. With private system funding (such as much of the US system), equity could be maintained if there were enough need-based scholarships funded either by the government or the HE institutions.

In an era of massification, achieving quality is more complex. In addition to the fundamental question of how to finance the necessary resource the following related issues need to be addressed: 1) Entering students should be prepared for rigorous college curriculum; 2) There must be sufficient number of trained academic staff and they should be paid enough to stay in the system; 3) The educational facilities should be adequate enough to support the educational mission; and 4) The graduates should be able to pursue meaningful careers. Overlooking the above-mentioned consideration may result in not only the waste of resources but also serious undesirable side effects.

In massified HES, three public policy objectives involving finance commonly arise: affordability, low tax rate, and quality of education. The unfortunate truth is that these three cannot be satisfied simultaneously, necessitating trade-offs. Affordability may be

achieved with a low tax rate, but the inevitable result is lower quality. For high quality and affordability, high government subsidy (and high tax rate) is inevitable. If quality and low tax rates are desired, affordability must be sacrificed.

Higher education affordability is a financial burden to students and parents. Therefore, affordability is the main indicator of access. Obviously, affordability is not an issue to high income households. But, to low and middle income households, absolute amount of tuition payment and relative share to their disposable income critically determine whether and which higher education they pursue. However, while affordability of higher education is an attractive policy goal, the blind pursuit of this goal would be counter-productive, as it would be difficult to provide higher quality education without adequate resources.

Levels of government subsidy to higher education are highly political. High tax rates are unpopular and create a distortion in the national economy. They discourage the labor incentive and may generate the flight of capital and highly productive labor out of the economy. The long-term negative consequence of high tax rates is often weighed against the short-term unpopularity should a government increase taxes to finance higher education.

A related policy consequence of government subsidy is how to channel the public fiscal resource to the end-user. One primary method is for government to supply higher education directly by establishing and operating colleges and universities. Another is to subsidize public or private institutions by grants and awards. A third is to give subsidies to households through grants and loans for college education. Policy makers need to be aware of the advantages and disadvantages of such alternatives.

Overview of Korean Higher Education System

In 2010, there were more than 411 higher education institutions (HEIs) in Korea, out of which 42 are public institutions. About 40% of them are four-year universities and another 40% are junior colleges. Total enrollment in higher education in 2010 was more than 3.6 million. More than 2.4 million students were enrolled in universities, about 750,000 students in junior colleges, and the rest in open universities and online universities. Somewhat more than 80 percent of high school graduates advance to higher education, and about 50% of age cohorts between 19 and 21 years old are in four-year universities, and an additional 20% in junior colleges. The gross enrollment figure reported to OECD for Korea (85%) is one of the highest in the world (Clancy and Goastellec 2006).

Universal HE is the result of a very rapid expansion that started around 1980. Noteworthy characteristics of the Korean HES are: 1) The household sector finances a very large portion of the system; 2) It is very hierarchical in terms of quality and reputation (Lee et al. 2003); 3) it is becoming more deregulated, although the legacy of strong government control remains (Kim and Lee 2006). These characteristics have been formed through a complicated interaction between market forces and government

policy throughout Korea's modern history.

The experience of Korean HE expansion is quite instructive. As is well known the biggest determinant of the size of HE is the number of graduates from secondary schools. Therefore, it is natural that the expansion of HE would be preceded by the expansion of secondary education, and the expansion of secondary education is preceded by the expansion of primary education. The cascading expansion of different levels of the educational system is due to the serendipitous combination of several administrations that often pursue very different education policies.

In the case of Korea, the expansion of primary education started in the late 1950s. In the aftermath of colonialism and the devastation of the Korean War, Rhee Syngman government pushed for universal primary education. While the ideology of universal primary education to build a new democracy and civil society was appealing, there simply was not enough financial resource. The lack of public resources to deliver universal primary education resulted in a high student/teacher ratio and the introduction of massive private sector involvement. As the government devoted its limited resources in primary education, secondary and HE was severely underfunded. Consequently, many private schools driven by the profit motive enter into those markets. So a dualistic system was developed (good quality public schools with low tuition and bad quality private schools with high tuition). However, there was one feature that made Korean higher education and secondary education very efficient. That was a complete school choice at both levels. All junior high schools (grades 7-9) and senior high schools (grades 10-12) select students based on entrance examinations. The nationwide entrance examination for better middle schools and high schools (high quality despite its low cost of attendance) created high stake rent seeking behavior in the form of private tutoring. In short, the expansion of education without enough public resources in the system of school choice and elite public schools resulted in rampant private tutoring and a corrupted private school system both in secondary and tertiary education.

The succeeding Park Chung-Hee government adopted a strong developmental agenda with heavy government intervention. The success of the universal primary schooling by the earlier Rhee administration produced a large number of primary school graduates and rising demand for secondary education. At the same time, because of the successful push for industrialization and rapidly expanding exports in light manufacturing industries, demand for secondary school graduates, particularly in technical fields, grew rapidly. In response to these socio-economic changes, the Park administration adopted the equalization policy in secondary schools and strict enrollment quota in tertiary schools. The equalization policy eliminated entrance examinations for secondary schools. In return, private schools are given financial subsidy. In essence, the government made private schools de facto public. While one of the most important goals of the equalization policy was to reduce the private tutoring burden, its major effect was the rapid expansion of enrollment in secondary schools. As the government viewed HE as a political foe (university students continuously challenged the legitimacy of the dictatorial government) and the breeding grounds for academic corruption, enrollment was suppressed through strict admission quotas.

However, the right of institutions to select students was not taken away. With the limited number of graduates and the burgeoning economy, the financial returns in college education stayed very high. So the rent seeking private tutoring game moved up to the college level. As private universities were faced with excess demand of HE, most of them could maintain their fiscal viability and high quality of students at the same time.

As the dictatorial government gave way to full blown democratization, the subsequent governments had to loosen up regulations on HES according to the popular demand: first by increasing the enrollment quota (in 1980) during the Chun Doo-Hwan administration; second by deregulation of the rules in establishing HE institutions (in 1995) during the Kim Young-Sam administration. During this early stage of rapid expansion, the returns to higher education were still very high as the economy grew rapidly and the new industrial structure demanded more educated workers. So existing private schools could easily expand their size, and many new HE institutions were established. The holy grail of the complete school choice was maintained throughout the period of rapid expansion, and the rankings and reputation of institutions played very important roles in the competition among students.

Because of the increased number of slots and fewer high school graduates (due to rapidly decreasing reproductive rates), the excess demand for college entrance has completely disappeared. Consequently, private colleges and universities that rely on tuition payments for most of their revenue are faced with heavy financial pressure, competing hard to attract more students including students from abroad, particularly from China.

This rapid expansion has necessitated a significant increase in HE spending. According to OECD (2010), Korea, which spent 2.4% of its GDP in higher education in 2007, ranks third after the U.S. and Canada. With its high enrollment rate, Korea's spending is not particularly surprising. What is surprising, however, is that Korea's higher education sector has been mostly financed by private funding, notably by tuition fees charged to students. Out of Korea's 2.4% spending in higher education, 1.9% (about 80%) was funded by the private sector. It ranks the second in the world in terms of the share of private spending in higher education measured as the percentage of GDP, after Chile. How can Korea finance the expansion of HE mainly by private funding? It is mainly because of the competition for better and more education among students and their parents.

Rankings and Quality Assurance in the Korean HES

The competition to enter better universities has been one of the most important long standing institutions for the last six decades of the modern Korean higher education system. The specifics of the student selection process have changed substantially over the years. In fact, different administrations used the method of student selection as one of the key education policies to introduce changes. However, the fact that the student selection is based on free competition means the integrity of the process has been maintained relatively well.

One can find the root of the competitive entrance process in the historical institution of “kawgeo”, the open scholarly competition to recruit high ranking government officials. It was adopted from Ming Chinese and had been used for several hundred years during the Koryo and the Yi Dynasties. Even in modern Korea, “koshi (kodeung Koshi)” has been used to select judges, prosecutors, high-ranking civil servants, technocrats, and diplomats. Selecting elites through open competition remains a respected social norm in Korea.

Another important social phenomenon in creating the meritocracy is the repeated collapse of the existing social class system resulting from radical political changes, brought by the introduction of Japanese colonialism and the devastation of the Korean War. These social traumas destroyed the traditional class system and created a new order, giving more importance to human capital over other assets such as land or physical capital. Overall, the Korean modernization experience created the social conditions in which education is a main vehicle of success and upward social mobility.

Economic theories predict complete student and school choice necessarily result in a hierarchical structure among HE institutions. When better students seek better faculty, and better teachers want better students, the reputation of the institution is the key mechanism to match the two groups. The rewards of success in the university admission game have been quite substantial in Korea. First, the cost of attending the best public universities such as SNU and KAIST has been much cheaper than lower-ranking private universities. Second, better universities have more extensive alumni networks. As the Korean economy was relatively closed and small, the positive network externality of attending better universities offers greater opportunities in one’s future. Third, off-campus employment opportunities (such as tutoring secondary school students) are substantially superior for better-ranked university students. Fourth, given the excess demand of university graduates until 1995, university graduates can obtain meaningful employment with relative ease. Therefore, college students did not have to exert great effort in academic works. In short, sheepskins were more important than the academic performance at the university. Consequently, the household efforts were concentrated on rent-seeking competition to enter better universities.

While the cost of providing higher quality education is generally higher, the actual tuition payments may not be radically different, and the cost may shift student preferences to some extent. First, public universities typically cost less than private ones because of government subsidy. Second, top ranked universities can attract more governmental funding for research, philanthropic donations, corporate donations, and so on. These considerations make high ranked public universities most attractive and low ranking private institutions least attractive.

The higher value of diplomas from better universities naturally generated rankings among education consumers. When university admissions were determined by entrance examinations for each department, the “cut line” for each department in each university was publicized. Consequently, the detailed rankings based on the admission

cut line was used to rank departments and universities among guidance counselors in high schools and college preparatory cram schools (“hakwons”). As the information of these cut lines for each department in each university was well publicized, such rankings were used to sort students very effectively. In short, even before the recent ranking frenzy, Korean HES has been subject to intense public interest in rankings, and this information has been used rather efficiently by education consumers and the institutions.

Departmental quotas were eliminated in the mid 1990s, but institution-wide admission and free choice of major/department was blocked by unpopular departments. The subsequent compromise allowed universities to admit students in groups of related majors (e.g., social sciences or engineering rather than economics or mechanical engineering) and limited choice of major among the related majors. At the same time, major news media started to enter into the ranking game. In 1997, *Joong-Ang Daily Newspaper* started to publish university rankings similar to the *U.S. News and World Report.* The need for such rankings became more important when the U.S. university market grew nationally in scope and the demand for college information by students and parents increased. As the U.S. higher education system is large (more than 4,000 institutions) and complex (in terms of region, size, mission, and so on), such attempt is a natural market consequence. A notable feature of the U.S. News ranking is that it classifies institutions in 10 groups: research university vs. teaching, national vs. regional and so on. While the rankings use 16 areas of data related to academic excellence, the specific criteria, quantified metrics, and the weights vary for each category.

As of 2010, the Joong-Ang Daily rankings are based on four major criteria: Educational environment (95 points), degree of internationalization (70 points), faculty research (115 points), and reputation and social recognition (70 points). It publishes rankings for specific majors or fields as well as comprehensive rankings. In 2010, the top five comprehensive universities are; KAIST, POSTECH, Seoul National University, Yonsei University, and Korea University, and ranking has been fairly stable since the beginning of the exercise.

Chosun Daily Newspaper, another major newspaper in Korea joined the ranking frenzy by being associated with Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) which joined forces with *The Sunday Times* in 2003 in ranking world universities. Asian universities are included in the Chosun-QS ranking. QS used four major criteria: research capability (60%), educational environment (20%), reputation (10%), and internationalization (10%).

In contrast to the Joong-Ang rankings that focus on national ranking, Chosun-QS is an international ranking. Also, faculty research capability is weighted more heavily. In this regard, Joong-Ang rankings are for education consumers looking for a better college experience domestically, and Chosun-QS rankings are for administrators in higher education and government policy to look for international recognition and global competitiveness and for students who plan to study abroad.

The top 20 Asian Universities comprise the most widely quoted results of the Chosun-QS ratings. The Asian region (as defined by this ranking) covers 11 economies including China, Japan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, and Vietnam. Overall, Korean universities are moving up steadily in the top Asian universities rankings mostly due to increased faculty publications and internationalization. In the most recent 2011 rankings, Seoul National University ranks sixth following the Univ. of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Univ. of Science and Technology, Singapore National Univ., Chinese University of Hong Kong, and Tokyo Univ. Among other Korean Universities, KAIST ranks 11th, POSTECH 12th, Yonsei 18th, and Korea 26th. Most major Korean universities have been gaining ground steadily in the ranking, mostly due to the fact that publication records of the faculty and international reputation among peers have been improving.

Recently, Korea started a new quality assurance program through accreditation in tandem with an ambitious income-contingent education loan program. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) appointed two organizations as official accreditation agencies: the Korean Council for University Education (KCUE) for four-year institutions, and the Korean Council for College Education (KCCE) for two- and three-year institutions. The system is expected to be in full operation in 2014.

The new accreditation system closely follows the U.S. model in several key aspects. First, the major incentive for institutions to be accredited is the financial gain. Without accreditation, universities and colleges cannot attract students, because students are able to secure subsidized educational loans by attending unaccredited institutions. Second, the accreditation agencies themselves are not government agencies, but independent organizations whose members are higher education institutions. So, at least in principle, evaluations are based on peer review. Third, the outcome of the review process is pass/fail/conditional pass without rankings. Fourth, self-evaluation is conducted by the applicant before the outside reviewers visit the institution and give full deliberation. Sixth, institutions need to be accredited periodically; in the Korean case, every five years.

Clearly the main objective of the new accreditation system is to do away with direct government bureaucracy in decision making and to promote quasi-market competition among institutions through more institutional transparency and accountability through peer evaluation. While the U.S. accreditation system has evolved over a century from the bottom up without any government intervention, the Korean system was introduced by a government mandate. In fact the introduction of market competition by government mandate has not been uncommon in Korea, as the economy borrowed many new institutions from more advanced economies.

The exact procedure and the criteria of accreditation have not been determined completely yet. In November 2010, KCUE announced an accreditation proposal. According to the proposal, the six major criteria for accreditation are: educational objective and development plan, faculty, curriculum, facility, finance and governance, and social service. In the same year, KCUE announced similar but simpler accreditation

guidelines for junior colleges.

One of the key criteria for accreditation is whether the institution can fill its seats for the entering class and maintain substantial class size in the subsequent year. In the era of declining potential students, institutions, particularly for lower ranking private institutions located outside of the capital region, attracting enough students is crucial for survival.

While the new accreditation process will cause some institutions to exit the HE marketplace, it is likely to create intense rent seeking activities among lower-ranking colleges and universities. 70% of the evaluation criteria are supposed to be qualitative. However, as peer evaluation has not been used effectively in Korea because of the economy's size and communal cultural heritage, it would be a challenge to implement such a process with integrity.

Another important government initiative is the requirement to disclose information about higher education institutions on the internet. Since 2008, highly detailed information regarding students, faculty, finance, scholarships and grade distribution, SCI publication per faculty, total scholarship given, and so on are disclosed, and these standard statistics of the HEIs could be found at the one-stop government information agency, http://www.academyinfo.go.kr/. There is also an accompanying site for primary and secondary schools.

Evaluation and future challenges

What enabled the Korean HES to achieve massification and upgrade its quality simultaneously in a relatively short time? In my view, the answers can be found in three areas: vigorous domestic competition, active internationalization, and accompanying strong economic growth.

The internal drive of education fever works not only as a mechanism for human capital investment but as the sorting mechanism of talents within the nation. Given the continual large premium of higher education, the private demand for HE sustained the growth of the HE sector. The premium that started due to the admission quota continued because of successful economic growth. Without economic success, Korea would not have generated the demand for universal HE. However, throughout the 1990s, the overall college premium decreased substantially. Additionally, the change of the industrial structure to a new global knowledge economy maintained the university premium for top ranked universities and specific disciplines. Therefore, the competition for better universities never diminished. But the nature of the competition is more for sorting (and rent-seeking) rather than for the human capital accumulation. Recently, the financial returns in lower ranking universities and unpopular disciplines became quite low, as those graduates cannot find meaningful employment to utilize their education. Many overqualified college graduates drop out of the labor force, engage in part-time employment, or seek further education.

Active internationalization also played an important role in the successful transformation of the Korean HES. Internationalization has several dimensions. First, it involves study abroad. For students, study abroad opens a greater opportunity for education that cannot be obtained domestically. In the case of Korea, study abroad is an opportunity for talented students (particularly graduate students who could not obtain a comparable education domestically) to seek further opportunities. The relationship with the U.S., because of its active participation in the Korean War, opened the gate for many Korean students. As the quality of faculty and educational facility was rudimentary up until the 1970s, U.S. doctoral institutions were the primary destination for talented graduate students who seek their PhD.'s.

Brain drain can be a serious issue in many developing economies. In the case of Korea, brain gain rather than brain drain occurred because of the growing Korean economy. These two issues (brain gain and economic growth) are interrelated. Without the economic growth, brain gain would not have happened. The economic growth was a result of continuing brain gain. In this regard, public policy and the role of the government are crucial. In the case of Korea, the push for attracting foreign trained PhD.'s in science, technology, and economics during the Park administration in the 1960s was an effective big push (Kim 2010).

A second aspect of internationalization is the improvement of research capability of the graduate faculty. As the production of academic research is heavily concentrated in advanced economies, the linkage to the core economies is an effective method to upgrade domestic research capability. Many Korean PhD.'s who earned their degrees from top universities in the U.S. and other advanced economies provided the key human resource pool for the faculty in top Korean universities. The emphasis on international publication such as Science Citation Index was a strong incentive mechanism for generating international recognition. At the same time, without sufficient domestic competition, Korea would not have been able to generate academic talents who successfully finish their graduate works in advanced economies. Even though their training and language ability were not completely satisfactory, the peer students in the elite institutions were comparable to the students in the global research universities.

In short, the combination of vigorous competition in HES, active internationalization, and economic growth created a virtual cycle in the Korean HES. Government policy (sometimes by design and other times advertently) played important roles in starting and sustaining the cycle.

However, the modern HES in Korea is not free of serious challenges. First, there must be a mechanism that nonviable HE institutions retire. A typical exit strategy of a HEI would be different depending on its governance structure in Korea. For public universities, it requires political adjustment of the conflicting interests among government, faculty, and students. Restructuring of private institutions is more difficult in Korea. As many private institutions are de facto for-profit, the founder and the related group would suffer losses to release control of the institution, and consequently there are strong incentives to continue operations against better judgment.

Second, the era of high premium for college graduates is over. The growing unemployment rate and lower labor force participation rate among college graduates has become a serious social problem. Serious mismatches exist between job requirements and educational attainment, and young graduates are reluctant to take unfulfilling low-paying jobs. The issue is not the access to HE per se, but to quality education that can lead to a meaningful career afterwards for the masses.

Third, the current administration seeks transparency through more public disclosure of information and accountability through decentralized decision making. If successfully implemented, the new system would avoid direct regulation and micro management by the government and rely more on peer evaluation and market competition. However, the size of the market in Korea is relatively small to make the peer review process anonymous. The lack of anonymity generates intensive lobbying efforts that may distort the system. However as it is still in the infant stage, the results have yet to be seen.

References

Clancy, Patrick and Gaële Goastellec (2007), "Exploring Access and Equity in Higher Education: Policy and Performance in a Comparative Perspective," *Higher Education Quarterly*, vol. 61, no. 2, pp. 136-154.

Kim, S. (2010), "From Brain Drain to Brain Competition: Changing Employment Opportunities and Career Pattern of U.S.-Trained Korean Academics," in Charles T. Clotfelter, ed., *American Universities in a Global Market*, National Bureau of Economic Research Book, The University of Chicago Press, pp. 335-369.

Kim, S. (2008), "Rapid Expansion of Higher Education in Korea: Political Economy of Education Fever," in *The Worldwide Transformation of Higher Education*, International Perspectives on Education and Society Series Vol. 9, edited by David P. Baker and Alexander W. Wiseman, Emerald Publishing: Oxford, UK., pp. 223-268.

Kim, S. and Ju-Ho Lee (2006), "Changing Facets of Higher Education in Korea: Market Competition and the Role of the State," *Higher Education*, vol. 52, pp. 557-587.

Kim, S., Zulfiqar Gilani, Pablo Landoni, Nakanyike Musisi, and Pedro Teixeira (2007), "Rethinking Public-Private Mix in Higher Education: Global Trends and National Policy Challenges," *Higher Education in the New Century: Global Challenges and Innovative Ideas*, edited by Philip G. Altbach and Patti M. Peterson, Chestnut, MA: Center for International Higher Education, Boston College, pp. 79-108.

Korea Ministry of Education, Education Statistics Yearbook, various years.

Lee, Ju-Ho, S. Kim and Seung-Bo Kim (2003), "Hankoog Daehakeoi Seoyeolkwa Kyungjaeng [Ranking and Competition among Korean Colleges and Universities],"

Kyungjaehak Yeongu [Economic Studies], vol. 51, no. 2, pp. 5-36, June 2003. (in Korean)

OECD (2010), Education at a Glance, Paris: OECD.

Trow, Martin A. (2005), “Reflections on the Transition from Elite to Mass to Universal Access: Forms and Phases of Higher Education in Modern Societies since WW II,” in *International Handbook of Higher Education, Part One: Global Themes and Contemporary Challenges,* edited by James J. F. Forest and Philip G. Altbach, Berlin, Germany: Springer, pp. 243-280.

Windolf, Paul (1992), “Cycle of Expansion in Higher Education, 1870-1985: An International Comparison,” *Higher Education* 23, pp. 3-20.

Winston, Gordon (1999), “Subsidies, Hierarchy and Peers: The Awkward Economics of Higher Education,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* Vol. 13 No. 1.

Russian Universities in the World Race to the Top: What Can Be Learned So Far?

by Olga Bain

George Washington University

Introduction

The extension of university and college ranking to the global scale over the last decade—such as by Shanghai Jiao Tong University, *Times Higher Education*,[1] and most recently (since 2010) by *U.S. News and World Report*—prompted new definitions of quality in higher education, epitomized in the phrase "world class universities." The concept does not have a single definition and, as Philip Altbach has observed, "everyone wants it, no one knows what it is, and no one knows how to get one" (quoted in Wildavsky 2010, p. 70). In the absence of other university models, Altbach is also convinced that a world-class university, "an institution at the top of a prestige and quality hierarchy," is a research university (Altbach 2007, p. 7). It is an institution intensely focused on the creation and dissemination of knowledge, and hence is a key to the knowledge economy and the globalization of science and scholarship. "All world-class universities are research universities, without exception. But not all research universities are world-class, nor should they be" (ibid.).

The idea of a world class university has indeed been taken very seriously by governments around the world. It is impossible to deny nations the desire to have at least one of their own. Hence there is a question how to establish one. In the 2009 World Bank publication, Jamil Salmi summarized the three major pathways to establishing world class universities by: (1) upgrading existing institutions, (2) merging existing institutions, and (3) creating new institutions (Salmi 2009, pp. 35-50). While all of these approaches are initiated by national governments, the report briefly mentions the potential role of regional and provincial governments and of the private sector either as a significant funding source or as represented in governing boards (p. 51). Although these three organizational approaches may seem self-evident, of great interest are specific cases of success (and equally of failure), the reasons why creating new institutions appears more feasible than reforming the old institutions, and whether a success story in one setting is transferable to a success in another one.

By the time of the 2009 World Bank publication, the Russian government was already acting and preparing to act on all of the three approaches and much more. This paper reviews the undergoing and planned governmental initiatives to qualitatively transform Russian universities and make them globally competitive. In addition to the review of these major state-initiated reforms, the paper outlines the current context of higher education in Russia, highlights the university-level practices aimed at improving their

[1] THE has been previously known as *Times Higher Education Supplement* (THES).

quality, and discusses potential conflicts in the implementation of the state initiatives. While many governments around the world are taking seriously the global position of their top universities, the focus of this paper is on the interplay of particular state policies with the specific context of higher education in Russia today.

Context of Russian Higher Education

Challenges and changes since mid 1980s

Russian universities drove on a bumpy road since the country's transition to the market economy in the mid 1980s. The biggest motivator on this uneasy route was sustained by the general societal democratization. It translated in university quarters into greater faculty and student freedom in thought and curriculum matters, greater university autonomy in administrative decisions from outside control (e.g., in appointing, promoting and rewarding faculty, opening new programs and transforming the old ones, setting up international linkages, resource-allocating and revenue-generating decisions and others), democratic governance procedures of elected officers and university presidents, and new practices of broad university participation in governance (Bain 2003). The higher education sector developed into a much more diverse system with a great number of individual universities eager to reinvent themselves. Rapid and often wrenching changes in the larger society, economy, politics, and public policies presented additional challenges to higher education. Central state policies, often times too narrowly focused on providing new incentives for higher educational institutions, neglected to remove constraints and policy incongruence. Frequent changes of structure and functions in state agencies overseeing higher education led to rapidly changing rules and their excessive formalization rather than their working as effective accountability instruments.

New Academic Structures and Status Hierarchies

Today the Russian higher education system comprises 1,134 universities and colleges, including 660 public and 474 private higher educational institutions--up from 502 public institutions in 1985. The system has developed a solid private sector—about 42% of the total number of higher educational institutions. Most students, however, are enrolled in public higher educational institutions—83% of the total enrollments (Higher School of Economics 2010, Goskomstat 2000). The student enrollments expanded threefold from 2.5 million students in 1983 to 7.5 million students in 2008. The Soviet-type binary system of university enrollments (kept at 10% of the total enrollments through the 1960-1980s) and poly/technical and other specialized institutions (90%) has become more blurred today. Some institutions of higher education keep their original names but many technical institutions have expanded the range of their programs and fields, introduced general education studies, and have become upgraded into universities. There is still a distinction between the more elitist, old classical universities and the poly/technical universities; however this also is becoming blurred. The prestige status of a university is becoming more often associated with the profitability of the industrial sector, to the employment to which the training leads, e.g., the energy sector, oil and gas extraction and processing, transportation, financial securities, or is related to the geographical

cluster of better employment opportunities—typically Moscow and St. Petersburg. Most higher educational institutions in the early 1990s were open to change, often pressured to do so for their mere survival in the wake of the nation's economic decline and the curtailed state subsidies. The experimentation with various educational forms—general education programs in addition to specialized programs, tiered progression to advanced and more specialized education and training (Bachelor's and Master's levels), accumulation of credit hours, project-oriented and module-based curricula to name a few—occurred on a large scale. While this resembles some of the major goals set forth by the Bologna Process, its development in Russia was besieged by numerous problems: both those specific to the Russian higher education situation and those common to the other systems that were committed to the Bologna Process.

Drastic Shortage of Public Funding and Emergence of Enrollment-Driven Economy of HEd

Russian higher education had to transform itself in the context of drastically reduced state funding, once the only funding source for the sector under the Soviet system, and to diversify its financial base primarily through charging tuition, while most of the industries that were expected to hire its graduates collapsed. The *enrollment-driven economy of higher education* emerged, and it continues to be the most significant driver of the higher education sector today. The proportion of tuition-paying students continues to grow from year to year: from 6.6% in public and newly established private universities in 1993 to 61.9% in 2008 (Bain 2001, Higher School of Economics 2010). The majority of tuition-paying students are enrolled in public universities: 72% in 2008 vs. 59.3% in 1993, while the total higher education enrollment increased over the 15-year period (1993-2008) threefold from 2.5 million students to 7.5 million students (ibid.). The rate of increase of tuition-paying students has been much higher in public universities than in private institutions. This expansionist model of higher education deserves credit for increasing Russia's tertiary education participation rate and, according to the most recent available UNESCO data (2008), puts Russia eleventh worldwide and sixth (after Korea, Finland, the USA, New Zealand, and Denmark) when compared to the OECD countries on this indicator (UIS UNESCO online data indicators) and above the average rate for North America and Western Europe: at 77% in 2008, up from 55% in 1987 (after a dip to 43% in 1995). Overall, in 2010 Russia has been ranked above all of the OECD countries in terms of the tertiary education attainment rate of its adult population (25-64 year olds) at 54% and well above the OECD average of 28% (OECD 2010, p. 36). Russia was ranked fourth (after Japan, Korea and Denmark, and tied with France) in terms of completion rates of first university or tertiary vocational programs combined (tertiary types 5A and B) (OECD 2010, p. 79). This expansionist model of higher education will be sustained in the future if there is a comparable or higher supply of domestic students and/or competitive programs reaching out to new groups such as international and adult students, and through non-mainstream educational modes such as online education, executive and cohort education, and the like.

Demographic Challenges and Early Institutional Responses

With the ever-increasing dependence on revenue-generating enrollments, the Russian higher education sector is facing yet another challenge: a drastic decrease of the higher education traditional age students as a result of the twice dwarfed birth rates in the late 1990s as compared to 1985: 8.3 births per a thousand of inhabitants in 1999 vs. 16.6 births in 1985 (State Committee on Statistics 2000), the indicator recovered in 2008 to 12.1 but did not reach the level of pre-*perestroika* of 1985. The immigration into the country did not compensate for the decline in birth rates. The number of graduates of secondary schools, the major supply for regular (fulltime) higher education admission, declined by more than a quarter (27.2%) in 2008 as compared to 2000 (calculated from Higher School of Economics 2010, p. 247). The higher education sector has already been tapping into the non-traditional age student pool for almost a decade. Since 2000 the higher education enrollments have surpassed the number of secondary school graduates, its major source for admissions (Klyachko 2010). But the size of this group of non-traditional age cohort students is unknown, and the regular fulltime enrollments—the backbone of the system—continue to attract overwhelmingly traditional-age cohort students. The higher education sector is facing the situation already evident in secondary education of mergers and closures of schools.

When this demographic decline began to loom, both individual universities and the government looked for ways to compensate for it. Most university strategies centered on attracting international students, developing online educational programs, opening branch campuses, offering in-demand programs and retraining programs for adults (the so called second higher education degrees). With some institutional exceptions, the first two showed only modest success on the national scale. National branch campuses, however, proliferated leading at times to ‘wars’ between local universities supported by their regional governments and Moscow-affiliated branch institutions that carried the capital brand name but often had very little to do with the recognizable university programs. The central government has curbed the spiraling expansion of branch campuses through tighter quality control. In-demand programs in such cost-effective and yet popular fields as management, business administration, and law often turned into revenue-generating “milking cows” for universities struggling to expand their programs from the narrow technical specializations of the past, as the Committee on The Nation’s Intellectual Potential of the Russian Federation’s Public Chamber put it in its report (Public Chamber 2007).

Another trend in enrollments should be noted here. While the higher education enrollments have continued to expand until today, the proportion of part-time and by correspondence students is also on the rise (comprising together about 49% of public universities enrollments in 2008). This proportional change in enrollments by admission types is similar to the 1970-1980s’ situation, and in contrast to the late 1990s-early 2000s when the dominant regular admissions peaked at 60% of the total admissions. This change might signal that the profile of higher education entrants is changing with regard to their age, prior education, employment experience, and educational

aspirations. More studies will be necessary to predict their choices concerning higher education. The national studies focusing on student characteristics in relation to their choices regarding higher education are nascent in Russia. However, individual universities might be more inclined to look closer at their potential "clients"-relying on the work of students and faculty that have experience in marketing studies. At the same time, effective and high quality programs for students with characteristics so different from what was considered the mainstream should also be organized in a different way. The part-time and correspondence programs had a poor reputation in the Soviet system of higher education. Today there is little systemic information on whether these have improved or not.

Expansion and/or Quality?

The expansionist strategy in higher education has been mainly prompted by individual universities themselves, starved by the declining subsidies from the state and forced to compensate for them from other sources. At the same time, concerns for the quality of higher educational programs were frequently voiced by the media, in public opinion polls by parents, academia, and the general public. The 10-year national program of "Conception of Modernization of Russian Education until 2010" (2001) responded by formulating three major principles of national policies in higher education: *accessibility, quality, and effectiveness*. The cornerstone measure of this major educational program in the last decade is the introduction of the Unified State Examination (USE) system to replace the secondary school graduation examination and higher education entry examination with one national test. The USE is supported by the voucher-like per-student funding formula. According to its developers, the funding formula is supposed to allow students to compete for university placement of their choice and to vote "with their feet" on the poor quality of educational programs. The funding is merit-based and awards higher state subsidies to students performing at higher score brackets irrespective of their place of residence: urban centers, rural areas, national metropolis (Kuzminov, Klyachko, Belyakov et al. 2002). Several independent studies confirmed that the national implementation of the USE-based funding is probably removing territorial inequalities in *access* to higher education (see, e.g., Gorshkov and Sheregi 2010). The program is also credited with curbing corruption in university admission by eliminating the university-held entry exams. The new funding mechanism is regarded as key to improving financial transparency, and therefore the *effectiveness* of higher education, and it is intended to equip students with the economic instruments for judging higher education *quality*. So the concept of *quality* appears closely related to the principles of economic selection and survival of the economically fittest. The merit-based funding formula has not so far addressed students with financially borderline status in the absence of a well-functioning loan system and, thus, *affordability* of higher education and *inequality in access* is still problematic (on increasing inequality in education see, e.g., Public Chamber 2007). Furthermore, the cost of living and travelling remain as major barriers for the territorial mobility of applicants. For public higher educational institutions the new funding formula will translate into a bigger divide between those institutions attracting higher performing students and securing the most state subsidies and those institutions that have to seek and admit self-financed students

of lesser academic performance. Some higher educational institutions today are torn between the need to attract self-financed students and collect tuition revenues from them and to "balance" their entering class with more state-subsidized admits as a new sign of institutional quality.

The intrinsic conflict between *expansion* (participation) and *quality* of higher education is curiously reflected by policy-makers, who, on the one hand, welcome increased higher education participation rates and, on the other hand, argue for the reduction of admissions by 10-15% (see, e.g., Public Chamber 2007).

It is instructional that the market ideology in higher education policies ascended worldwide and brought an end to the "golden age" of higher education when the state subsidies to higher education systems around the world were especially generous. In contrast, higher educational institutions in Russia experienced a drastic reduction in funding just before the new market principles were introduced, and therefore they lacked the "springboard" that could allow them to better adjust to the new economic situation.

State Initiatives Supporting Top Universities

Mechanisms of selecting, ranking, competitive awards, and cost-sharing are not unknown to Russian universities in the past two decades. Many public universities looked to these mechanisms as instruments for building new hierarchies and providing differential state subsidies. When this did not happen and state subsidies were depleted by the financial crisis of the 1990s, the top national universities—Moscow State and St. Petersburg State—argued for a special status as national research universities, and the state, starved for public revenues, included its best universities by funding them directly from the national budget thus trying to deflect the political vicissitudes from the stressed-out universities. Other farsighted higher educational institutions applied instruments of ranking and self-study for their own institutional-level quality improvement (Bain 2003). The concept of "*top quality*" universities was brought into the policy discourse in the late 1990s when the government focused on securing an economic breakthrough from the "resource-curse" of the resource-exporting economy to the *knowledge economy* that is based on innovation. Research and education were recognized as the key elements of the innovative economy. Several large programs for selecting and rewarding top universities were implemented since 2006 and some are still under development. At the same time, the actual public funding for higher education has been reduced since 2008, further increasing the gap in per student higher education funding in Russia relative to other OECD countries, though in policy papers education has remained a national priority (Klyachko 2009, pp. 32-34).

I. Support of Innovative Universities through competitive grants

The first competitive grants were awarded in 2006 for 17 public universities for 2 years, followed by the second competition with the similar award to 40 public universities as part of the National Priority Program that included education. The grants awarded

innovative educational programs, generally defined as those that lead to “qualitative transformation of educational programs,” promote competences and skills “necessary not only to transfer, but to obtain, process, and utilize new information”, and are oriented toward measurable impact on the economy through knowledge and technology transfer. The universities were also required to specify the organizational, personnel, and financial resources they would mobilize to implement such programs (National Priority Project “Education”). Innovations were referred to not as merely “more of the same,” “more with less,” but as “preparing the future today, not catching up with the past” (ibid.)

II. Federal Universities

Parallel to the two-cycle program of short-term competitive grants, the program for establishing universities with federal status and funding was launched in 2006. The first *federal universities* were established in two of the then seven (since 2010—eight) federal districts of the Russian Federation. Rostov-na-Donu (Southern Federal District) and Krasnoyarsk (Siberian Federal District) were awarded about $2m USD each, and in 2009 five more federal universities were founded in four additional federal districts. In 2010-2011, two additional federal universities were founded (one in a newly established federal district). It is not clear whether additional federal universities will be established in the future, and what the role of center-region politics in these decisions might be. It should be noted that federal districts are not tax-paying units in the Russian Federation but the 83 regions that comprise them are. Federal universities’ sites were determined through a competitive application process, and are being built through mandated mergers of existing public institutions of higher education (to be fully integrated by 2015), and it is expected that they subsequently will be transformed into effective and high quality teaching institutions with an important R&D function oriented toward national and regional goals of economic and human capital development. Additionally, federal universities are expected to meet all the requirements of the Bologna process for international academic mobility. According to the sociological survey of residents in several regions, federal universities are perceived to provide very good quality educational programs and to be substantially less expensive (state-subsidized) to attend, while higher income respondents expect them also to be more demanding to students and faculty alike (Avraamova et al. 2009). Distributed around the country, federal universities are a model of multi-campus systems with substantial responsibilities for providing access regionally. About 30-40% of total funding is expected to be provided by regional and municipal governments and university self-generated revenues in addition to the major funding (60—70%) by the federal government. The status is permanent. Importantly, the government expects these new universities to achieve domestic prominence and to join the top 100 world university league by 2015.

III. National Research Universities

The competition for the status of *national research university* was awarded to 12 universities in the first round in 2009 and to an additional 15 universities in 2010. Two Moscow-based universities were awarded this status prior to the launch of the program. The criteria and procedures for selection were built on those first selected during the

2006 competitive grants for innovative universities. It is a ten-year program, with the federal funding of up to about $600m USD and cost-sharing by the institution from other sources at the rate of 20% annually for five years, and self-financed for another five years. Comprehensive assessment by the end of the ten-year period would either confirm the status permanently or deny it. The expectations are set high—with the promise for national research universities to be ranked as world-class universities, and to be quite elitist in character (e.g., with a small faculty/student ratio of 1:5). Of the newly selected national research universities 11 out of 29 are located in Moscow, 4 in St. Petersburg, and the remaining 14 in five federal districts of the Russian Federation. Seventeen of the new national research universities are technical/technological universities, nine classical universities, one a medical university, one a university of economics, and one affiliated with the Russian Academy of Sciences. In comparison, the 2006-2007 grants for innovative universities were held by a more regionally diverse group of institutions, with only four Moscow universities and two St. Petersburg universities common between these two winning lists. It is not clear whether additional competitive rounds for this status will be called by the federal government in the future, and if called, whether the criteria will change. In May 2011, the intermediate assessment was produced by the Expert Committee for the first 14 universities awarded the funding as national research universities. According to the university self-evaluation reports and background materials provided to the Committee, the state-mandated assessment criteria articulated at the start of the competitive grant program in 2009 have not so far appeared to measure institutional performance (Dezhina 2011, Sterligov 2011). Some criteria appear uncertain and a poor fit for the goals of the program. The examples include the criteria that:

(1) did not capture institutional effort/progress on indicators after two years of the start of the program but focused on absolute numbers of past achievements,

(2) did not focus on effectiveness of the funding, 82% of which was earmarked for investment into equipment and research logistics in 2010,

(3) were lumped together, e.g., the program aims at achieving international visibility of national research universities but publication productivity was assessed using both international citation indices and domestic journals citation indices in one compound indicator,

(4) were not based on common definitions, e.g., not clear whether publication productivity was calculated per headcount faculty or FTE faculty,

(5) were difficult to verify, such as percent of students in the funded area of training who get employed upon graduation.

The key goal of the program is to support research activity at the most promising institutions and to ensure research and teaching integration. It turns out that each professor in the assessed 14 universities published on average one article (0.7) annually, and from among all the 29 national research universities that indicator is even lower at 0.58 (Dezhina 2011). Two national research universities were assessed as performing below the key target threshold but no recommendation on specific action toward these universities were reported. The indicator of 20% cost-sharing was achieved by all universities: these sources, however, might include other federally

funded programs. Indeed, 14 national research universities assessed in this exercise were also awarded 15 out of 40 mega grants for attracting leading scientists, and significant funding from the two other federal programs (on university-business cooperation and on innovative infrastructure). Furthermore, it is not clear how participating universities will be held accountable for not achieving the expected key indicators. It also appears that the universities so far selected in this program will enjoy a head start far in excess of the possibilities available to other universities should the grant competition be called in again. Many observers inside and outside of Russia are concerned that this program may not encourage a transparent competition.

IV. Attracting Top Researchers and Scientists to Russian Universities

In summer 2010, the open competitive grant competition was announced to attract top researchers to lead two-year research projects in Russian universities (2011-2012), to set high research standards, to transfer the know-how of conducting world-class research to the local university teams, and to build sustainable research centers. The amount of the grant was about $5m USD and, thus, the program was dubbed as a "mega grant program." The competition was open to foreign nationals and expatriates, as well as nationals working at a different institution in the country—a strategy that proved to be fruitful in bringing big name scholars in their respective fields and expats living and working abroad. The model of "partial return" of mid-career scholars is regarded as an attractive and cost-effective means of reversing the brain-drain of researchers, especially high in Russia in the 1990s and the early 2000s. An invited top researcher would spend no less than 4 months per calendar year for two years at a Russian university and be remunerated at a level comparable to his/her current salary in the home country. In addition to the research proposal, some quantitative criteria of the leading researcher's prominence were requested in the application, such as his/her citation index, publication impact factor, number of most cited publications, experience in leading research teams. Also the data from the university unit (lab, department) on research productivity and training in a particular field related to the proposal and on the institutional ability to co-finance the research were requested. No budget for a proposed research was requested, and no criteria for a proposal review were explicated. Applications were accepted in 20 designated traditional scientific and technological fields of research and one additional area that combined three fields in social sciences: "economics, international research, and sociology." There was one month given to prepare the application documents and yet the request for proposals yielded a high response. There were 507 applications submitted jointly from 507 researchers and 179 Russian universities, on average 2.8 applications per institution. 40 grants were awarded instead of the initially announced 80 grants in 18 fields to 26 universities, on average 1.6 grants per institution including 6 grants to Moscow State, 3 grants to Novosibirsk State, 2 to St. Petersburg State. Nine institutions were awarded more than one grant. Altogether 8 Moscow-based institutions received 15 grants, 4 St. Petersburg-based institutions received 6 grants. Of the 26 winning universities, 12 were recently selected as national research universities and they received more than half of the available grants—21, and one was federal university and it received 2 grants. The

second round of this grant program was called in May 2011 with the awards expected to be announced by the end of the year.

V. Innovation City-Cluster "Skolkovo"

The most ambitious governmental plan for the innovation spinning R&D cluster has been so far the Innovation City "Innograd-Skolkovo" near Moscow. Although conceptually still under discussion, it will most probably include a university or advanced research extension programs of existing universities. While opinions differ widely, many see in "Skolkovo" the "Silicon Valley" model and argue against the possibility of its direct emulation and against intensive state intervention in the project (see, e.g., Guriev and Tsyvinsky 2011).

Current Limitations

The Russian government responded to the demographic decline, the need to integrate higher education and research, and align them with the demands of the knowledge economy in several continuous large-scale investment initiatives that aim at setting criteria for the qualitative renewal of the system. These five large-scale governmental initiatives in higher education are prominent projects in determining a select few institutions of high quality but with different missions, which are also expected to feature in the near future in the top world-class university league tables. Akin to excellent initiatives in other nations, Russian initiatives also reflect the specific context of Russian higher education and are unprecedented in scale and the related stakes in the past 20 years of Russian higher education reforms. While these efforts are still under way and are applauded, some serious limitations will need close attention:

1) Economic innovation policies with state interventions are welcomed but are typically received with caution by economists: while targeted public support for certain knowledge industries are helpful, "appointing the winning fields" that are about to engender economic innovations may be better left to the market (see, e.g., OECD 2011, Guriev and Tsyvinsky 2011).

2) The state support may be needed for the fields most vulnerable under the current understanding of economic innovation, such as the social sciences and the humanities.

3) The current draft of the Law on Education does not specify the source of funding for universities other than for federal or national research universities. It is not clear whether the federal government is going to remove itself from the support of public higher education as a whole, focusing only on the elite subsector.

4) The point 3) above assumes a viable and strong decentralized system of finance and accountability in Russian higher education, which is still absent. Regional governments are still unable to fully step up into such a void and fully support the expectations of local voters and taxpayers in terms of higher education accessibility and needs.

5) While the federal government is supporting a few centers of excellence for an extended period of time, it is still not clear how sound competition will be sustained in the future.

6) With the history of years of suspicion between the federal center and the regions in Russia and the accompanying sense of exploitation, high-stakes federally funded programs for higher education, which are supported by tax revenues from regions, need to be as transparent as possible and need to reflect the inputs of university communities, academic and professional associations, regional and business communities, and independent experts.
7) Proper accountability tools for the high-stakes excellence assessment of this kind are still needed. This may involve reworking indicators and metrics towards measuring performance, ensuring that they help individual universities to develop their strategic vision and planning, and engage all the actors in a dialogue about the goals and tools of this exercise.
8) The evaluation process is in danger of over-formalization, it needs to be made meaningful at the university level as a basis for university self-regulation and improvement.
9) Although the paramount emphasis of these initiatives is to encourage knowledge production and transfer, they directly target higher educational institutions and have little or no room for the engagement of the Academies of Sciences, an important sector directly charged with knowledge production and in need of investment and reform.
10) While the federal government has committed itself to support top quality institutions with different missions (federal universities vs. national research universities), it is not clear what signals are intended to be sent to the rest of the institutions of higher education in the system: whether they will be pressured to improve their quality by mimicking research-intensive institutions in order to obtain funding from the federal government or whether they will continue pursuing enrollment-driven strategies that are increasingly jeopardized by the demographic decline with the secure funding coming primarily from merit-based admissions.
11) Last but not least, there is an intrinsic conflict between the support of quantity and quality with regard to higher education participation and access to quality educational programs, and the proper balance is yet to be realized.

References

Altbach, P. G. (2007). Empires of knowledge and development. In Altbach P.G. and Balan, J. (Eds.), *World class worldwide: Transforming research universities in Asia and Latin America*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 1-28.

Avraamova, E. et al. (2009). Federal universities: Expectations, problems, experience [Federalnye universitety: Ozhidanija, problem, opyt]. *Economic Policy and Education* [Ekonomicheskaja Politika i Obrazovanie], 1. Moscow: Academy of National Economy by the Government of the Russian Federation.

Bain, O. (2003). *University autonomy in the Russian Federation since Perestroika*. NY and London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Bain, O. (2001). The cost of higher education to students and parents in Russia: Tuition policy issues. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 76(3-4), pp. 57-80.

Dezhina, I.G. (2011). Pervye itogi Porgrammy nationalnykh issledovatelskikh universitetov [First results of the National Research Universities Program]. Retreived on June 15, 2011 from http://www.iep.ru/ru/kommentarii/pervye-itogi-programmy-razvitiya-nacionalny-issledovatelski-universitetov.html

Gorshkov, M.K. and F.E. Sheregi (2010). *The youth in Russia: Sociological portrait* [Molodezh Rossii: Sotsiologicheski portret]. Moscow: Center of Social Forecast and Marketing.

Guriev, S. and O. Tsyvinsky (2011). Ratio economica: It should be deserved [Ratio economica: Eto nado Zasluzhit]. *Otechestvennye zapiski*, #121 (2887), July 5, 2011. Retrieved on July 5, 2011 from http://www.vedomosti.ru/newspaper/article/263294/eto_nuzhno_zasluzhit

Higher School of Economics (2010). Education *in the Russian Federation 2010*. Moscow: Higher School of Economics.

Klyachko, T. L. (2010, December 28). Economics of higher education—a change of model? [Ekonomika vysshego obrazovanija—smena modeli?]. Presentation at the Center of Economics of Continuous Education, Academy of State Economy, Moscow. Retrieved on March 5, 2011 from http://www.slidefinder.net/k/klyatchko/26699317

Klaychko, T.L. (Ed.) (2009). *Forecast of Higher Education Development in Russia: 2009-2011* [Prognoz razvitiya vysshego obrzovanija v Rossii: 2009-2011]. Moscow: Eurasia Foundation.

Kuzminov, Y.I., Klyachko, T.L., Belyakov, S.A. et al. (2002). *Modernization of Russian education: Governmental individual financial obligations*. Moscow: Higher School of Economics.

National Priority Project “Education”. Available online http://www.rost.ru/projects/education/ed3/ed31/aed31.shtml

OECD (2010). *Education at a glance—2010*. Paris: OECD.

OECD (2011). *OECD reviews of innovation policy: Russian Federation 2011*. Paris: OECD.

Public Chamber of the Russian Federation (2007). *Education and society: Is Russia ready to invest into its future?* [Obrazovaniye i obshchestvo: Gotova li Rossija investirovat' v svoje budushchee?]. Report. Moscow.

Salmi, J. (2009). *The challenge of establishing world-class universities*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.

State Committee on Statistics (Goskomstat) (2000). *Russian statistical yearbook—2000*. Moscow: Goskomstat.

Sterligov, I. (2011). Ministry of Education and Sciences completed an assessment of National Research Universities [Minobrnauki otsenilo NIU]. *Science and Technology in the Russian Federation (ST&RF),* June 1, 2011. Retrieved on June 15, 2011 from http://strf.ru/material.aspx?CatalogId=221&d_no=40037

Wildavsky, B. (2010). The *great brain race: How global universities are reshaping the world*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement of Higher Education Institutions: Vietnam Exemplar

Dr. **Tran** Thi Bich Lieu

University of Education, Vietnam National University in Hanoi

Dr. **Nguyen** Kim Dung

Institute for Education Research
Ho Chi Minh City University of Pedagogy

Abstract

Recently, quality assurance (QA) has been a focus in Vietnam as a means to improve higher education quality, and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have been increasingly impacted by both domestic and international accreditation. For example, five training programs have been evaluated by the Asian University Network and 40 HEIs have participated in three rounds of external evaluation. Many more HEIs are striving to be accredited by the Vietnam National Accrediting Committee.

This paper provides an overview of higher education development and QA in Vietnam and points to six improvements of education quality under the impact of QA: 1) A new understanding of higher education quality and conditions for ensuring quality; 2) Vietnam gradually reaching regional program standards; 3) HEIs focusing more on training students in professional skills and all-round development; 4) HEIs focusing more on research and increasingly publishing in international journals; 5) HEIs focusing more on student services; and 6) Creating a culture of quality.

The paper identifies three reasons leading to the quality improvement under the impact of QA; and four lessons and nine recommendations to improve QA and education quality in Vietnam.

Currently, Vietnam does not have national, regional, and international university quality achievement. Therefore, this paper can only analyse some quality achievements of different HEIs under the forces of QA to demonstrate that QA is gradually improving education quality of HEIs in Vietnam.

Introduction

Higher education quality in Vietnam and the urgent need for establishing a quality assurance system

During the centralization period (before 1986), each higher education institution had its training aims provided by the Central Government. If an institution reached these aims, it accomplished its functions and was said to have "quality." At that time only a very small percent of the population who passed university entry exams could attend universities in Vietnam or in former socialist economies. The graduates later became experts in different socio-economic fields of the economy.

Since 1986 Vietnam has been building a Socialist-oriented Market Economy[i]. Higher education development in Vietnam in the market economy can be generalized as: diversity with a rapid increase in quantity, but low quality.

According to the Ministry of Education and Training's (MOET) 2007-2008 statistics, Vietnam has 209 three-year colleges and 160 four- and five-year universities, among which are 40 private universities. In 2004-2005 these figures were 137; 93 and 22 (MOET's Statistics, 2004-2005). Student numbers have increased: in 2007-2008 there were 1,603,484 students of which 422,937 attended three-year colleges and 1,180,547 attended universities. Twelve percent (12%) of students were non-public (MOET's statistics 2004-2005). Students attending colleges and universities occupied about 18% of the 18-24 age population.

Lecturing staff has been increased in doctoral professorial numbers, but the quality is low. In 2004-2005 lecturing staff amounted to 47,646: 13.6% of them held doctoral degrees; professor and associate professors made up only 0.59%. In 2007- 2008, these numbers had grown to 56,120, of which 14.4% held doctoral degrees; 3.9% held professor and associate professor titles (MOET's statistics 2004-2005 and 2007-2008).

For many years, higher education quality has been strongly criticized in Vietnam. According to the Vietnamese Government's report (10/2004) and Vietnamese National Assembly's Report on Higher Education (Tap chi Tuyen giao TW, 06/07/2010), higher education cannot meet the demands of the labor markets by providing highly qualified human resources. The number of students has increased too rapidly while the training conditions are inadequate to ensure quality. Students lack professional skills. The quality of master and doctoral training is low. Low capacity leads to low education quality. Among the critical factors have been an absence of highly qualified teaching staff, content of higher education curricula have been outdated, along with no standards for assessment or evaluation. Investment in higher education has been too small, accompanied by an ineffective use of funds. Research funds have been small and fragmented. Low salaries, ill-conceived incentive structures, excessive bureaucracy and corruption are common factors that make it difficult to attract talented professors. (Vu Q. V., 2006; Tran N. K., Truong T., 2004).

Different solutions have been implemented to enhance the quality of higher education of which the most important is establishing a quality assurance system.

Changes in the quality of higher education under the impacts of quality assurance: University Exemplars in Vietnam

- *Overview of the quality assurance system in Vietnam*

The structure of the quality assurance system in Vietnam consists of General Department of Educational Testing and Accreditation (GDETA) at MOET that was established in 2003 and Centers for Quality Assurance at education institutions of K-12 to 16 that were established by MOET's requirement in recent years. By now 71.88% universities have a Center for Testing and Education Assessment (Can T. T. H., 2011).

Quality assurance aims to promote education quality through implementing accreditation and recognition activities. As in any economy, accreditation in Vietnam is implemented through three stages: self-assessment, external evaluation, and recognition by MOET for institutions that meet accreditation standards.

Accreditation has become very important for Vietnam as a main means to define levels necessary for implementing educational aims, curriculum, content of schools and other educational institutions as formally stated in 2005 Education Law. Kim D. Nguyen, (2009) states that education quality assurance has become more important when Vietnam entered WTO, APQN[ii] and INQUAHE[iii] because it will ensure competition capacity of Vietnam's HEIs to compete with other HEIs in the world based on equal quality.

The accreditation is conducted based on accreditation standards which the first time MOET promulgated as temporary in December 2004; modified and promulgated a second time in 2007 after drawing lessons from the first accreditation of 20 universities. 2007 accreditation standards are composed of 10 standards and 61 indicators which cover most quality assurance requirements.

1. Mission and goals: (two criteria)
2. Organization and Management: (7 criteria)
3. Curriculum (Training programs): (6 criteria)
4. Instructional activities (7 criteria)
5. Staff (9 criteria)
6. Students (9 criteria)
7. Research and Technology Development: (7 criteria)
8. International cooperation (3 criteria)
9. Library and Facilities (9 criteria)
10.Finance & Financial Management (3 criteria)

(For more detail see Annex 1).

The HEIs will be accredited by three grades: if a HEI meets 100% criteria at level two, it will be accredited at the highest grade, grade three; if a HEI meets 60% of criteria at level two and the rest are at level one, it will be accredited at grade two; and at the lowest (grade one) if a HEI meets 80% of criteria at both level two and one (Ban Dam bao chat luong, 06/2/2011).

- *Impact of quality assurance on higher education quality in Vietnam*

By Nguyen P. N., (03/29/2009), accreditation has enhanced awareness and responsibility of HEIs in ensuring education quality, created a culture of evidence based quality, encouraged institutions to focus more on research; tied HEIs to the labor markets, allowed students to assess lecturing staff, etc. With the strengths and weaknesses that have been found, accreditation encourages HEIs and informs them of their weaknesses so that they find the measures to improve.

1) *Vietnam has moved a step forward in understanding higher education quality and conditions for ensuring quality*.

In the first 2005-2007 accreditation, 16/20 HEIs reached grade two (Vu T., 01/08/2009). In the second 2008-2009 external evaluation, 14/20 met grade two (Kim D. Nguyen, 2009).

Associated with accreditation activities, many training workshops and conferences have been organized. Therefore, understanding education quality and the way to carry out accreditation activities has been increasing. About 156 staff has been trained in accreditation in the second phase (Kim D. Nguyen, 2009). Society is more concerned with QA and education quality. Recently, quality is considered not only the means to stated goals, but a system of inputs, processes and outputs. There is an emphasis on developing student competence to match society's requirements; the quality of training, research, and service is considered as three interrelated components of education quality.

2) *Vietnam gradually reaching regional program standards*.

QA has forced HEIs to strive for quality as the means to establish their reputation in the fierce competition among domestic universities and international universities entering Vietnam recently.

Five training programs in Vietnam are evaluated by the AUN (ASEAN University Network): the Bachelor Program in IT at University of Technology and the Bachelor Program in International Economics of University of Economics and Business (UEB), Vietnam National University in Hanoi. UEB's program is evaluated as one of the top programs in economics in Vietnam and in the region (Luu M., 08/04/2011). Three others are: the IT program at University for Natural Sciences; the Electronic- Communication Program at Ho Chi Minh City Technology University and the Computer Sciences at

International University, Vietnam National University in Ho Chi Minh City (*4 chương trình đào tạo ĐH Việt Nam được kiểm định theo chuẩn*).

An international Business Technology Program (BTEC) at Da Nang University of Economics is accredited by Edexcel International UK (http://cie.due.edu.vn).

3) *Under the impact of accreditation standards, HEIs focus more on improving students' professional skills and all around development*.

The result of the first accreditation set off an alarm for the MOET and HEIs about the disconnect between HEIs and the needs of society. Many workshops have been organized to find solutions to solve the problems. Recently, training programs at most HEIs have focused more on training professional and other skills for students. More practicum, internships, study tours and simultaneous assignments have been used. Assessment of student learning is focused more on the skill formation.

According to the external evaluation report phase two, four HEIs met standard three "Curriculum" and three HEIs met standard four "Instructional activities" while these numbers were zero in phase one. Fifteen HEIs met criterion 3.2. stipulating that curricula meet the market demands of knowledge, skills and ethical values that will be formed for students; 16 HEIs met criterion 4.4 of diversifying assessment forms (Kim D. Nguyen, 2009).

HEIs have established relations with employers to create places for students to practice skills and find jobs after graduation. Eighty percent (80%) of 22,016 three-year college graduated students of 2007-2010 courses immediately found jobs according to the statistics of Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (Ha V., February 2011). The external evaluation phase two reported about 60-70% of students of 20 HEIs found jobs within the first year or after one year following graduation (Kim D. Nguyen, 2009). The proportion is higher at Haiphong Private University[iv]: 93.46 % (Tran Q. T, 2010), Can Tho University[v]: 75% (Kien B., 11/10/2010), 90% at University of Economics in Ho Chi Minh City[vi] (10/2007), 85% at Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry[vii] (2008)

Student competence of some HEIs is highly evaluated by 60% of employers as reported in the second external evaluation (Kim D. Nguyen, 2009). However, professional skills and knowledge are still low as evaluated according to the survey conducted by MOET among 20 universities in Vietnam in 2008. By employers, 50% of graduated students fail to meet employers' requirements and need to be retrained. 36.3% of employers said students need further skills training, 28.3% of them asked for more professional training for students and 33.6% said students need *both* skills and professionalism retraining (Kieu Oanh – Doan Truc,07/01/2008).

Many HEIs have created conditions for all-around development of the students. Students are encouraged to take part in different contests and have gained high international and national prizes. During five years (2002-2006) students at the

University of Economics in Ho Chi Minh City gained 322 awards of Eureka, Young Economist and MOET's Science Research (University of Economics HCM City, 2007). Lac Hong Private University[viii] in 2008 has 4 groups participating in the National Robotics Contest and gained first place in Southern Vietnam's Contest (Lac Hong Private University, 5/2009). Competing to win in the contests has been a tradition of famous education institutions. But, under forces of QA and the market mechanism, efforts have been increased at many institutions.

4) *Under the impact of accreditation standards, HEIs focus more on research, tie research with training and practice; strive to publish more articles in international journals.*

More than 30% of research projects of seven HEIs had results that have been applied to produce socio-economic development in the communities (Kim D. Nguyen, 2009).

The University of Natural Sciences[ix] (11/2007) and Vietnam National University in Hanoi (VNU) alone conducted 18 State level research projects and 733 Ministerial level research projects during a five year period. Students conducted 1,608 research projects in the period 2001-2006 and of these, 73 were awarded by MOET with four first-place awards, and 12 second place. The University of Natural Sciences gained three awards in 2003 and six awards in 2006 from VNU. In 2004 the university gained three Young Scientist awards and one State Award. The research results have high application capacity.

A study of P. D. Hien (24 February 2010) shows that Vietnam, Thailand and Malaysia have been growing rather rapidly, annually publishing about 15–16% of articles in peer review international journals. The number of articles published by four leading Vietnamese Universities: (VNU, Hanoi University of Technology, Hanoi University of Education, and Ho Chi Minh City National University) has doubled between 2004 and 2008.

With a desire to be ranked among top world universities, VNU[x] in Hanoi alone published 169 articles in 2009 in the cited international journals; an increase of 28% compared to 132 articles in 2008 (VNU Media,6/02/2011).

Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry (2008) from 2001-2006 published 23 articles in international journals and 395 in domestic journals.

Despite this fast growth, Vietnam's leading universities still generate 15–30 times fewer peer-refereed international publications than either Chulalongkorn or Mahidol universities in Thailand. (P. D. Hien, 24 February 2010).

The funds for research have been increased year by year. At the University of Economics in Ho Chi Minh City, funds for research in 2006 and 2007 were nearly double as compared to 2002 and 2003 (University of Economics HCM City, 2007). At

Lac Hong University (5/2009) funding for research in 2006-2007 was nearly twice more compared to 2003-2004.

5) *Under the impact of accreditation standards, HEIs focus more on student services*

Student services such as dormitories, kitchens, internet access, learning and professional consulting, e-libraries, entertainment places, etc., have been set up in the most HEIs, especially in some newly established private universities. Hai Phong Private University provides students with wireless-equipped accommodations and modern kitchens for dining. Facilities include a swimming pool, stadium and multifunction sport hall and other extra activities to develop students' abilities (Tran Q.T. 2010).

Students are well informed of learning objectives and requirements, curricula, exams and their rights on social and research activities (Kim D. Nguyen, 2009).

Three-year colleges in Vietnam have close relations to 750 companies which train in professional skills for students (Ha V. February 2011). 13/20 HEIs of the second external evaluation phase have established relations with employers to help students find extra jobs and post-graduate employment (Kim D. Nguyen, 2009).

Most HEIs have scholarships for excellent students and zero-interest loans for the poor students.

6) *Accreditation has created a culture of education quality*

By observing HEIs activities and interviewing lecturing staff, researchers found that the culture of quality has been formed at HEIs because people have focused more on evidence based quality, and increased discussion on quality assurance. People work closely with each other in the manner of sharing, cooperating and helping each other to accomplish their duties.

Why HEIs can improve education quality under the impact of QA:

1) *Accreditation standards and criteria are the guidelines for HEIs on how to improve education quality*

As stated by HEIs' leaders, accreditation standards and criteria themselves are good guidelines for HEIs to plan their activities to enhance education quality. They require HEIs to meet conditions for quality such as setting missions, goals and objectives fitting the institutional mission and socio-economic development of the communities they serve; developing highly qualified teaching staff and matching the training programs to the market demands of knowledge, skills and ethical values of students; providing adequate infrastructure and learning equipment; having the necessary student services, etc. Accreditation standards and criteria require HEIs to use more authentic and formative assessment, focus on students' professional knowledge, skills and problem

solving. Through self assessment HEIs can recognize their strengths and weaknesses and they are provided more detail during the external evaluation by each criterion. Moreover, external evaluation suggests concrete solutions for HEIs to improve quality. HEIs have improvement plans according to the recommendations of external evaluators and to the findings resulting from self assessment.

2) *Accreditation standards force HEIs to develop highly qualified teaching staff as it is the most important factor for education quality.*

19/20 HEIs met criterion 5.3: Have policies for staff to participate in professional activities in and outside the economy. More than 40% of the lecturing staff at most HEIs have post graduate degrees, of which 10 to 25% are doctors compared to 13.6% of the nation's average. 10-20% of the lecturing staff at most evaluated HEIs can work directly with international experts and most use ICT well in teaching (Kim D. Nguyen, 2009). HEIs are sending more of their staff to do PhD and post-doctoral research overseas and to attend international workshops.

At Hai Phong Private University (Tran Q. T, 2010), a lecturer will be awarded 1,500,000 VND after passing the masters exam and 5,000,000 VND to defend their thesis (100 USD & 300 USD in 2008) and will be promoted to a higher salary; if a lecturer passes doctoral exams, he/she will be awarded a laptop and 25,000,000 VND (about 1,500 USD) for his/her dissertation defense. Lecturers who gained scholarships to study abroad will be also awarded return tickets in addition to the coverage of scholarships. After 11 years, the university has recruited 292 new lecturers; among them are two professors, 6 doctors, 20 doctoral students and 142 masters. It has a plan to invest 22 billion VND (more than one million USD) to train 1,000 lecturers to have their doctoral degree. Young lecturers are trained research methods by famous professors and scientists, and required to learn and use English.

3) *Accreditation standards encourage HEIs to expand international cooperation*

By external evaluation report phase two, 18 HEIs met criterion 8.2: Have effectiveness in training cooperation demonstrated by staff, student exchange, joint programs; upgraded infrastructure and equipment; 11/20 of HEIs met criterion 8.3: Have effectiveness in research cooperation of joint projects, workshops and joint publication. International cooperation has helped HEIs to enhance staff capacity in teaching and researching, and diversifying resources for upgrading institutional equipment (Kim D. Nguyen, 2009).

Lessons drawn from exemplars and recommendations.

From HEI exemplars we can draw some lessons as below:

- Quality assurance is both a condition of and a motivation for quality improvement. When a HEI meets quality assurance conditions, it will gain high outcomes of education quality.
- The vision of university leaders on quality is very important. When they understand quality assurance well, they create all the needed conditions for quality

improvement. Cases show that the creativity of a leader's mind is more important than available resources. In the conditions of developing economies, private HEIs are good examples of how to develop a university by mobilizing different resources, having good strategies to attract talented lecturers and students and how to tie universites with companies to develop students' practical skills and find jobs after graduation.

- Quality of lecturing and researching staff is a decisive factor for education quality.
- Autonomy in financial management is a stimulus for HEIs to enhance education quality

Among 40 HEIs that took part in the accreditation, four private universities have full autonomy in financial and personnel management, and other public HEIs have been given more autonomy. HEIs use their autonomy to effectively allocate and use resources to meet the needs of instructional activities as reported in their self assessment and external evaluation.

Recommendations:

Vietnam's accreditation standards as compared to Regional Accreditation Standards in the US still have many limitations. Vietnam's accreditation focuses more on quantitative measurement, has loose connection and consistency among all standards and criteria, and tends to confirm past and present achievements … while Regional Accreditation Standards in the US have more holistic criteria and components, close connection and consistency among criteria and components, and tend to encourage preparation for the future and improvement of quality… (Kim D. Nguyen, Oliver E.D., Priddy E. L., July 1, 2009)

Dividing into three grades of criteria achievement helps HEIs know where they are, but there are not enough indicators to differentiate HEIs. Different HEIs may gain at the same level although their achievements are different: University of Humanities and Social Sciences (VNU in Hanoi) had 394 faculty, National Economic University in Hanoi had 867 and Can Tho University had 1,738 faculty who studied and worked in cooperation with international universities but they are scaled at the same level two of the international cooperation standard (Nguyen T. H.L, 9/2008).

Therefore:

1) Vietnam has to focus more on qualitative indicators and prioritize student outcomes in the standards.
2) Set more concrete descriptions and indicators in measuring and evaluating quality of HEIs so that the quality of HEIs can be more clearly differentiated.
3) Because QA is new in Vietnam, Vietnam has to cooperate with different international QA agencies, especially accreditation agencies in the US, to help Vietnam develop appropriate accreditation standards, to implement appropriate assurance processes and internationalize QA activities so that Vietnam can achieve international standards of education quality and learn more effective quality assurance models and strategies from other economies to apply in Vietnam.

4) Increase the effectiveness of research by connecting them to practice and focus more on the application capacity of research results; narrowing the gaps between training and research.
5) Use ICTs in accreditation processes: professional manuals, documents and regulations for the new set of standards should be posted and available on MOET's website; create e-forms of application, self assessment reports and other forms, allowing HEIs to submit online. The use of ICTs in accreditation make quality assurance more transparent, convenient and effective.
6) Quality must be the pride and responsibility of all university members, not a leader's job alone.
7) Vietnam has to adapt to the mechanism of financial allocation based on accreditation results so that all HEIs may strive for education quality.
8) One of the effective measures for quality improvement is society's control and monitoring of HEI's quality. Lessons learned from the US show that Vietnam has to establish some independent accreditation agencies beside MOET's General Department of Educational Testing and Accreditation.
9) Publicize accreditation results of HEIs so that society is informed and creates a competitive environment for improving education quality among HEIs.

Conclusion

QA has created a progress step in enhancing awareness of educators, students, and the whole society about education quality and conditions to meet education quality; it helps develop more infrastructure, instructional equipment, student services, etc; and especially it compels HEIs to focus more on developing student skills and doing more research. It ties training with society's needs. Although some improvements have been made, **Vietnam is still the only economy in Southeast Asia which does not have any high-standard quality universities recognized by international organizations**. Vietnam is asked to expedite QA.

References

Ban Dam bao chat luong (06/2/2011), Truong Dai hoc Bach khoa Tp HCM, Conh nhan dat tieu chuan kiem dinh chat luong truong dai hoc (Center for QA (06/2/2011), University of Technology in HCM City, Recognition of meeting the criteria of Higher Education Institution,
http://www.oaq.hcmut.edu.vn/index.php?goto=congnhan

Can T.T.H. (2011), *Nghiên cứu quản lí kiểm tra, đánh giá kết quả học tập trong giáo dục đại học ở Việt Nam,* Luan an Tien si, Dai hoc Quoc gia Ha Noi (Study Management of Examining and Assessing Student Learning Outcomes in Higher Education in Vietnam, Doctoral Dissertation, VNU Hanoi)
Education Law, 2005, MOET

Ha V.(February 2011), Thiếu lao động trẻ có nghề (QDND), (Lack of skilled laborers)
http://www.qdnd.vn/qdndsite/vi- vn/75/43/2/26/26/149007/Default.aspx

Ho Chi Minh City University of Economics (9/2007), *Self Assessment Report* (Vietnamese)

Kim D. Nguyen, (0 4 – 07, 2009), *Bao cao tong hop danh gia ngoai 20 truong Dai hoc viet Nam nam 2009* (General External Evaluation Report on 20 HEIs in Vietnam in 2009)

Kim D. Nguyen, Oliver E.D., Priddy E. L,July,1, 2009, Criteria for Accreditation in Vietnam's Higher Education: Focus on Input or Outcome? Online Publication Quality in Higher Education Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713443244

Kien B., (11/10/2010), *Thuoc do chat luong giao duc dai hoc* (Measurement of Higher Education), www. websrv.ctu.edu.vn/news

Kieu Oanh – Doan Truc, (07/01/2008), 50% of graduates need retrained, Vietnam Net, http://english.vietnamnet.vn/education/2008/01/762909/

Lac Hong Private University, (5/2009), *Self Assessment Report* (Vietnamese)

Luu M., (08/04/2011), The UEB announced AUN quality assessment result of the honor bachelor program in International Economics
http://www.ueb.edu.vn/enNewdetail/44/Training/5843/the-ueb-announced-aun-quality-assessment-result-of-the-honor-bachelor-program-in-international-economics.htm

MOET's statistics 2004-2005, http://www.moet.gov.vn/

MOET's statistics 2007-2008, http://www.moet.gov.vn/

Nguyen P. N., (29-03-2009), *Tác động của văn bản pháp quy về kiểm định chất lượng tới các trường ĐH ở Việt Nam,* ceea.ier.edu.vn/ (Impacts of legislation documents on accreditation on HEIs in Vietnam)

Nguyen T. H.L (9/2008), *Kiểm định chất lượng giáo dục đại học một số vấn đề trao đổi* (Higher Educaation Accreditation: Some Discussing Issues and Problems) (http://www.pup.edu.vn/cac-mat-cong-tac/xay-dung-luc-luong/kie309m-di323nh-cha301t-luo323ng-gia301o-du323c-da323i-ho323c-mo323t-so301-va301n-de300-trao-do309i

P. D. Hien, 24 February 2010, *A comparative study of research capabilities of East Asian countries and implications for Vietnam*, http://www.viet-studies.info/Research_Comparison_PDHien.pdf

Tap chi ban Tuyen giao TW, (7/6/2010), *Quốc hội thảo luận hàng loạt vấn đề về đào tạo Đại học* (Vietnam's National Assembly discussed series of problems of Higher Education)

Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry (2008), *Self Assessment Report* (Vietnamese)

Tran N. K., Truong T. (March, 2004), Chat luong va hieu qua giao duc (HE Quality and effectiveness), *Reports on Higher Education Renovation: integration and challenges,* Ministry of Education and Training, pp.238-247.

Tran Q.T (2010), *Phat trien giao duc Vietnam trong nen kinh te thi truong va truoc yeu cau hoi nhap quoc te,* De tai Doc lap cap Nha nuoc, Ma so: ĐTĐL. 2007G/53, 2008-2009 (Develop Vietnam's Education in the market Economy and International Integration", Code: ĐTĐL. 2007G/53, 2008-2009, State Research Project)

Vietnam Government (2004), *Report on Education,* Hanoi, October.

VNU Media (6/02/2011), *Những thành tựu nổi bật của ĐHQGHN năm 2010* (Prominent Achievements of VNU in Hanoi in 2010) http://www.ms.hcmus.edu.vn/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=20%3A4-chuong-trinh-dao-tao-dh-viet-nam-duoc-kiem-dinh-theo-chuan-&catid=9%3Atong-hop&Itemid=5

Vu Q. V. (13/02/2006), *Chi tiêu cho giáo dục: Những con số "giật mình"!* (Expenditure for Education in Vietnam: horrible statistics!), Vietnam Net

Vu T. (01/08/2009), *Kết quả kiểm định 20 trường ĐH đợt đầu: Cả 20 trường chưa đạt nhiều tiêu chí* (Results of 20 HEIs in the first external evaluation phase: all 20 HEIs have not met different criteria), http://www.thanhnien.com.vn/news/Pages/200945/20091108032325.aspx

University of Natural Sciences (11/2007), Vietnam National University in Hanoi, *Self Assessment Report* (Vietnamese) *4 chương trình đào tạo ĐH Việt Nam được kiểm định theo chuẩn* (Four programs evaluated by AUN in Vietnam)

[i] This economy is based both on the market mechanisms and on socialistic orientations of social and educational equality for all and emphasizing the leadership role of Vietnam's Communist Party in its development.
[ii] Asia-Pacific Quality Network
[iii] International Quality Assurance of Higher Education
[iv] Took part in the first accreditation
[v] Took part in the first accreditation
[vi] Took part in the second accreditation
[vii] Took part in the second accreditation
[viii] Preparing to submit self assessment for the external evaluation
[ix] Preparing to submit self assessment for the external evaluation

[x] VNU has its accreditation standards that are the same as MOET's but VNU's grades are divided into four. Grade four is the highest and refers to the regional and international standards. Its university members can apply for both MOET's and VNU's accreditation. For more information see at http://www.vnu.edu.vn/dhqg/contents/

Thai Experience with Quality Assurance

Rachavarn **Kanjanapanyakom**

Associate Professor in Industrial Engineering

Kasetsart University, Thailand

Abstract

The First National Education Reform Act in Thailand has brought much improvement in Higher Education in Thailand. According to the Act, quality assurance in educational systems is comprised namely of two systems; internal and external. External quality assurance is the responsibility of the Office of the National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA). Results of the first round of quality assessment (2001-2005) determined that 91.92% of all universities' quality levels are considered to be acceptable. As for the second round (2002 – 2010), the results showed that 94.83% of higher educational institutes were accredited. Even with such impressive passing rates there is no clear evidence as to the improvement on quality of graduates. There are still many issues of concern. For example: the escalating enrollment of higher education due to promotion of education in the previous National Economic and Development Plans with the disproportionate number of enrolment in social sciences leading to the shortage of manpower supply in many areas, and complaints about the quality of graduates. With clear evidence of decreasing population and the education age group, and where supply exceeds demand, HE institutes will fight for incoming students in the near future and pose a risk to quality in higher education. From all these challenges, how can universities keep up with quality teaching and maintain integrity in a competitive environment? This paper addresses some of the changing factors that have emerged during the last several years and are beginning to shape the landscape of quality assurance systems in many institutions in Thailand.

Overview of Quality Assurance in Thailand

The announcement of the first National Education Act in 1999 changed the face of quality assurance in higher educational institutes in Thailand. According to the Act, quality assurance in educational systems is comprised of both internal and external systems. Internal quality assurance is the responsibility of each academic institution and its governing organization to oversee that such internal mechanisms are put in place and remain a part of the continuing management system. As for external quality assurance, the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) was established in 2000 as a public independent body responsible for external assessment of all educational institutions in the economy. At the time, higher educational institutions (HEIs) in Thailand are classified into traditional public and private universities under the Ministry of University Affairs and Technical and Teachers Colleges under the Ministry of Education. There are also specific institutes under other ministries with degree offering in specific areas, such as; the Royal Military Academy and the Royal Thai Naval Academy under the Ministry of Defense, Nursing Colleges under the Ministry of Public Health, etc.; all of which

have to be subjected to external assessment by law. ONESQA is responsible for the assessment framework and assessment output within a five-year cycle. Since its onset all universities in Thailand have been subjected to two rounds of external assessment.

The first external assessment round (2001-2005) aimed at verifying the actual situations of educational institutions and encouraging all institutions to present their self evaluation report together with basic statistical data that reflect their Internal Quality Assurance system. The assessment framework was based on 8 criteria and 28 indicators, and 260 institutions were assessed. Each institution received a feedback report based on data given in their self-assessment reports and recommendations drawn from site visits and observations.

The assessment framework criteria are as follows;

1. Quality of Graduates
2. Quality of Teaching and Learning
3. Quality of Academic Support
4. Quality of Research and Innovation
5. Quality of Academic Services
6. Quality of Preservation of Arts and Cultures
7. Quality of Administration and Management
8. Quality of Internal Quality Assurance System

Table 1: Summary Result of the First External Assessment Round[1]

Category	Quality Level				Overall Average
	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	
Public (24)	1	5	16	2	Good
Private (54)	7	35	11	1	Fair
Rajabhat Institute (41)	1	16	23	1	Good
Rajamangala Institute of Technology (38)	8	26	4	0	Fair
Specific Institute (93)	2	26	63	2	Good
Community College (10)	2	7	1	0	Fair
Total (260)	21	115	118	6	Fair

Note: Rajabhat Institutes and Rajamangala Institute of Technology were Teachers Colleges and Technical Colleges under the Ministry of Education. Both were elevated to university level in 2005.

[1] Public seminar document from ONESQA, 25 April 2011

The second assessment round (2006 – 2010) was more rigorous with an increased number of indicators to be reported and targeted at institutional accreditation. The objectives of the second assessment round are to stimulate quality enhancement in each institute via standardization, organizational development plans, and accreditation. There were 252 institutes assessed. The results were 220 accredited, 10 pending. and 6 not being accredited.

Table 2: Summary Result of the Second External Assessment Round

Category	Accredited	Pending	Not-Accredited	Undecided	Total
Autonomous	13	-	-	-	13
Public	14	1	-	13	28
Rajabhat University	38	2	-	-	40
Rajamangala University of Technology	9	-	-	-	9
Private	53	5	3	6	67
Community College	15	1	3	1	20
Specific Institute	78	1	-	-	79
Total	220	10	6	20	252

In this round the assessment framework consisted of 7 Criteria and 48 indicators. The 7 Criteria are:

1. Quality of Graduates
2. Research and Innovation
3. Academic Services
4. Preservation of Arts and Cultures
5. Institutional and Staff Development
6. Curriculum and Learning Process
7. Internal Quality Assurance System

The third assessment round which is scheduled to begin in year 2011 aims to raise the educational quality standards focusing on institutional outputs, learning outcomes, and impacts rather than on processes. The new assessment framework also gives room for each institution to identify indicators which are unique and appropriate to their development environments.

Are We Making Progress?

Results of the first round of quality assessment (2001-2005) indicate that 91.92% of all universities' quality levels are considered to be acceptable. However this is somewhat

disappointing since less than half of all HEIs (only 47.69% of 260 higher education institutions) demonstrated the achievement of ONESQA standards. High percentages of graduate employment did not reflect the skill and knowledge required by employers: for example, English proficiency and problem skills. The major positive impact of such extensive exercises is the emergence of "Quality Management" thinking and establishing basic data base systems.

As for the second round of external assessment (2006– 2010), there were signs of improvement in Research and Publications, Preservation of Arts and Cultures, the Internal Quality Assurance System, and a higher percentage of higher educational institutes were accredited (94.83%). Quantitative results brought many controversial arguments to the evaluation process when some of the newly established private institutes were ranked with a higher score than some of the well-known public universities.

Looking at the overall system, there is clear evidence of a massive increase in the higher educational system of the economy. Some of the quantitative results are;

- The number of higher education institutions has drastically increased during the last four decades from less than 20 degree-granting institutions (1970) to 252 institutions at present (2010). The number of students in higher education has increased from a little over 60,000 students in the academic year 1970 to 2.4 million students (2010). This phenomenal increase in HE students is due to many factors; one of them is the launching of two open universities in 1971 and 1981, which had a tremendous impact on the increase of students in the higher education system from merely 69,000 in 1970 to almost 800,000 students in 1984. The second factor is the promotion of education in the previous National Economic and Development Plans (1997 – 2006) that promote the basic education from 6 years to 9 and 12 years at present. Another factor is the rapid increase in private institutes due to government incentives as well as an increase in multiple campuses in the existing public universities.
- The ratio of higher education enrollment to total population has increased drastically from 7.76% in 1990 to 38.30% in 2008. Consequently, the ratio of higher education enrollment in the age group population between 18 – 21 years has increased from 39.03% to 60.47% during the last decade, which is well beyond the target set at 28% in the 9th National Economic and Development Plan (2002 – 2006)[2].
- The Transition Rate (the percentage of students who graduate from one level and move on to the next level) at Higher Education Levels has increased from 73.98% in 2003 to 94.76% in Academic Year 2009[3]. This is not only because of increased numbers of public and private universities, but also of the government's policy for the Student Loan Fund, which is accessible to all students.
- Female students have had equal access opportunity to higher education comparable to their population ratio. In fact it seems that formal learning is more popular among female students, as the ratio of female student enrollment at higher educational levels is 54.28% (academic year 2008) which is higher than the female population ratio of the economy (50.8%)[4].

[2] Source: Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, http://www.nesdb.go.th

[3] 2009 Education Statistics in Brief, Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education.

[4] Source: Department of Employment

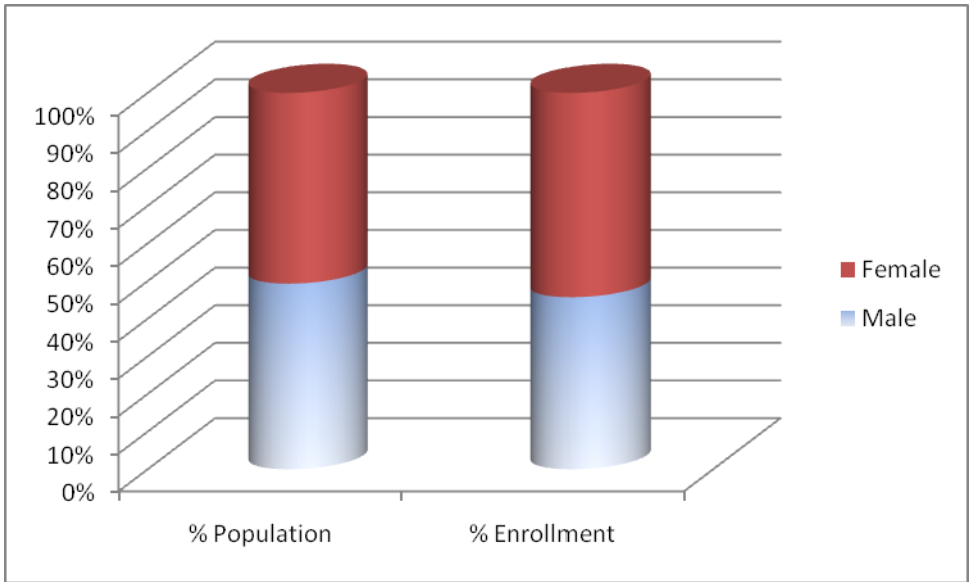


Figure 1: Ratio of Male to Female Population and Higher Education Enrollment (2009)

- Although there is a steady increase in the numbers for graduate enrollment, overall growth is at a very slow pace. The ratio of Graduate Enrollment to total Higher Education Enrollment has only increased 3.76% from 2000 to 2008. The result from the first round of quality assessment confirms that less than 5% of new graduates planned to continue on to graduate study.

Table 3: Increase in Higher Education Student Enrollment, 2000 - 2008

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total Population (m.) [5]	61.88	62.31	62.8	63.08	61.97	62.42	62.83	63.04	63.39
HE Enrollment (m.)[6]	1.82	1.9	1.99	1.98	2.21	2.27	2.50	2.43	2.43
% HE Enrollment to Total Population	29.49	30.49	31.63	31.38	35.59	36.29	39.83	38.55	38.30
% of HE Enrollment to School Age Population(18 - 21 yr)	39.03	41.08	43.81	48.56	52.92	55.60	62.50	61.05	60.47

Note: Numbers of Higher Education Enrollment include; diploma level, undergraduate degree level, graduate degree level in public and private institutions.

[5] Source: The Bureau of Registration Administration, Ministry of Interior, http://203.113.86.149/xstat/popyear.html
[6] Source: Ministry of Education, http://www.moe.go.th/data_stat/

Table 4: Graduate Level Enrollment and Number of Publications, 2000 - 2008

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Graduate Level Enrollment	95,623	115,449	137,578	127,571	161,892	179,191	204,059	217,615	218,603
% of Graduate Enrollment to Total HE Enrollment	5.24	6.08	6.93	6.44	7.34	7.91	8.15	8.95	9.00
Total number of publications[7]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8,620	6405

Issues of Concern

Although we have achieved the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) in education reform, much discussion has focused on the quality of higher education. Here are some of the issues of concern as Thailand enters the next decade of Educational Reform (2009 – 2018):

- With increased intake of higher education level students throughout the economy, the number of graduates also increases in a steady trend. Currently, more than 500,000 graduates enter the employment market each year, but with unbalanced supply in different areas[8]. There is a clear shortage of manpower supply in science and technology areas, especially in Medical Science and Applied Science.
- School age population numbers have been decreasing steadily during the past ten years due to successful birth rate control and extended marriage age in the younger generation. This is noticeable especially in the pre-elementary school age group. In the meantime due to promotion of higher education enrollment and increasing numbers of programs available in higher educational institutes, higher education enrollment has been escalating. With an overflow of higher education and more supply over demand, there will be challenges to maintain the number of incoming students in each institute amidst a competition to win over students.

Table 5: Numbers of Pre-elementary Education versus Number of Undergraduate Degrees and below, 2001 - 2009[9]

Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Total Pre-elementary Education	2,108,175	2,070,760	1,941,723	1,824,732	1,806,282	1,771,998	1,758,573	1,770,386	1,780,074
Total Undergraduate Degree and Below	1,784,481	1,848,861	1,852,044	2,043,806	2,086,029	2,298,704	2,212,619	2,209,413	2,093,545

[7] Source : Office of Higher Education Commission, Ministry of Education
[8] Department of Employment
[9] Source: Ministry of Education, http://www.moe.go.th/data_stat/

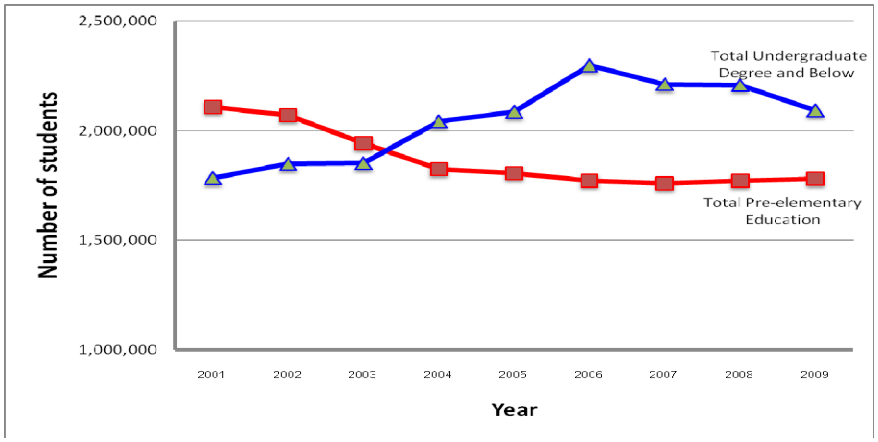


Figure 2: Total Pre-elementary enrolment versus Total Undergraduate enrolment, 2001 - 2009

- There have been complaints about the quality of graduates in virtually every area regarding professionalism, exact skills, English proficiency, problem solving skills, strategic thinking, etc. It is uncertain whether information relating to quality aspects required by employers had been disseminated to all parties concerned, especially to students. With demands from students for more freedom, and with the exploitation of IT, quality in classroom learning has deteriorated.
- Budget and financial stability are major concerns of public institutions. While there have been promotions to increase higher education enrollment, the amount of government budget allocated has not increased proportionately. Budgets per student allocated to public universities have been decreasing for the last decade, forcing all the universities to offer special programs and off-campus degrees. Some of these off-campus degree programs are offered in places without appropriate teaching facilities and learning support mechanisms for quality learning. Without the surveillance and control mechanisms from the responsible authority, there have been escalating numbers of such programs all over the economy competing in offering degrees by giving concessions and utilizing attractive marketing strategies.

Changing Landscapes in the Quality Assurance System

From all these challenges, how can HEIs keep up with quality teaching and maintain integrity in a competitive environment and yet earn trust and faith from the public as a leading university in the economy? Some of the changing factors that have occurred over the past several years and are beginning to shape the landscape of quality assurance systems in many institutions in Thailand include the following.

Factors influencing the changing of Quality Assurance Systems to move towards improvement can be classified into external and internal groups. External factors are mainly changes from government agencies responsible for regulations and accountability. Some of the major changes are;

1) Public Sector Reform and the declaration of the Royal Decree on Criteria and Procedures for Good Governance B.E. in 2003 was the starting point of many strategies being enforced in public administration offices. In accordance with the Public Administration Act, the Office of the Public Sector Development Commission (OPDC) was established and given the responsibility for introducing changes to improve public management and promoting continuing high performance of Thai

public agencies at both national and provincial levels. The first Public Sector Reform Strategies (2003 – 2007) was then announced as part of the national strategic reform tools. All government agencies including public universities were subjected to the system of the **performance agreement and measurement** from which a series of **key performance indicators** was used to set **target goals**. In order to assist the public sector, many tools were introduced and massive training undertaken on the implementation of these tools. Modern management tools such as the strategic planning process and balanced scorecard, and quality of service delivery along with incentive schemes and rewards were introduced side by side. In 2006 OPDC introduced a framework for evaluation of the Quality Management System in all public sector entities based on the well-known Baldridge framework. Many public universities immediately adopted the framework and incorporated it into their internal quality assurance systems. The framework is being carried forward to the Second Public Sector Reform Strategies, which started in 2008 and scheduled to end in 2012.

2) The strengthening of Internal Quality Assurance by the Office of Higher Education Commission (OHEC). According to the National Education Act, OHEC as the governing body of all public universities is to oversee that internal quality assurance mechanisms perform internal assessment on a regular basis. From 2007, OHEC launched many QA initiatives, which not only assisted in the process of internal quality assurance systems, but also served as a basis for quality improvement. The introduction of an on-line database system for collection of QA indicators and uniformity of data gathering, together with e-report and on-line assessment not only simplifies the internal assessment process, but also enables access to public information. OHEC also enforces the Thai Qualification Framework for Higher Education in 2009 as a basis for curriculum design and standard discipline. The Qualification Framework demands all disciplines to specify learning outcomes in 5 domains of learning, namely;
    a. morality and ethics,
    b. knowledge,
    c. cognitive skill,
    d. interpersonal skills and responsibilities,
    e. Numerical skill, communication and IT skills and psychomotor skills in some specific disciplines such as music, nursing, etc.

    OHEC also introduced the Educational Excellence Framework based on the Baldridge Educational Criteria in 2004 as a guideline for institutes on their quest for excellence. The criteria were updated to a newer version in 2009 and dubbed the Educational Criteria for Performance Excellence, known as EdPEx. In order to promote the application of the criteria in higher institutes' performance improvement, a small pilot project was launched in 2010 as an initiative for higher educational improvement strategy.

3) The popularity of World University Rankings has driven many institutes to look into their own organizations and begin asking challenging questions. At the beginning no one paid much attention to the ranking results since no institute was listed in the top 200. Some of the many obstacles are the unfamiliarity of factors considered and the tediousness of data gathering. However, once universities realized that these are common KPI used across many raking systems, data gathering systems were

established and the ranking results used to drive improvement. Improvement focus is difficult and painfully slow. Effort in the quality improvement initiatives in many institutions, although yielding progressively higher evaluation scores, may fail to move the university up in the rankings.

In the meantime changes took place within some institutions that are beginning to pay off. There are clear signs of improvement in quality indicators and emerging Best Practices. Some of the internal changes taking place are:

1) Integrated Quality Assurance Framework. Subjected to various external assessment systems, many institutions learned and adopted their own internal quality assurance system based on an integrated framework of Internal Quality Assurance and Excellence Criteria, for example**:** Khon Kaen University Quality Assurance (KKU-QA), Chulalongkorn University Quality Assurance (CU**-**QA)**,** Mahidol University Quality Development (MUQD), etc. These frameworks not only integrate external assessment frameworks but also incorporate quality assurance into the university-wide management system. The results of quality assurance are used as input into the annual strategic planning process and target setting. KPIs are being deployed into all work units and aligned with the institution's vision and mission. The quality assessment process is now a tool for turning findings into opportunities for improvement and driving strategic objectives. Although most improvements are at the premature stage, there are reports of improvement in some early indicators such as increases in the quality of incoming students, reduction of the turnover ratio and drop out rates, and an increase in suggestions and improvement ideas from employees in many institutions.

2) Quality is used as a tool for workforce development. One of the major hindrances in quality assurance is that people in the organization fail to see the potential for improvement from the QA system. The more successful institutions employ quality as a means to assist their workforce to understand the complexity of the university systems and interrelated results. Working as internal and external assessors encourages those in the workforce to develop their skills and knowledge in modern management tools such as strategic planning processes, performance management systems, customer satisfaction surveys, Pulse Surveys, process improvement tools, and international standards. Employee engagement has improved tremendously as they can relate the value of their work and improvement efforts in the institutional results.

3) Improving quality of services and support mechanisms. Adoption of industrial standards by service units is becoming more common in many institutions. International Standards which are well known to industries and business sectors such as ISO 9000 – Quality Management System, ISO 15189 – Medical Laboratories and ISO 18000 – Safety Management System, are being employed as frameworks for process management and quality control of laboratories and services in the university to improve the operational performance of service units. Other service support mechanisms such as library and IT also improve their service quality through benchmarking and best practices principles. With encouragement from the OPDC's Process Improvement Awards and Service Quality Awards, numerous service units in public institutes earned awards for their improvement efforts in service quality.

4) Benchmarking partnership and sharing of Best Practices. Benchmarking partnership has been formed in many institutes both as bilateral and multilateral levels. The **Consortium of Thai Medical Schools** is an example of such a benchmarking partnership. Established in 1989, consisting of 19 medical schools in the economy, the consortium initiated a benchmarking project among its member medical schools in 2003. The project extended to phase two of Organizational Assessment using an excellence framework. Sharing of Best Practices from the assessment process stimulates learning and improvement among Thai medical schools. Other benchmarking partnerships such as Khon Kaen University and Songkla University are still in the early stages and have yet to produce value exchanges. Hopefully there will be more benchmarking partners to stimulate organizational learning.

Conclusion

Quality Assurance can be a powerful tool to drive organization-wide improvement, depending on the perception and patience of the authorities involved. It is apparent from two rounds of external assessment that different institutions are at different levels of maturity. Authorities responsible for assessment, control, and budget allocation should clarify the nature and limitation of each institute and apply appropriate measures and mechanisms to stimulate improvement. Institutions should continue to learn from others' Best Practices and improve their own Quality Assurance Systems to match their operating environments. An institution's leader should understand the importance of the Internal Quality Assurance System and integrate it into their strategic management system. In the meantime, focus improvement initiatives in the right areas, although improvement results will not take effect in a short time. The most important thing is not to view Quality Assurance as a cyclical exercise and report writing project. HEIs should continue to use IQA as a mechanism for quality improvement and lead organizations to quality excellence.

References

Jeanne-Marie Col, Marc Holzer, Paul Posner, Marilyn Rubin(2006), *Results-Based Management in Thailand*. Evaluation Report.

Kirtikara, Krissanapong, ***"National Education Reform***" powerpoint presentation, December 15, 2010

Nakornthap, Amornwich(2009). "***Quality Assurance and Quality Issues in Thai Education: Toward Research-Driven Strategies for Improving Quality***" The International Journal of Quality Assurance and Accreditation, Vol.1 No.2.

Selaratana, Sannudee(2009), ***"Accountability in the Thai Public Sector***" PhD thesis, Department of Accounting and Finance, Faculty of Law, Business and Social Sciences, University of Glasgow, http://theses.gla.ac.uk/1280/

Suwanwela, Charas, "***Higher Education Reform in Thailand"*** Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand.

Graduates and Employment Estimation Report, 2010. Department of Employment.
Global Education Digest 2009, Comparing Education Statistics Across the World, UNESCO Institute for Statistics

Higher Educational Plan - 2nd Phase, powerpoint presentation, Office of the Higher Education Commission, Ministry of Education, September 30, 2007.

2009 Education Statistics in Brief, Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education.

2000 -2009 MIS Educational Data, Ministry of Education. http://www.moe.go.th/data_stat/

Managing Quality in Technical Education: Brunei Darussalam's Perspectives

Ashri **Ahmad** EdD

Acting Assistant Director/Senior Education Officer
Department of Planning, Development & Research
Higher Education Division
Ministry of Education
Brunei Darussalam

Abstract

'Quality' and 'Quality assurance' in education have become global issues in the last decade. Educational institutions around the world are focusing on designing and implementing quality assurance systems to ensure students a high quality education. In many economies, including Brunei Darussalam, the development of a national system of quality assurance in education has sometimes brought confusion and controversy. The main reason for this stems from the conflicting perspectives of different interest groups: governments, administrators and academic staff being the principal ones, but students, employers and the general public also have significant voices. All, of course, are committed to quality but each regards it in a slightly different way.

The paper highlighted a study set out to explore the perceptions of two groups of stakeholders; the administrators and the teachers on the quality assurance system in vocational and technical education in Brunei Darussalam. The study examined the stakeholders' understanding of the term quality and the significance of quality assurance measures. It also established stakeholders' perception of the current quality assurance practices.

A mixed-method research approach was used in this investigation, including document analysis, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. The results provide insights into stakeholders' perceptions of quality and a range of purposes for quality assurance system implementation. The study identified the lack of a structured comprehensive quality assurance system in technical education institutions and highlighted ways in which quality improve the quality assurance measures. This study was timely in light of the increased interest in shaping quality assurance mechanisms in TET in Brunei Darussalam.

Introduction

In Brunei Darussalam, post secondary institutions such as the technical education and training institutions have undergone significant changes over the last two decades. There has been a tremendous increase in student population and student applications for enrollment, but at the same time a reduction per student in real terms, in government funding and diversification of organizational roles and expectations of these institutions and an establishment of private training providers, which eventually will lead to increased competition.

As in many other economies throughout the world, Brunei Darussalam's technical education and training (hereafter TET) institutions are under pressure to find effective and efficient ways of meeting the requirements of stakeholders while at the same time retaining values and practices consistent with their role in the communities they serve. This environment requires TET institutions to identify their future direction, establish relevant and rigorous strategic responses to the operating environment, and to determine frameworks and strategies to capitalize on competitive advantage. It has also increased the need for continuous commitment to the pursuit of quality through systematic improvement strategies for the delivery of quality TET.

The Research Questions

The study seeks to develop insight into Brunei TET quality assurance policies as perceived by the two groups of stakeholders; the administrators or policy makers and the teachers or the implementers. The aims and objectives of the study are as follows:

1) To examine stakeholders' understanding of the term quality and significance of quality assurance measures.
   Research Questions
   a) How do the stakeholders understand the term quality in TET?
   b) What purposes are perceived as significant in the implementation of a quality assurance system?
2) To establish stakeholders perception of the current practices in ensuring quality.
   Research Questions
   a) How do stakeholders currently perceive the quality assurance measures?
   b) What recommendations do the stakeholders have to improve the current quality assurance measures?

Literature Review

Due to the increased emphasis on quality, the educational sector in many economies has shown over the past two decades, increased levels of interest in the development of more effective, systematic and scientific means of monitoring the performance and outcomes of education systems. More educational institutions are focusing on the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes, as well as students' educational outcomes (Blom & Meyers, 2003). According to Feigenbaum (1994, p. 84), 'quality of education' is the key factor in 'invisible' competition between countries since the quality

of products and services is determined by the way ‘managers, teachers, workers, engineers and economists think, act and make decisions about quality’. In the same year, Craft (1994, p. viii) identified the need for ‘… credible academic and professional awards’ … which have led ‘ … national governments and tertiary institutions themselves to establish sophisticated mechanisms to … improve the quality of the education offered and the awards granted.’

Defining quality in education

The international literature on quality and quality assurance in education, according to Harman (1996) reveals considerable difficulties and ambiguities in the definition of a number of key terms. This, according to Harman, is not surprising as quality deals with a number of complex notions and only in the widest sense is there broad agreement about what quality is. Apart from this lack of agreement, authors interested in researching quality issues differ significantly in their views about the way a number of key concepts used in the current debate about quality were defined.

In discussing the concept of quality, Harman (1996) indicated that ‘many see quality as a relative concept, meaningful only from the perspective of particular people at particular points of time, measured against some either explicit or implicit standard or purpose’ (p.4). Aspin and Chapman (1994) stated that the concept of quality does not necessarily lend itself to a straight forward interpretation. While quality is a widely used concept in industry where clearly definable products exist, the concept of quality is more difficult to define in education. Hager (1997, p.6) states that ‘there is no one universally applicable answer to the question 'what is quality?' since quality is a function of many factors which vary with the nature of the organization, its particular purposes, its overall philosophy, the nature of its client, ...’. Lakomsi (1998, p.233) in prolonging the debate, suggests that ‘To use a well known, but eminently serviceable cliché, quality, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. Depending on the social, political, economic or educational context in which discussion on quality is conducted, it will look different, mean different things and will lead to different practical proposals of how to bring it about or to maintain it’.

Baker (1997), Green (1994), Harvey and Green (1993) and Harvey and Knight (1996) discussed the nature of quality in the context of education and identified five ways of thinking about quality: Quality as ‘exceptional’, Quality as ‘perfection’ or ‘consistency’, Quality as ‘fitness for purpose’, Quality as ‘value for money’, and Quality as ‘transformative’.

Quality as ‘Exceptional’
According to the Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford University Press, 2006), quality is defined as ‘general excellence’ or ‘the degree of excellence of something as measured against other similar things’. The exceptional notion of quality takes it as given that quality is distinctive (Green, 1994; Harvey & Green, 1993), exclusive (Green, 1994) or excellence (Baker, 1997). Garvin (1988, p.41) in defining quality described it as being

‘both absolute and universally recognisable, a mark of uncompromising standards and high achievement … often quality cannot be defined precisely’.

Quality as ‘Consistency’
The consistent view of quality is similar to traditional notions of excellence in some respects. This notion focuses on process and sets specifications that it aims to meet perfectly (Cosby, 1994; Van Berkel & Wolfhagen, 2002). The perfection approach or the right every time approach (Baker, 1997; Harvey, 1998) defined quality as the absence of errors (Green 1994), where once the design or a specification has been established by the producer, any deviation from it, means a reduction in quality.

Quality as ‘Fit for purpose’
Fitness for purpose was the definition of quality proposed by Ball (1985). Guaspari (1985) and Yong and Wilkinson (2002) claim that the extent to which a product or service is meeting and/or exceeding the expectations of customers is the most widely used definition of quality. This approach implies that quality is relative to a particular activity, product or service. The judgment as to whether an activity, a product or a service is of quality depends on whether it successfully meets or serves the purpose of the user (Juran, 1997) or for which it is carried out (Baker, 1997).

Quality as ‘Value for money’
Value-based definitions of quality describe quality in terms of costs and prices. Based on this definition, a quality product is one that provides performance, requirements and conformance at an acceptable price or cost (Yong & Wilkinson, 2002). This definition is closely related to the customer specification approach to fitness for purpose, in that customers are specifying what is of value to them.

Quality as ‘Transformative’
The transformative notion of quality involves consideration of fundamental changes in form, including cognitive change or transcendence. Baker (1997, p.4) feels that the notion of ‘transformative’ quality appears to be ‘very apt for education: … as education is not a service where something is done for the consumer, but where something is to do to and with the student’. This notion of quality stresses the value added notion of quality, a measure of the extent to which the educational experience enhances the participants’ knowledge, skills and abilities. Harvey (1998, p. 244) in explaining transformation as a definition of quality in education states that ‘Transformative education is about 'adding value' to the students by enhancing their attributes but it is also about empowering them as critical, reflective, transformative, lifelong learning, ... Education is not a service for a customer - but an ongoing transformation of the participant. … . Students are not customers or consumers, they are participants’.

The purpose of quality assurance mechanisms

Quality and quality assurance have become key issues internationally in the 1990s (Craft, 1994) and managers of education systems and institutions are concerned about quality and how to put in place appropriate quality assurance mechanisms. There are

many different approaches to quality assurance (Hager, 1997) most of which are applied at the organizational level rather than that of individual modules or projects.

While an exact definition of quality is somewhat problematic, there are fewer problems with the notion of quality assurance. Gilbert (1992, p.32), for example, defines quality assurance as 'the assembly of all functions and activities that bear upon the quality of a product or service so that all are treated equally, planned, controlled and implemented in a systematic manner'. Harman (1998) and Skilbeck and Cornell (2000) defined quality assurance in the context of higher education as systematic management and assessment procedures adopted by a higher education institution or system to monitor performance and to ensure achievement of quality outputs or improved quality. Vroeijenstijn (1995, p. xviii) defined quality assurance as the 'systematic, structured and continuous attention to quality in terms of quality maintenance and quality improvement.' Harman and Meek(2000, p.5) refer quality assurance to 'the processes of on-going review, assessment and monitoring that should apply to all recognized providers in order to ensure that courses and awards are of a high standard and that institutional monitoring of performance is effective'.

In reviewing the literature, several important dimensions of international variations in quality assurance mechanisms concerning the purposes or functions of quality assurance systems were identified (Kells, 1995; Vroeijenstijn, 1995). These purposes are improvement of education, accountability, public information and market transparency, allocation of resources and planning, and control.

Improvement of education

Several authors (Harvey, 1998; Van Bruggen Scheele & Westerheijden, 1999; Van Damme, 2000) mention improvement of education as the main and most frequently stated purpose of the quality assurance process. Improvement, according to the authors, is linked to the definition of quality as transformation. This approach to the quality assurance process leads to the processes of institutional innovation. The goal of quality assurance, they say, is to help institutions acquire the necessary input, improve processes and raise the standards of outcomes. However, it may be necessary to ask what is to be improved, in what ways, and for whose benefit.

Accountability

According to Van Damme (2000), the concept of public accountability has been the dominant and most important rationale for introducing quality evaluation. Accountability, as defined by Schofield (1999), is the degree to which stakeholders meet and are perceived by others to meet their obligations in terms of planning, actions and their role in achieving identified objectives. In economies where educational institutions' autonomy is traditional or based on the market, there has been a growing demand for explicit accountability. On the other hand, Askling, Lycke and Stave (2004) contend that in countries where educational institutions have been under government control, accountability is the price of increased autonomy.

Public information and market transparency
This function stresses the right of the public and of potential customers such as students, their families or employers for detailed information on educational institutions, for example, with regard to standards and quality of the academic, success rates and facilities.

Allocation of resources and planning
According to Van Damme (2000), some countries are using quality indicators to differentiate between institutions in the allocation of funds and resources. Decision making processes concerning allocation of programmes are also based on it.

Control
Harvey and Newton (2004) explain the two control functions of the quality assurance process. First is the government's intention to control the education system by restricting unrestrained growth. This is done, according to them, either by financial control or by using the outcomes of quality monitoring to encourage or restrict expansion. Second is the desire of those in authority to control the status, standing and legitimacy of the education system. This addresses the comparability of standards, the standard or level of student academic or professional achievement, nationally and internationally.

Research Approach and the Sample

Two kinds of data collection methods were used sequentially, first the qualitative method, followed by the quantitative method. The study involved a number of samples of two groups of stakeholder in the area of TET consisting of administrators and teachers from five TET institutions. The informants selected for the interviews were a purposeful sample using the maximum variation technique (Patton, 2002). A total of 21 individuals was interviewed. 24 administrators and 155 teachers were selected to complete the survey questionnaires.

Data to answer the research question was generated by semi structured interview and survey questionnaires. This arrangement is made to illustrate quantitatively the general thinking of a larger population of the stakeholders in their ranking of which definitions best describe quality in VET. The findings from the interviews are used to justify and illustrate qualitatively why stakeholders had these perceptions**.**

Major Findings and their Implications for Future Direction

Four major aspects were examined in this study and each will be discussed in turn: Establishment of a structured comprehensive quality assurance system, documentation of quality assurance policies and measures, staff awareness of the importance of a quality assurance system, aspects of human resource provision and management of a quality assurance system. This section would also provide suggestions for the direction that educational institutions could take to ensure a quality TET provision. These issues along with the implications of the finding will be reviewed in turn.

Establishment of a structured comprehensive quality assurance system

Based on the two groups of stakeholders' perceptions, there was no structured comprehensive quality assurance system, implemented by the educational institutions at the time of the study. Both groups of stakeholders perceived a relatively low number of quality assurance measures in place and believed these measures were not uniformly practiced by all institutions. The stakeholders in this study agreed on the need for the institutions to establish a structured comprehensive quality assurance system for Brunei TET institutions. This suggestion is consistent with the European Associations for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (2005) view that formal policies and procedures will provide a framework within which educational institutions can develop and monitor the effectiveness of their quality assurance systems and help provide confidence in institutional autonomy. Without doubt, the starting point for quality assurance requires that each TET institution very carefully examines its purpose, bearing in mind national TET imperatives as well as educational institutions strengths and characteristics. In developing and planning a quality assurance system, it is necessary to define precisely the stakeholders' perceptions of what constitutes quality in TET. Then it is important to consider what purposes stakeholders perceive as most significant for implementing a quality assurance system.

It was evident from the study that different definitions of quality were used simultaneously by both groups of stakeholders to define quality of TET. The findings reveal that administrators placed the same importance on the definition of quality as 'exceptional', quality as 'fit for purpose' and quality as 'transformative' in defining quality. Teachers, on the other hand, seemed to perceived the definition of quality as 'transformative' compared to quality as 'exceptional' and quality as 'fit for purpose' as the definition that best described their view of quality in TET. The findings support Harvey and Green's (1993) claim that stakeholders' conceptions of quality may not fit only one of the five definitions.

The findings may imply that in ranking quality as 'exceptional', quality as 'fit for purpose' and quality as 'transformative' are the definitions that best represented the view of quality in TET, that the administrators, being the policy and decision makers, emphasized equal importance in quality as excellence, as something distinctive, as a standard which is both absolute and recognizable with high quality input and the excellent level of resources. They also view quality as the ability of an institution to fulfill its mission or a programme of study to fulfill its aim and a measure of the extent to which the educational experience enhances the students' knowledge, skills and abilities.

Teachers, placing more emphasis on quality as 'transformative' as the best definition to represent quality in TET, may imply that teachers as frontline personnel of the organization, who are in direct contact with the TET students, base the quality of their graduates as the way they measured quality. Their perception of quality seems to relate more to their students' knowledge, skills and abilities. This finding is consistent with a reading on quality in higher education by Harvey (1998) who suggests that teachers are more likely to subscribe to the definition of quality as transformative, as by undertaking

education, individual's lives may be transformed. These findings are also consistent with the study carried out by Gibb (2003) where quality as 'excellence' reflected the system teachers perceived management to be implementing.

The finding also revealed that improvement was the top choice for both groups of stakeholders. This finding is consistent with Harvey (1998), Van Bruggen et al. (1999) and Van Damme's (2000) statements that mentioned improvement of education as the main and most frequently stated purpose of the quality assurance process.

Van Damme (2000) commented that the relative weight of definitions in policies and in institutional quality assurance frameworks is often responsible for a lack of understanding in this field. Taking this into consideration, the educational institutions should identify the type of quality that Brunei TET wants to achieve in planning, designing and implementing a quality assurance approach.

In planning for a quality assurance system, it is important to describe each definition of quality separately in order to get a clear picture of what stands for, what the ideological basis is, and what the implications of the proposed view of quality are. Points of agreement and disagreement, and the criteria that each stakeholder used when judging quality, provide a useful starting point for negotiations about a common platform for quality work in Brunei TET situation. This approach for the learning and implementing of a quality assurance system was suggested by Giertz (2001) and Woodhouse (1996). A consensus between administrators as policy makers and teachers as implementers with regards to what is meant by quality in the context of the current TET environment needs to be achieved so as to avoid potential conflict. It would be ideal as suggested by Woodhouse (1996), if this articulation be presented as a unified voice, as this will enhance the credibility of the conception of quality.

Documentation of quality assurance policies and measures

Because of the absence of a structured comprehensive quality assurance system in the educational institutions, there appear to be no consolidated documents on a quality assurance system in general. This is in contrast to Robinson's (1994) claim that in an organization with a quality system in place, its procedures for delivery of service are well documented. He added that in such organizations, the documentation is clear and explicit in its description of procedures and its present practices. The information is also presented in a readable manner and user friendly manner. Harman (1996), shares the same view. He stated that in any quality assurance mechanism, it is crucial that there be clear, written guidelines and that all processes should be as open as possible in order to develop confidence of all those involved' (p. 93). Furthermore according to Harman, all stakeholders should be 'encouraged to develop and demand high quality documentation'

The fragmented quality assurance measures in the educational institutions, if continued would create important strategic consequences as they define the contents of quality assurance mechanisms, their effectiveness, the actors involved, and the role of quality in steering the direction of the Brunei TET system. The identification and the

assessment of the existing quality assurance measure in the educational institution as carried out in this study are consistent with Dale, Cooper and Wilkinson's (1997) suggestion that this exercise is necessary in order to determine how these measures will be retained, modified and integrated within any new quality assurance system.

Based on the findings of this study, it is clear that the educational institutions, as a priority, need to consolidate their quality assurance documents and disseminate these documents to the administrators and teachers in the TET institutions. A manual of key documents on the quality assurance system needs to be published to guide administrators, teachers and even students. It is crucial that ways be found to minimize additional paper work. What emerged clearly from the research is that from the stakeholders' perspective, process and requirements need to be kept simple, with an emphasis on minimum but clear and detailed records of practice. Furthermore, such procedures must be built into day-to-day operations. Over time, a more precise understanding could be developed of what kinds of information should be recorded and kept.

Staff awareness on the importance of quality assurance

Staff awareness on the importance of a quality assurance system to the TET was another issue highlighted in the study. The study revealed that the educational institutions had attempted to implement certain quality assurance measures, but not all staff were receptive to their implementation. While stakeholders, especially teachers, face the burden of responding to scrutiny, there was also a feeling amongst some of them of being manipulated, or as one respondent said' of not being trusted and valued'. In addition, a number of teachers appeared to be wary of the possible effects of overt emphasis on the internal verification. They felt that assessors might regard verification as a judgment on personal performance, rather than as a monitoring of quality, and feared the consequences for management's relationship with staff. These issues confirm the contentions of Harvey and Knight (1996) about the responses of academics in their study.

While the majority of stakeholders did not express negative views about quality assurance measures implemented by the educational institutions, they believed that much of the problem in their implementation stemmed from the educational institution themselves. While this problem was not always related to quality assurance measures, there was often a sense of confusion and a lack of clear information and guidelines on the quality assurance procedures. This also seemed to contribute to a degree of demoralization amongst teachers. However, bearing in mind the dissatisfaction with the current quality assurance measures among a large number of respondents, in particular with the lack of a structured comprehensive quality assurance system, it is reasonable to assume that administrators and teachers would welcome improvements in quality practices.

Another lesson that can be drawn from the findings of this study is that while intrusive, top-down, quality assurance procedures could be a viable long term option, as maintaining and improving quality is more easily achieved when staff are directly

involved in the process of quality management. A suggestion made by Dynan and Clifford (2001) is also relevant to Brunei TET's attempt to introduce a quality assurance system. They claim that for quality to be fully incorporated in the institution's processes, there must be real engagement of the staff at all levels, an engagement that arises from a sense of empowerment.

The finding highlighted the importance of communication as a strategy in ensuring quality provision in the TET. Educational institutions could consider playing a role in communicating with teachers regularly about quality assurance. The involvement of all teachers, according to Dale, Cooper and Wilkinson (1997) is an important step towards continuous improvement. They noted that ongoing change and continuous improvement may at first be viewed as a threat to established working relationships and could produce resistance, a perception highlighted by some stakeholders in the study. These authors also comment that involving staff members in the planning process could reduce the restraining forces identified, and that the best way of reducing resistance to change is to involve those whom it is going to affect in the decision making process, an issue very much highlighted by stakeholders in the study.

Aspects of human resource provision

Staff of an institution, according to Mc Ilroy and Walker (1993), play an important role in quality assurance and the quality assurance of an institution will be decided by the quality of the staff. They added that effective staff development and involvement of staff in planning are important elements of quality assurance. Staff of an institution should be able to analyze their operations and modify them to optimize the use of resources. This is important for the continuous improvement of an institution.

The study demonstrated that both groups of stakeholders believed that certain aspects of human resources in the educational institutions could seriously hamper the successful implementation of quality programmes, as well as implementation of quality assurance measures. The identified factors include the unavailability of specialized staff in some disciplines, staff lacking appropriate competencies, variable staff motivation and commitment, and unsystematic staff professional development. This finding is consistent with the claim made by Harman (1996) that within the Asia and Pacific region, of which Brunei is a part, it is important to recognize that a great deal of discussion about quality in education relates to basic input issues, such as degree of expertise and training, numbers of staff, level of preparation for students, the degree of competence of administrators or leaders and availability of resources. Staff issues such as the overall shortage of well-qualified and staff without relevant qualifications, according to Harman, are the major problems facing many developing countries.

Professional development efforts, even though with the established Human Resource Development and Management Unit in the Department of Technical education, appeared to be fragmented with little common direction apart from the system-wide based policy of professional development. The findings of this study led to a major conclusion that professional development within TET in Brunei is in need of further review and considerable reform if it is to become more effective. Both groups of

stakeholders believed that TET should plan and integrate the quality assurance measures within a planning process aimed at achieving TET objectives. This approach is supported by Harris and Simons (1999) who believe such an approach is more effective in achieving long term change. Boerstler et al. (1996) have also argued that targeted training can also be effective as it saves money, time, and avoids training people who do not use it, a problem identified in this study.

Conclusion

It is hoped that this examination of the quality assurance process in TET in Brunei and its implications for the future direction for the TET will be carefully examined by the nation's vocational education decision makers. Given the findings of the present study, there is reason to be optimistic about the future of the quality assurance system. However, improvement requires courage, hard work, and commitment at all levels of the education community in the educational institutions in order to transform the dream of excellent education through a systematic quality assurance system into a reality.

References

Askling, B., Lycke, K.H., & Stave, O. (2004). Institutional leadership and leeway – Important elements in a national system of quality assurance and accreditation: experiences from a pilot study. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 10, 107-120.

Aspin, D.N., & Cghapman, J.D. (1994). *Quality schooling: A pragmatic approach to some current problems, topic and issues*. London: Casell.

Baker, J. (1997). *Conflicting concepts of quality – Policy implications for tertiary education*. A paper presented at the AIC Tertiary Education in New Zealand Conference, 27-28 May 1997. Retrieved March 21, 2005 from http://www.ed.co.nz/docs/quality.pdf

Ball, C. (1985). *Fitness for purpose*. SRHE and NFER-Nelson, Guilford.

Blom, K., & Meyers, D. (2003). *Quality indicators in vocational education and training. International perspectives*. National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER)

Boerstler, H., Foster, R.W., O'Connor, E.J., O'Brien, J.L., Shortell, S.M., Carman, J.M., et al. (1996). Implementation of total quality management: Continual wisdom verses reality. *Hospital and health Services Administration*, 41(2), 143-159.

Craft, A. (Ed.) (1994). International *developments in assuring quality in higher education: Selected papers from an international conference*, Montreal, 1993. London: The Falmer Press.

Cosby, P.B. (1984). *Quality without tears. The art of hassle-free management*. New York: New American Library.

Dale, B.G., Cooper, C.L., & Wilkinson, A. (1997). *Managing quality and human resources*. Blackwell, Oxford.

Dynan, M.B., & Clifford, R.J. (2001). Eight Years on: Implementation of quality management in an Australian university. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 26(5), 203-215.

European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. (2005). *Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European higher education area*. Helsinki, Finland.

Feigenbaum, A.V. (1994). Quality education and America's competitiveness. *Quality Progress*, 27(9), 83-84.

Garvin, D.A. (1998). *Managing quality: The strategic and competitive edge*. New York, Free press.

Gibb, J. (2003). *What impact is implementing a quality assurance system having on the vocational education and training classroom?* National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER).

Giertz, B. (2001). *Anything goes? The concept of quality revisited*. The Sixth QHE seminar. The end of quality? Birmingham, 25-26 may 2001.

Green, D. (1994). *What is quality in higher education?* Buckingham: OUP and SHRE.
Guaspari, J. (1985). *I know when I see it: A modern fable about quality*. New York: American Management Association.

Hager, P. (1997). *Quality assurance in VET. Review of research*. National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER).

Harman, G. (1996). *Quality assurance for higher education: Developing and managing quality assurance for higher education systems and institution in Asia and Pacific*. Bangkok: Unesco –ACEID, Bangkok.

Harman, G. (1998). The management of quality assurance: A review of international practice. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 52(4), 345-364.

Harman, G., & Meek, V.L. (2000). *Repositioning quality assurance and accreditation in Australian higher education*. Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs.

Harris, R., & Simons, M. (1999). *Quality vocational education and training: Where does staff development fit?* AVERA Conference papers.

Harvey, L. (1998). An assessment of past and current approaches to quality in higher education. *Australian Journal of Education*, 42(3), 237-255.

Harvey, L. (1999). *Quality in higher education*. Paper presented at the Swedish Quality Conference, Goteborg. Nov 1999. retrieved May 9, 2005, from http://www.shu.ac.uk/research/cre/publications/got6eborg.pdf.

Harvey, L., & Green, D. (1993). Defining quality. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education: An International Journal*, 18(1), 9-34.

Harvey, L., & Knight, P.T. (1996). *Transforming higher education*. Buckingham: SHRE and Open University Press.

Harvey, L., & Newton, J. (2004). Transforming quality evaluation. *Quality in Higher education*, 10(2), 149-165.

Kells, H.R. (1995). *Self-study processes* (4th ed.). New York: ACE/McMillan.

Lakomski, G. (1998). Editor's introduction. *Australian Journal of Education*, 42(3), 233.
McIlroy, A. & Walker, R. (1993). Total quality management: Some implications for management of distance education. *Distance Education*, 14(1), 40-54.

Oxford University Press. (2006). *Oxford English Dictionary*. Retrieved January 7, 2006, from http://www.askoxford.com/concise-)ed/quality?view=uk

Robinson, B. (1994). Assuring quality in open and distance learning. In F. Lockwood (Ed.), *Materials production in open and distance learning*. London: Paul Chapman Publisher.

Schofield, K. (1999). Independent *investigation into the quality of training in Queensland's traineeship system*. Brisbane: DETIR.

Skilbeck, M., & Cornell, H. (2000). Quality *assurance and accreditation in Australian higher education*. A national seminar on future arrangements. Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs. Retrieved January &, 2005, from http://www.dest.gov.au/highered/pubs/quality/qa.pdf.

Van Berkel, H.J.M., & Wolfhagen, H.A.. (2002). Evaluation: The Dutch system of external quality assessment: Description and experiences. *Education for Health*, 15(3), 335-345.

Van Bruggen, J.C., Scheele, J.P., & Westerheijden, D.F. (1999). To be continued… Synthesis and trends in follow-up of quality assurance in Western European higher education. *European Journal for Education Law and Policy*, 2, 155-163.

Van Damme, D. (2000). Internationalization and quality assurance: towards worldwide accreditation*? European Journal for Education Law and Policy*, 4, 1-20
Vroeijenstijn, D. (1993). *Quality management in university*. Canberra, Australia Government Publishing Service.

Woodhouse, D. (1996). Quality assurance: International trends, preoccupations and features. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 21(4), 347-356.

Yong, J., & Wilkinson, A. (2002). The long and winding road: The evolution of quality management. *Total Quality Management*, 13(1), 101-121.

The National University of Singapore's (NUS) Mission to be a Leading Global University

Tan Eng Chye

Provost, National University of Singapore
Singapore

The National University of Singapore (NUS) is one of two comprehensive universities in Singapore. Prior to 2006, the NUS was a statutory board under the Ministry of Education and was subject to Civil Service rules and guidelines over many areas such as finance and human resource practices. Since its corporatization in 2006, while NUS remains a publicly-funded entity, the University is now operating as a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee, with its own Board of Trustees. The NUS Board and Management now have considerable autonomy and flexibility to set its directions and goals, with the budgetary and academic prerogatives to pursue them.

Today, the NUS is a large and comprehensive state-funded university. In 2010, the NUS had 26,400 undergraduates and 10,500 graduate students enrolled across the 15 Faculties and Schools of the University. The faculty staff strength stands at 2,300; another 2,300 researchers are employed by the NUS to support and conduct research. Structurally, it can be said that the NUS is comparable to a typical state university. One of NUS's key roles is to provide university education to Singaporeans; NUS is currently admitting 12.5% of Singapore's birth cohort, and will continue to be obligated to educate a sizable proportion of our population.

Global university mission aligns with Singapore's goal to be a distinctive global city

NUS's mission and vision have evolved with time, and arguably, in tandem with Singapore's economic development and needs. In the early years, NUS was primarily a teaching university, teaching and training graduates to take on jobs created by foreign investments that were mostly in the manufacturing sector. In the 1990s, the economy progressed towards higher-skilled and knowledge intensive activities; manufacturing moved up the value chain, and services and technology sectors began to grow in importance. NUS correspondingly developed and then intensified research activities, and built up capabilities to take on the spectrum of research from basic to applied and translational.

The NUS is now building on its achievements and moving on to its next endeavour, that is, to become a global university. Once again, this is corollary to Singapore's national goal moving forwards, of ***High-Skilled People, Innovative Economy, Distinctive Global City****,* as was articulated by the Report of the Economic Strategies Committee

that the Singapore Government has accepted and adopted[1]. Of interest is the Committee's statement that Singapore's future must rest in being a global city: being a global city and meeting point in Asia for enterprise, talent, cultures and ideas will be a source of competitiveness and growth in its own right. On a similar grain, the NUS sees that its future lies in being a global university.

Defining the global university endeavour

How then does NUS define the global university endeavour? What and whom does NUS regard as global universities? Global universities seem to possess certain common hallmarks that the NUS is aspiring towards. First, a global university has a global vision and aspires towards global influence and impact. Second, the composition of the faculty and student body of a global university would ideally be diverse to reflect a cosmopolitan global environment and outlook. Third, a global university delivers an education that prepares students for living and working in a globalized world. Fourth, global universities are research-intensive. The creation of important new knowledge must necessarily precede its dissemination and application, and global universities are actively involved in knowledge creation and are deemed by others to be thought leaders in various research fields. Fifth, global universities are leaders in and continually pursue and contribute to international benchmarks in education, in research, in service, and best practices. Global universities endeavour to innovate new models of education, research and service that can serve as exemplars for others. Finally, global universities are typically key nodes in influential global networks, be it academic networks or consortia type of partnerships with academic institutions and industry.

At the NUS, we have evolved the global university concept further by positioning the vision of NUS, not just as a global university, but one that is also centred in Asia. This is in recognition of the continuing, ascendant and profound rise of Asia. Asia is poised to grow in pre-eminence – economically, politically and in every field. Whether it be science and technology, academia or the arts, Asian players are emerging and becoming significant players in the market. In this vision, NUS aspires to be a leading global university, which has especial expertise, insights and partnerships within Asia.

Amidst the global university pursuit, it must be remembered that the fundamental roles, responsibilities and obligations of NUS have not changed. As a state institution, the Government and public's expectations are manifold – NUS must continue to educate a significant portion of the national cohort to meet the economy's manpower needs. Education in an Asian society that is built upon meritocracy is strongly regarded as a social leveller, and to the poorer segments of society, education is the key to a more

[1] The Prime Minister established the Economic Strategies Committee (ESC) in May 2009 to develop strategies for Singapore to maximise our opportunities in this new world environment, build our capabilities and make the best use of our resources, so as to achieve inclusive growth. Members of the ESC were drawn from the Government, labour movement and the private sector. Eight sub-committees and several working-groups were formed to study various strategic areas. The Government has accepted the key directions set out by the ESC. The ESC report was made publicly available from 1 Feb 2010. http://app.mof.gov.sg/esc.aspx

economically secure future. In research, NUS is expected to innovate to bring about productivity and efficiency gains for our industries; NUS‘s research supports our industry’s research and development needs and contributes towards national initiatives and solving national problems. NUS must essentially fulfil its traditional roles, while taking on an additional mission to become a global university.

With the background and context explained, we now highlight the key steps that NUS has taken in pursuing the global university mission.

Attracting talent

First and perhaps paramount, is attracting talent. The university is made up of its people, and a global university must attract and be comprised of the best talents, whether they be faculty members, staff or students. The strength of a university, its education, its environment, the intellectual atmosphere, the ideas and interactions, all hinge upon the quality of faculty members and the student body.

Top faculty

The NUS maintains a singular focus on recruiting, developing and retaining top faculty; this has been set as a key deliverable for the Provost, all Deans and Directors, underscoring the utmost priority that the university accorded to top faculty. The NUS recruits faculty from all over the world, and hiring decisions are based on the candidate’s merit and scholarship achievements. Faculty compensation is competitive and internationally benchmarked. In line with fostering a culture of excellence, a performance-based element has been phased in and has become a significant portion of the annual compensation package. The NUS has also maintained stringent standards, and some would say, upped the ante for promotions and tenures; the NUS employs a comprehensive assessment system that involves external reviewers to evaluate the faculty member’s contribution to scholarship and the impact of his research. On top of recruitment, senior management are required to identify and groom potential successors for key senior management positions. Faculty with leadership potential are put systematically through mentorship and leadership development programmes.

Top students

In attracting bright talented students, many state universities face the contending challenge of having to push for quality and excellence, while maintaining a sizable student intake. ‘Brain drain’ is not peculiar to Singapore, but the NUS admittedly does face a particular challenge in attracting the best and brightest young Singaporeans to pursue their education with the NUS, as they often have many options and opportunities to study at leading Western universities as well.

To cater to the varied learning needs and capabilities of each student, the NUS has moved from a one-size-fits-all model to introduce differentiated academic pathways.

Each individual's learning is self-directed, and each student can pursue a course of studies that would maximize his learning and potential, according to his interest and aptitude. With differentiated academic pathways the very best students are not held back, but are instead able to pursue the most rigorous and challenging courses.

The NUS has since introduced two notable differentiated programmes for top talents, namely the University Scholars Programme and the Global Engineering Programme. The University Scholars Programme (USP) is an interdisciplinary academic programme for a select group of 180 NUS exceptionally motivated and talented undergraduates (admitted annually). USP students are concurrently enrolled in one of six Faculties or Schools, namely Arts and Social Sciences, Business, Computing, Design and Environment, Engineering and Science. Students do 30% of their academic work with the USP, and 70% in their home Faculty or School. The USP has adopted elements of the Harvard University's Core Curriculum Programme; the modules are designed to develop interdisciplinary thinking, and learning extends beyond the classroom through a wide range and combination of research, internship, community involvement and study abroad opportunities. More significantly, the programme builds a close community of engagement and intellectual stimulation amongst the most talented students across the university by providing an environment for exploration, collaboration and creative discovery.

Another attractive differentiated programme that NUS offers is the Global Engineering Programme (GEP), launched in 2009. The GEP allows the top engineering students to accelerate their studies to complete the entire Bachelor of Engineering course in 3 years, one of which could be spent overseas. After the Bachelor course, students can, with credit recognition, proceed directly to do a Masters Programme at either Cambridge University or the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the 4th year.

Excellence in education

The second pillar of NUS's strategy to become a global university is the pursuit of excellence in education. Education is an integral core of every university's work. Over the years, NUS has implemented many changes to its educational offerings. NUS's approach to education can be summed as follows.

Nurture the Talent of Tomorrow: Global Education for a Globalized World

In essence, our graduates must be equipped and prepared for the global world. In this dynamic and fast changing environment, graduates will need to be skilled, yet be versatile to take on opportunities and jobs that may not even exist today, and to overcome challenges as they come. We can impart students with the knowledge that is current and relevant today, but more pertinently, we need to imbue students with critical thinking and communication skills, and an exploratory and adaptable spirit. The NUS thus aims to develop well-rounded individuals who are able communicators, curious and

with a resourceful and enterprising spirit—global citizens who are constructive and responsible members of society.

Global Dimension

A distinctive feature of NUS's global education is the extensive opportunities for a work or study stint abroad. The NUS believes that international exposure programmes hone cross-cultural consciousness and develop the ability to live and work in diverse international settings. With cross-border exchange programmes, students are given the opportunity to learn from faculty from 2 or more universities; at the same time they are immersed in a different cultural setting. Over half of our undergraduates will have some overseas education exposure, and 25% of our undergraduates spend 6 months or more in exchange programmes around the world. We are working towards further increasing these percentages in the future.

One of the most prominent global education programmes offered to NUS students is through the NUS Overseas Colleges. The NUS Overseas College experience immerses students in the most entrepreneurial hubs in the world. There are currently 7 NUS Overseas Colleges. The first NOC started in Silicon Valley, and is focused on technology start-ups with students taking courses from Stanford University. The other NOCs are in Philadelphia with the University of Pennsylvania; in Tel Aviv with Technion Institute; in Shanghai with Fudan University; in Stockholm with the KTH Royal Institute of Technology; in Bangalore with the Indian Institute of Science; and in Beijing with Tsinghua University. Students who are selected spend one year in these hubs, working as full time interns in high-tech start-ups or innovative companies. These hubs were carefully chosen to provide students opportunities to learn directly from the founders and entrepreneurs in these start-ups. At the same time, the students take entrepreneurship-related or discipline-based courses at NUS partner universities at these overseas locations.

On the home campus, the NUS has also consciously created a diverse environment that mimics a global marketplace. 20% of the undergraduate population, 70% of the graduate student population and half of the university's professors come from overseas. The NUS also welcomes over 1,200 exchange students from universities all over the world, creating a vibrant and international campus environment.

Moving towards a more broadly-based curriculum

A second area of education that NUS has been working on is to move towards a more broad-based curriculum. The issues facing Asia and the world today are global, complex and interconnected. To address these challenges, there is a compelling need for new educational models which have a primary focus on nurturing graduates who can think critically and deeply about issues, while having a broad intellectual base which allows them to see connections and solutions across different disciplines in more original ways.

To hone these skills, the NUS has over the years attempted to broaden its education curriculum by widening the offerings of courses that students can take beyond their degree specialization. Today, about 25% of the courses which the typical NUS undergraduate would take are general modules on subjects outside the student's major. To encourage multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary learning, the NUS has also developed a range of joint and double degrees within, and many in collaboration with partner universities. In 2011, NUS students can choose from 67 joint or double degree programmes offered with about 40 top universities around the world.

Along this theme of a broad-based education, the NUS is pursuing two breakthroughs, namely University Town's Residential Colleges and the Yale-NUS College that will significantly enhance the quality of broad-based education. In 2011, NUS will be introducing residential living and learning through the 4 residential colleges at University Town (UTown), 2 of which are scheduled to open in Fall 2011. The colleges are loosely modelled after the Oxbridge collegiate model, and leading colleges in selected U.S. and Asian universities. The residential colleges will comprise a diversity of students from across all disciplines. Students will read a number of modules in their residential colleges to explore issues of global importance while drawing on relevant Asian perspectives. Residential living will enhance the students' overall learning experience as it accords many opportunities for mutual learning within and beyond the classroom, and builds communities of intellectual inquiry and discourse.

Come 2013, the Yale-NUS College will open its doors to provide a first-rate liberal arts education for high potential students. The College will benefit immensely from the guidance of Yale, which is amongst the very finest universities in the world, known for its outstanding quality of education, scholarship and research. The key focus of the college is to nurture curiosity, thinking from first principles, reasoning, communication and quantitative skills. This is achieved through an intense multidisciplinary programme covering the natural and social sciences, mathematics and the humanities. Learning will be in small and highly interactive classes, and integrated with residential living and co-curricular activities. Building on the strengths of both institutions, it is envisaged that the Yale-NUS College will offer a novel curriculum spanning Western and Asian cultures and issues, exploring their similarities and differences, and better preparing students for lifelong learning in an interconnected, interdependent global environment.

Inquiry-based pedagogies

To enhance the quality of teaching and learning, the NUS has also consciously reviewed and conducted fundamental and major revamps of our teaching pedagogies to become more inquiry and research based. The traditional and prevalent approach to education, especially in medicine, mathematics, science and engineering, is that the student first has to learn vast tracts of basic principles, theories and knowledge before the syllabus begins to introduce how the knowledge is related to and applied practically. Newer pedagogies such as Problem-Based Learning can, however, considerably

enhance learning in areas such as theories and basic science. Problem-Based Learning has been adopted by the School of Medicine, and it now makes up 25% of curriculum time for medical students. Through Problem-Based Learning students do not view basic sciences in isolation, but rather learn to read in and connect with the relevant basic science subjects. Students are presented clinical-based scenarios to tackle real life sets of questions and issues, at a stage where they have only little background knowledge. For example, on the topic of obesity, a case scenario could be on a woman who lost weight after adopting a protein diet. Students would have to work out how and why this happened, explore the various underpinning nutritional, biochemistry and physiology processes and outcomes. Students are then better able to appreciate the value and relevance of basic science in clinical medicine, and read basic sciences with keener interest and deeper understanding.

A second example is the Faculty of Engineering's Design-Centric Curriculum that was introduced in 2009, for which students work in teams on design projects and modules, with the basic engineering and science courses built around these. The design projects that students can choose from are in three broad themes: future transportation systems, engineering in medicine and smart cities. With the new Design-Centric Curriculum, students will not just carry out research projects, but will also have their courses built around the project so that they can experience the thrill of applying sophisticated basic knowledge to an exciting practical problem. The move to allow students to be involved in research and hands-on design projects has made considerable achievements. Our students in Mechanical Engineering have been involved in building their own Formula-1 race cars and they have been doing well in the Formula Society of Automotive Engineering competitions. Another team of Engineering students built an Eco-Car, that is, an energy-efficient car, from scratch, and secured top place in the Shell Eco-marathon in 2010.

Excellence in Research

The third broad pillar of NUS's global university endeavour is to pursue excellence in research. A global university is characterized by high quality and productive research that yields insights and contributes to the body of knowledge that eventually leads to the improvement of lives. As compared to many Western institutions that have longstanding cultures and an established track record in research, the NUS is relatively less experienced in this regard. While NUS is a comprehensive university, the reality is that resources for research and development are finite, and somewhat limited - in 2010, NUS received over S$400 million in research funding. As such, R&D efforts will have to be focussed. The NUS has thus taken the approach to support research broadly across disciplines, but also, to develop certain peaks of excellence.

One strategy that NUS has adopted to produce higher quality research is to establish integrative research clusters. The NUS has to date, established 5 integrative research clusters, namely in finance and risk management, biomedical science and translational clinical research, ageing, sustainability solutions, and in Asian studies. Integrative

research provides a platform to draw scholars from across different disciplines to work closely on the same issues and problems; it encourages more interactions and collaborations among researchers across campus and helps create a dynamic academic community. Researchers can leverage each other's expertise to conduct research across major levels of analyses. This approach is particularly suited for complex and multi-faceted questions as the clusters will provide a novel structure enabling experts in specific knowledge domains to synergize their research to tackle complex multi-disciplinary issues.

An example is research on ageing. Prior to the setting up of research clusters, NUS already had more than 50 research groups spanning medicine, science, computing, engineering, social sciences, architecture and design, that were undertaking research into various aspects of ageing. Our scan of the international research landscape indicates a knowledge gap in ageing, particularly in relation to Asia, as much of the research conducted on ageing has been centred on the West. With the breadth and depth of pockets of research expertise across the university, NUS saw an opportunity to conduct research that generates holistic solutions to the problems of an ageing population in Asia, and to assume thoughtful leadership in this pertinent area. The Virtual Institute on the Study of Ageing, or VISA, was thus established to achieve greater synergies and collaboration among existing groups of researchers. VISA's research is along three themes, namely 'Ageing Society', 'Ageing Body' and 'Ageing Cell'. 'Ageing Society' focuses on the social aspects of ageing, such as how the elderly can live a healthy, active and independent life, healthcare and healthcare financing for the elderly etc, with a focus on the Singapore, China and India demographic scenarios. 'Ageing Body' focuses on selected ageing diseases and disorders, especially those that affect the brain and cognition, and seeks to discover and understand whether there are nutrients or intervention strategies that may prevent degeneration. 'Ageing Cell' is directed at unravelling some of the basic cellular and genetic mechanisms of ageing, and whether it is possible to halt or reverse age-related changes at the cellular level.

The Global Asia Institute is another one of the five integrative research clusters. As the NUS pursues our vision to be a leading global university centred in Asia, we seek to be a well-connected knowledge hub which distinguishes itself by providing a new and more integrated understanding of critical issues in Asia. Again, the NUS already had pockets of expertise relating to Asia within the Faculties and research institutes. These, however, tend to have a relatively narrow focus and cannot adequately study large-scale research issues which are important globally and in Asia. The conventionally organized research centre is an optimum structure to study individual issues rigorously, but research dealing with complex and interlinked issues would require a new approach.

The NUS thus embarked on a new platform to promote multi and interdisciplinary research on Asia. The Global Asia Institute (GAI) was set up in 2009 to study the political, economic, social and cultural relations within and beyond Asia that are pivotal to Asia's future. Through the GAI vehicle, teams of researchers will regularly synthesize the findings from their research so as to develop a more holistic and networked view of

the interactions and interplay between the issues. GAI will kick off with research on 3 broad areas: they are demographics and life-course, financial security and smart cities. By focusing on integrative and holistic studies, the work of the Institute will go beyond public policies and also deal with matters of health and technological importance. At the same time, the GAI will pursue comparative studies of key cities in China and India. For the longer term, NUS may consider setting up physical satellite centres in China and India to access and tap on local talent, data and expertise.

Global university endeavour strengthens the NUS

The global university endeavour has generally yielded results. The NUS has been moving up the major university league tables and has over the years grown in standing and repute. In enumerating the strategies and measures that NUS is taking in pursuit of becoming a global university, it appears that there are many simultaneous and sweeping changes (some of which are monumental), new initiatives being implemented, and an inordinate amount of resources has been pumped in to support the many efforts.

The well-known ecological phenomenon of 'adapt or die' may offer some insights. The only way for an ecological system to survive in an environment of increasing change is for it to become a complex adaptive system. To cope with a greater range of stimuli and challenges that it is confronted with, the system has to develop and evolve a wider variety of responses. This **diversity** of responses is what gives the system resilience and adaptability. By contrast, the failure to develop this diversity usually results in atrophy, and sometimes, dramatic collapse.

The NUS's multi-pronged approaches in education and research are perhaps akin to the **diversity** of responses that NUS will need to build up in response to this external environment of increasing change. Building diversity sometimes does entail that the overall system is less optimized, coordinated or efficient, but what the system gains is resilience and adaptive capacity -- the ability to respond to a wider range of opportunities and existential challenges, and this is critical for the 21st century. We thus believe that the global university endeavour is a necessary and worthwhile one for the NUS.

Evaluating Third Party Evaluators' Role in Assuring Global Equality Among Premiere Japan Universities

Rie **Mori**

National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation
Japan

What makes a university a world premier university? It is not an easy question for anyone to answer in a concrete way because it is difficult to predict precisely the kind of conditions that will lead to excellence in higher education institutions (HEIs hereafter). It is also the case, however, that certain groups of "top universities" are generally looked upon as "premier" by the society in almost all higher education systems. Accordingly, there is a select group of universities in Japan, although it is unclear who "selected" them, and how.

This paper explores just what makes a world-class university by looking at recent national policies on higher education and third party evaluations. It also examines possible ways for third party evaluators who carry out authorized evaluations to promote world-class "excellence" of universities.

What is a "premier" university? — national perspective

Though it is unclear what is required to be a premier university, one concrete index that was used to measure the excellence of HEIs based on the national consensus in Japan consisted of division scores for entrance examinations (Sugimoto, 2003). Japanese university entrance examinations have always based admission on students' academic ability. This scheme of selection was introduced to the Japanese higher education system several years after the Meiji Restoration in 1868, when major modernization started in Japan modeled after the Chinese Imperial examination for civil-service appointments. It eventually prevailed in all stages of the formal education system (Amano, 1983). It was a version of the "civil service reforms" designed to avoid nepotism (Young, 1961). Since then, Japanese HEIs have conducted entrance examinations independently, and they provided admission "purely on the basis of …exams" (Karabel, 2005). This practice prevailed not just at the institutional level, but also at the school or department level where selection of students is based mainly on exams prepared by faculty members in each department. Hence, division scores that indicate the possibility of successful admission for a prospective student with a certain level of scholastic ability have been developed for each department. Dore and Sako (1998) comment:

The advertising literature of the cram schools…rate[s] each university department by the hensachi score [division score] which should guarantee an 80 per cent chance of success in its entrance examination. (The figures are produced by analysing the 'average mock test scores' of the previous year's applicants and the difference in scores

between those who passed and those who failed each department's entrance examination. (p.32)

Division scores, which show the height of selectiveness in entrance examinations, thus had served for decades as an index of "excellence" in a society where "the entrance examination was used as the primary certificate of scholastic ability, rather than achievements in university" for decades (OECD, 1970). To a considerable extent, Japanese society understood that premier HEIs would require higher division scores for prospective students.

Sometime in the mid-90s this emphasis on division scores for entrance examination started to wane, particularly for less selective HEIs. This reduction was due to a basic change in demography. Division scores were originally worthwhile for the entire system of higher education on the premise that the number of prospective students would considerably exceed the number of spots available for admission that HEIs would provide (Yonezawa and Mori, 2009): when the youth population began to decline and such "rationed scarcity" lost its primary function, society came to be in need of other ways to measure quality higher education as a system.

One of the vehicles for ascertaining quality higher education is the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation (CEA) system that was inaugurated in 2004. HEIs are required by law to go through a third-party evaluation once every 7 years (for the whole institution) or every 5 years (for professional schools) from an accreditation body recognized by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) (Mori, 2010). Hata (2009) effectively summarized the sequences that led to the inauguration of CEA:

"CEA was not regulated by the law until Japanese society developed universities that admit more than 50% of the 18-year-old population because they had not paid enough attention to its quality, which consequently led to a drop in quality when the sole vulnerable system of quality assurance the society had trusted in — entrance examination — became unavailing."
As is clear from this comment, CEA has, by its nature, little to do with excellence. It is, rather, related to HEIs' satisfaction with minimal requirements or their process of seeking internal improvement. In fact, the National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation (NIAD-UE), one of the certified evaluators wanted to design the initial standards of evaluation that would be separate from university rankings.

Losing their Positions — international perspectives

While national indexes in Japan have been disengaging from classifying the functions of almost all departments that they used to evaluate, another measurement of excellence of HEIs has emerged that suddenly attracted the increasing attention of the higher education community: international college rankings. Among those international rankings is the World University Rankings by the Times Higher Education Supplement (THES), based on opinion surveys in the academic community around the world that

started in 2004 (THES, 2010). There are several reasons for the increased attention given this ranking.

Figure 1: Rankings of Japanese Universities by Times Higher Education; 2004-10 (The vertical axis shows HEI rankings in the world.) Source: THES, 2010

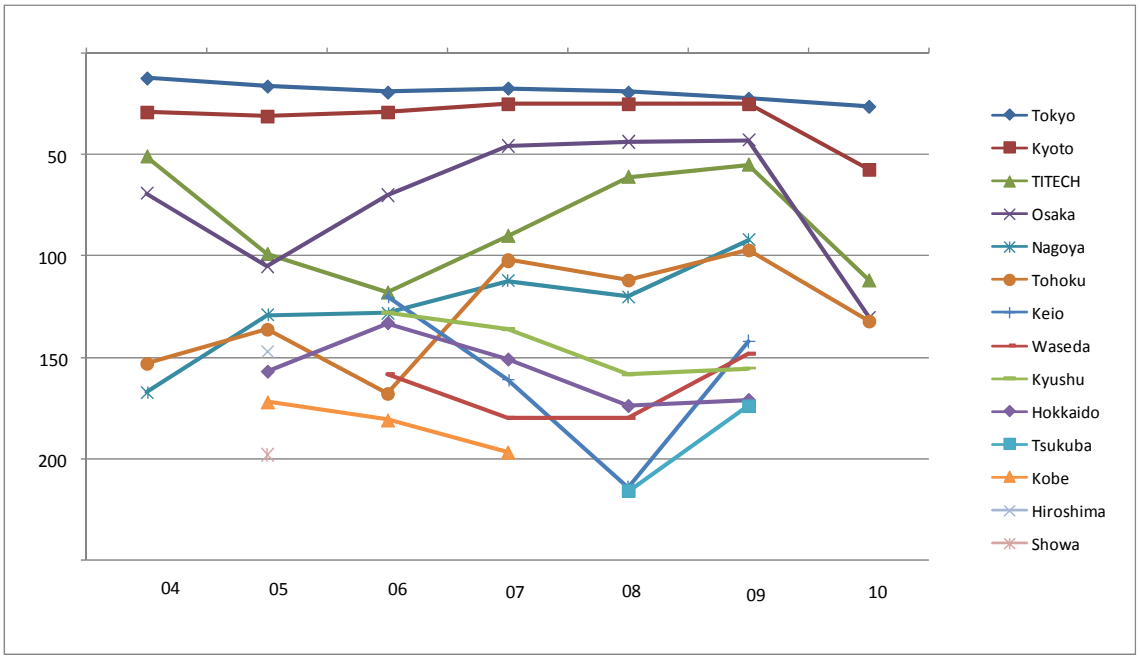


Figure 1 shows that only a few Japanese HEIs appear in this ranking. Nonetheless, the rankings roughly correspond with the classification of HEIs subject to division scores that is still thought to be reliable in Japan in terms of selective institutions. Hence, it was easier for the Japanese higher education community to be convinced that this ranking is reliable. Furthermore, the number of Japanese HEIs in the Top 200 ranking in 2010 dropped to 5 institutions from 11 in 2009 (see **Figure 1**). If this ranking reflects the reality of world higher education — and it is fair to say it reflects certain aspects of its reality — it can be said that Japanese HEIs are losing their positions in the international market of "premier" universities.

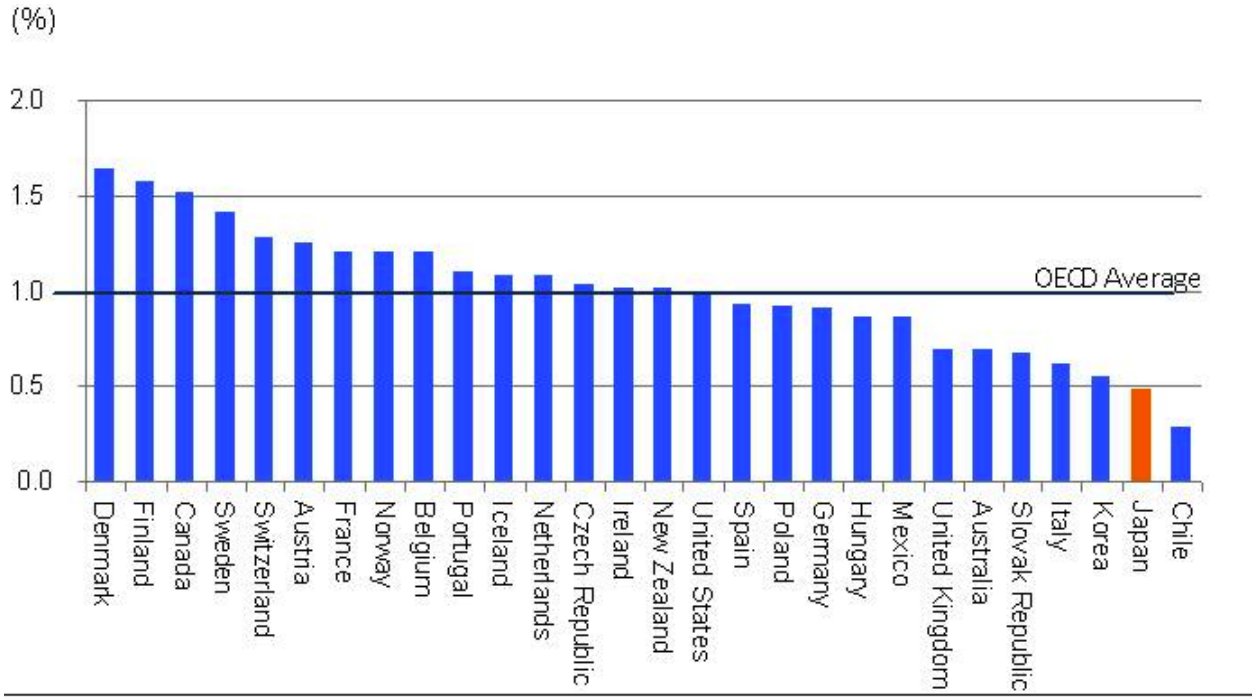
Some think this steep decline in international competency of Japanese HEIs in this ranking is due to more emphasis on the citation index and/or introduction of a public-expenditure indicator into the process of rating. True or not, the former indicates the linguistic disadvantage in several disciplines, while the latter is deeply related to a major inadequacy that Japanese higher education faces.

What's Happening to Japanese "Top" Universities — in search of a de facto standard

It has been discovered that the financing of Japanese higher education heavily depends on households, as high as 51.15% of total investment to higher education. Public expenditure on higher education institutions occupies 0.5% of GDP and, as is seen in

Figure 2, this percentage was among the lowest of OECD member economies as of 2007 (OECD, 2010)

Figure 2: Public Expenditure on HEIs as a Percentage of GDP; 2007
Source: OECD, 2010



Moreover, the major line-item of public financing has been continuously reduced: since 2004, public HEIs have been subjected to a scheduled 1% per annum reduction of Operational Grants and Capital Development Funds (OGCDF). Though it is true that the Ministry's funding has been shifting from formula-based to competitive-based, allocations through formula funding still maintain a much larger share in governmental expenditure on higher education (OECD, 2009). And yet, the formula fund OGCDF, subsidized by the government for national universities, was decreased about 7% from 1,241.5 billion yen to 1,158.5 billion yen between 2004 and 2010. In the same period, public funds for private HEIs provided in annual current expenses have been reduced from 332 billion yen to 322 billion yen.

In this paper, I would like to focus on national public universities, since the majority of HEIs that appear in **Figure 1** are national public universities: of 14 institutions listed, 11 are national public universities.

Figure 3: Annual Operational Grants and Capital Development Funds; 2004-10

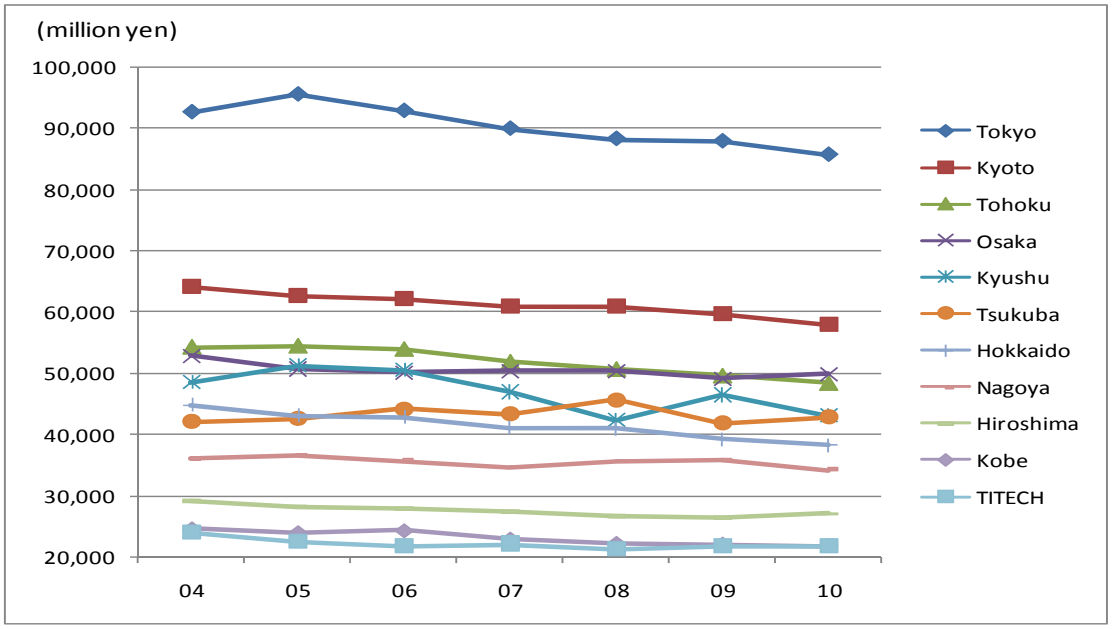
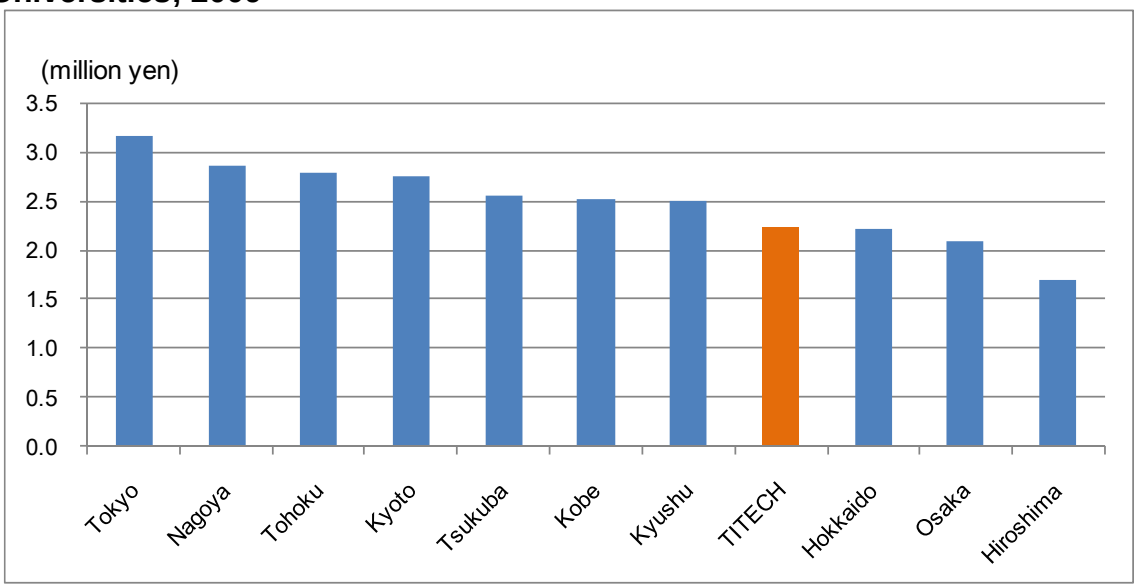


Figure 3 shows the transition of yearly amounts of OGCDF that those 11 national public universities have received since 2004. As can be seen in this figure, even those "premier" universities that are high in the THES rankings have not been exempted from the reduction of governmental subsidies through formula funding.

Be that as it may, if we compare **Figures 1** and **3** we notice that there is one HEI which stands out: The Tokyo Institute of Technology, also known as TITECH.

Figure 4: OGCDF Allocation per Capita of Student in 11 National Public Universities; 2009



(Amounts of OGCDF received by each national public university divided by the numbers of degree-seeking students both in graduate and undergraduate programs. Data of Kyoto, Kyushu, Tsukuba, and Kobe are from 2010)

TITECH is subject to the annual reduction of OGCDF along with all other national universities, and its actual amount of funding is rather small among those 11 universities. As seen in **Figure 4**, OGCDF's allocation per capita student is not especially high. Nonetheless, TITECH is one of 5 Japanese HEIs that remains in the THES 200 ranking in 2010 even after Japanese universities that were relatively more generously funded had lost their positions. Thus, it is reasonable to presume that TITECH probably has unique characteristics. Examining its characteristics might contribute to the process of finding a possible way to create a de facto standard of excellence in HEIs.

First, let us look at two characteristics of TITECH: graduate education and internationalization. An OECD review team carried out a comprehensive review of Japanese higher education in 2006 and made several recommendations that were published in 2009. Among these, the team recommended that Japanese higher education strengthen graduate programs to attract "the upper end of the international graduate student(s)" for higher global competitiveness (OECD, 2009). When we examine the construction of student populations in each "top" national public university, TITECH shows significant strength in both graduate programs and the internationalization of its student body, especially in graduate programs (see **Figures 5** and **6**).

Figure 5: Shares of Undergraduate and Graduate Students in 11 National Public Universities (Data from Kobe are 2010)

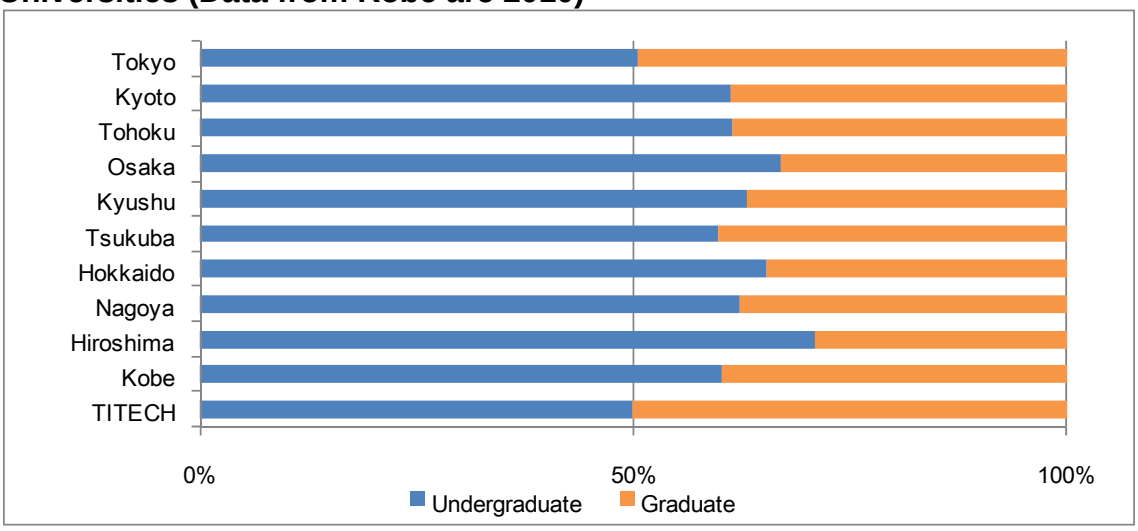
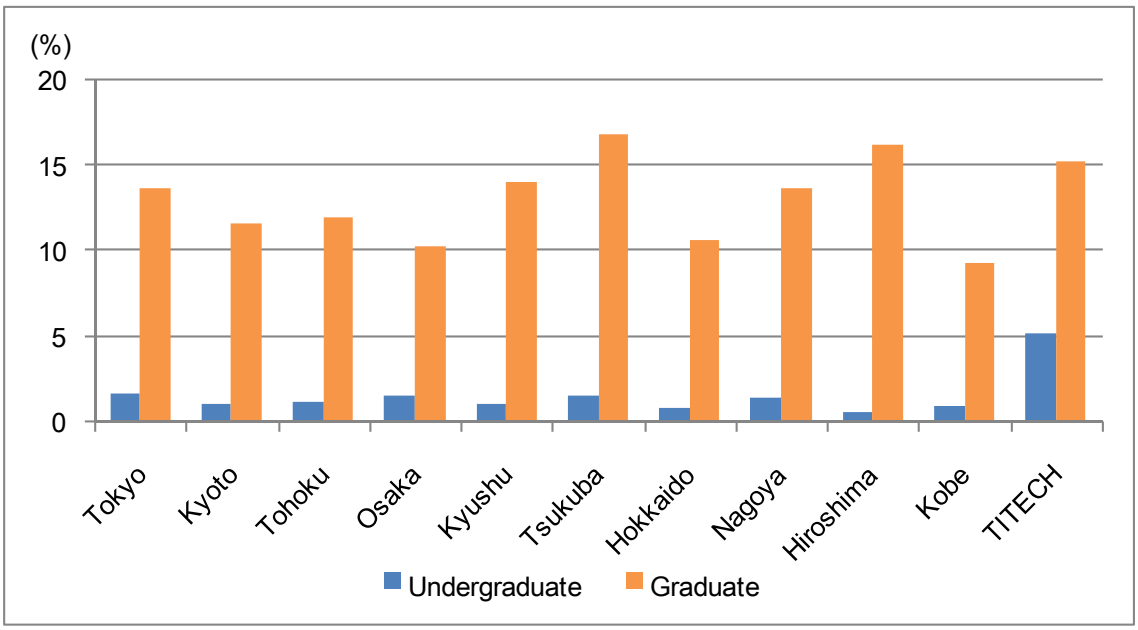


Figure 6: Shares of Mobile Students in 11 National Public Universities; 2009
(Percentage of degree-seeking international students in graduate and undergraduate programs. Data of Tsukuba and Kobe are from 2010)



However, correlation does not always imply causation. It is true that TITECH has a larger proportion of graduate programs and more mobile students at all levels of its programs, and at the same time it keeps a higher profile in global college rankings in comparison with its smaller formula funding by the government. But this does not necessarily mean that a more internationalized graduate student body always leads to higher marks in international rankings. It could be the other way around: A higher ranked HEI attracts more graduate students internationally. Especially in terms of higher education, separating a cause of quality from the consequence of quality in one snap shot is difficult. Those two ends, cause and consequence, could be shown as a circulating cycle or a spiral, with the circulation dynamic as the key concept.

Second, we should look at the objective characteristics of TITECH. Its distinctive features can be summarized as follows:

1) Smaller student population: in 2009, its total enrollment was 9,798 putting undergraduate and graduate programs together compared with 27,821 in the University of Tokyo.
2) Moderate student-teacher ratio: the S-T ratio at TITECH was not necessarily small at approximately 9.0:1 in 2009. This figure was larger than 7.3:1 for the University of Tokyo, 7.6:1 for Kyoto University, and even that of Tohoku (6.3:1) or Osaka (8.1:1), which are ranked lower than TITECH in THES 2010.
3) Concentration in disciplines: TITECH is, with considerable attention to the social/human sciences, not only a science and technology institute. However, its efforts in education and research are reasonably focused on those fields of science and technology operating as two complementary disciplines. This feature might be advantageous for HEIs seeking quality, considering institutional effectiveness and the fact that Japan has been a key player in innovation in engineering and manufacturing.

Role of the Third Party Evaluation

As mentioned above, the CEA system was established to ensure that all Japanese HEIs satisfy minimum requirements. Given this requirement, there are limited possibilities for evaluation bodies that carry out CEA to promote HEIs' global competitiveness at this moment.

However, discussions have taken place about the possibility of introducing performance-based budgeting into the OGCDF allocation process especially in the case of research budgets (cf. Tanaka, 2009). If this policy were to be incorporated in the future, NIAD-UE, one of the authorized evaluators that carries out CEA and the only one responsible for the third party evaluation of education and research performed by national public universities, would have increased importance. Instead of trying to satisfy a new authority of evaluation for budgeting, through direct communication with HEIs, it could develop fair and supportive evaluation schemes, including a process to accumulate enough data on research performance to make reasonable evaluations possible, as Tanaka (2009) notes.

Under current circumstances, however, it is more pressing for third party evaluators to make CEA more efficient and supportive for HEIs. As we have seen by analyzing the characteristics of TITECH, positive features of "premier" universities in the Japanese context of higher education can be emphasized. However, even though those characteristics would promote the excellence of HEIs, actually downsizing a HEI, manipulating undergraduate and graduate proportions, determining the variety of disciplines, or attracting more mobile students to HEIs is not a prime responsibility of third party evaluators. What third party evaluators are responsible for in terms of CEA is, above all, nurturing the internal circulation of improvement inside HEIs by demonstrating good practices, developing a data accumulation system that makes objective comparison between HEIs possible for their own benchmarking purposes, placing emphasis on student satisfaction rates using student surveys, and making their own evaluation processes effective in order to avoid evaluation fatigue so that HEIs can apply more energy to their chief responsibilities — education and research.

Conclusions

The definition of a "premier" university is still ambiguous. At the same time, it should be pointed out that third party evaluation does not necessarily promote the excellence of higher education under current regulations and schemes of evaluation. Nonetheless, there are ways for third party evaluators to support HEIs to improve quality or, if a HEI desires, to pursue "premier" status in the international higher education market. For example:

1) Encourage HEIs to develop internal circulation of improvements. Quality assurance is ultimately the responsibility of each HEI, not of evaluators.
2) Ensure diversity of HEIs even among national public universities. Becoming a global "premier" university is not always an aspiration of a HEI. Moreover, it is often unclear what makes a premier university, as pointed out earlier. Given those presumptions, empowering individual HEIs in self-determination and orientation, and helping to create diversity throughout the higher education community will eventually be advantageous in obtaining and maintaining premier status as a university.
3) Displaying good practices in education and research to help HEIs in benchmarking themselves with other institutions. And to accomplish this —
4) Accumulating reliable data about all HEIs and developing the use of data-driven analysis for improvement of education and research.

In addition to these suggestions, we can ascertain one desirable pathway for third party evaluations from the TITECH example. As was seen in the analysis of the case of this institution, the amount of formula funding, the prescribed number of spots available for admission or even the S-T ratio do not necessarily correlate with global competitiveness. Thus, if a third party evaluator wants to make its evaluation meaningful, the evaluation process should not only focus on "inputs" to a HEI. It must obtain perspectives and mechanisms to evaluate something other than inputs such as an internal process to improve education and research at each higher education institution.

References

Amano, I. (1983), Shiken no Shakai-shi— Kindai Nihon no Shiken, Kyoiku, Shakai (A Social History of Examination: Exams, Education and Society in Modern Japan), University of Tokyo Press, Tokyo [Japanese]

Dore, R. and Sako, M. (1998), How the Japanese Learn to Work, Routledge, London

Hata, T. (2009), Nihon ni okeru Koto Kyoiku no Shitsu Hosho no Rekishi to Kadai (History and Problems of Quality Assurance of Higher Education in Japan) Hata, Yonezawa and Sugimoto eds, Koto Kyoiku Shitu Hosho no Kokusai Hikaku (Comparative Study on Quality Assurance of Higher Education) pp.21-57, Toshindo, Tokyo [Japanese]

Karabel, J. (2005), The Chosen: The Hidden History of Admission and Exclusion at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, Mariner Books, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston and New York

Mori, R. (2009), "Accreditation systems in Japan and the United States: A comparative perspective on governmental involvement" New Directions for Higher Education, Accreditation: Assuring and Enhancing Quality, vol. 145, pp. 69–77, Wiley Publishers, Hoboken, NJ

OECD (1970), Reviews of National Policies for Education: Japan, OECD, Paris

OECD (2009), OECD Review of Tertiary Education: Japan, OECD, Paris

OECD (2010), Education at a Glance 2010, OECD, Paris

Sugimoto, Y. (2003), An Introduction to Japanese Society, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

Tanaka, H. (2009), Koto Kyoiku ni okeru Hyoka to Shigen Haibun: Gyoseki Rendo Gata Kofu Kin no Kanousei to Kadai (Evaluation and Funding in Higher Education: Possibilities and Challenges for Performance-Linked Funding), RIETI Discussion Paper Series 09-j-008, Research Institute for Economy Trade and Industry, http://www.rieti.go.jp/jp/publications/dp/09j008.pdf [retrieved in May 2011] [Japanese]

THES: Times Higher Education Supplement (2010), The World University Rankings, www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings/ [retrieved in May 2011]

Yonezawa, A. and Mori, R. (2009), "Learning Outcomes and Quality Assurance: Challenges for Japanese Higher Education", Evaluation in Higher Education, 3(1), pp.1-21, Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan, Taipei

Young, M. (1961), The Rise of the Meritocracy, 1870-2033: An Essay on Education and Equality, Penguin Books, London

Project 985 & Project 211: The Innovative Measures in Improving the Quality of Higher Education in China

Dr. **Zhu** Yiming

Professor, East China Normal University
China

Origin

It is well known that China has been on the fast development track for the past thirty years. In the process, the educational demands from individuals and the economy were huge and urgent. In the early 1990's, the Chinese government planned to implement strategies for invigorating the economy through science and education in the context of an emerging knowledge economy and global competitiveness in the 21st century. The government issued a document named "*Outlines for Reform and development of Education in China*" in February of 1993, which pointed to new directions in educational reform and development. The *Outlines* said, "*In 1990's, higher education must be geared to the needs for accelerating the reform, opening up and the modernization drive. We should explore new approaches, enlarging the scale of development in education making the structure more rational and markedly improving its quality and efficiency*".

Project 211

In 1995, Project 211 was announced, which is the Chinese government's endeavor aimed at strengthening about 100 institutions of higher education and key disciplinary areas as a national priority for the 21st century. The implementation of Project 211 is an important measure taken by the government to promote the development of higher education in the context of the economy's advancement in social and economic fields. The project aims at training high-level professional manpower mainly within educational institutions at home to implement the national strategy for social and economic development. The original plans and tasks of Project 211 at that period were the following:

(1) ***Top priority will be given to the strengthening of universities*** *to help them approach and reach the advanced international standards for the overall quality of teaching, scientific research and the training of professional manpower, so as to establish their international prestige and position among universities in the world.*

(2) ***Priority will be accorded to the upgrading and improvement of the infrastructure*** *for teaching and research in about 25 universities, which, with a high concentration of the key disciplinary areas, have an important impact on China's socialism modernization drive, and shoulder a large share of responsibility in developing the public service system.*

(3) ***Efforts will be made to strengthen about 300 disciplinary areas*** *which have important impact on social and economic development, scientific and technological development, and national defense, thus enhancing the long-term training capacity for high level professional manpower in response to the needs of a socialist market economy.*

(4) ***Steps will be taken to establish a basic framework for the public system of higher education***. (From "*Project 211: a brief introduction*", published by Dept. of International Cooperation and Exchange, MOE of China, 1996)

As a result of Phase I of Project 211 (1995-2000), about 100 institutions and more than 600 disciplinary areas received input, which had been greatly improved in teaching, scientific research and management and institutional efficiency.

Project 985

In May of 1998, President Jiang Zemin made a significant speech at the conference celebrating Peking University's centenary. He said, **"To realize modernization, China must have quite a few first-class universities of international advanced level**." After this conference, in the *Action Scheme for Invigorating Education Towards the 21st century* issued by Ministry of Education of China in the end of 1998, the Article V was presented as "*Founding a number of first-class universities and disciplinary areas or fields of study reaching international advanced level*". In order to memorialize Mr. Jiang Zemin's speech at Peking University, the government developed its first-class universities plan, calling it later "Project 985". In this *Action Scheme*, some core concepts were mentioned, such as the level of research in small fields with international advanced levels, highly qualified faculty, undergraduates and postgraduates trained at high quality levels, governmental support and financial input. Gradually, the picture of Project 985 became clear.

The goals of 985 are that a number of Chinese universities and a larger number of key disciplinary areas or fields of study might rank among first–class academic institutions or centers of excellence in the world within ten to twenty years. The principles of Project 985 were:

(1) **Focusing on national development orientation,** to make important contributions to social and economic development and to enhance national key competitiveness.

(2) **Focusing on reform and innovation**, to deepen the internal management system and mechanisms operating in higher education institutions.

(3) **Integrating construction with the overall plan,** to combine the long term goals with the current task, to combine talent training with the scientific research, and to combine disciplinary development and platform building.

Thus, the main tasks of 985 are:

(1) **Mechanism innovation**, including management and operational systems, the personnel system and incentive mechanisms, and the academic organizational pattern, to build an input-effectiveness-based system characterized by openness,

and equitable and fair accountability and evaluation.

(2) **Team building**, including recruiting excellent talents abroad and at home to enter universities, train potential youths, enhance the capacities of the teaching force, and develop management staff and the technical support team.

(3) **Platform building**, focused on international scientific and technological development and the important needs of national modernization in order to play a key role in national innovation.

(4) **Infrastructure support,** including providing public resources and equipment sharing, digital environments and network, library and others, to approach or attain world advanced levels.

(5) **International cooperation and exchange**, including inviting world famous experts to lecture and conduct research together, applying cooperation with the world's first class universities or academic institutions, holding high level international conferences and encouraging foreign students to study in China.

Obviously, Project 985 is closely connected with Project 211. Project 211 is aimed at building about 100 universities whereas Project 985 focuses on a small number of universities that can approach or attain world first class status in the future. In Project 985 two foci were highlighted: developing a platform for scientific and technological innovation, and building research bases in humanities and social sciences.

Progress

Project 211

At present, Project 211 includes 110 universities, located throughout the economy, including the western poor areas. About 777 disciplinary areas are benefiting directly. The project cost is shared through a co-financing mechanism involving the state, local government and higher institutions, besides the regular grants. In 1995-2005, the total input of Project 211 had reached 36.826 billion RMB Yuan. Over the past 15 years, the central governmental input has been 18.755 billion RMB Yuan for Project 211.

In 2007, the ministerial level coordinating group for Project 211 affiliated with the State Council, which is responsible for coordination and decision-making in Project 211 implementation, published "*Project 211 development report (1995-2005)"*, which introduced the overall Project 211 implementing process, achievements and experiences with detailed information and special data.

This report pointed out that after ten years of effort, Project 211 had achieved the following:

(1) The target universities involved in Project 211 all had enhanced their overall capacities significantly and reduced the gap with first class universities in the world.

(2) Disciplinary construction had made huge progress, and in some areas approached or attained world advanced levels. Especially important, the key disciplinary system adapted to the development of Chinese modernization had been basically established.

(3) The equipment and conditions of Project 211 institutions had been significantly improved and many high level disciplinary bases had been built.

(4) Many excellent talents had been attracted and recruited as university faculty so that disciplinary teams were formed, especially in western 211 universities.

(5) The public service system of higher education had been constructed with highly efficient, convenient and fast turnaround, which is in-phase with world standards. The Chinese Education and Research Network (CERNET) has become equal to first class world comparables, the Library and Document Support System (LDSS) has reached the world advanced level, and the Modern Equipment and Facilities Sharing System (MEFSS) has begun to play a significant role.

(6) Educational capacities have been strengthened greatly and a large number of faculty have been trained to align with changing conditions and teaching reforms. Postgraduate education has also improved.

(7) The capacities of scientific research have been significantly upgraded and numerous remarkable outcomes have been produced. These universities have undertaken large national research tasks and focused on theoretic and practical issues relevant to society.

(8) The functions of social service with these universities have been strengthened and made important contributions to social and economic development, including in industry, technological progress, local social development and national defense.

(9) The scope of international cooperation both in length and depth has been expanded raising the international impact of Chinese higher education. Project 211 universities have become the main way to promote international cooperation and exchange in higher education.

(10) The project has promoted reform and innovation, pushing the comprehensive, harmonious development of Chinese higher education. This project has promoted management system reform, changed some educational ideas and concepts, and played demonstrated roles in higher education.

The report detailed five important experiences made during the implementation of Project 211 from 1995 to 2005.

(1) Insisting on emphasized construction (key universities) as an inevitable option in building the stronger higher education in China.

(2) Insisting on disciplinary construction as a core is a necessary way to building high-level universities in China.

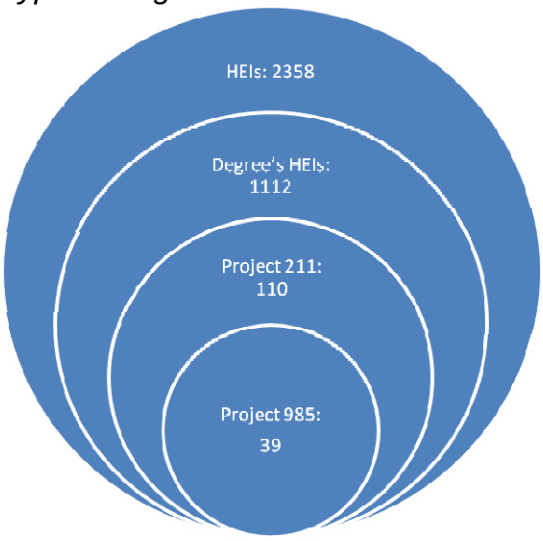
(3) Insisting on quality resource sharing as an important approach in promoting the overall development of higher education.

(4) Insisting on scientific planning and management as an important assurance in implementing Project 211 successfully.

(5) Insisting on development through reform as a sustaining power in promoting project vitality.

In 2010, 1112 institutions provided regular normal course higher education institutions (4 years), and the percent of Project 211 universities among them is about 10%, but Project 211 universities have undertaken the training tasks for 4/5 of postgraduates studying for a Ph.D, 2/3 of postgraduates studying for a masters degree, and 1/2 of foreign students in all the economy. And these universities have 85% of national key disciplines, 96% of national key laboratories and 70% of national research expenditures.

Figure 1: Types in higher education institutions in China



Obviously, Project 211 universities have already played key roles in Chinese higher education. And Project 211 has brought the development of local higher institutions in financial input, institutional orientation and social reputation (Zhou, 2008). Now, the government plans to further implement Project 211 with 1000 disciplinary areas targeted, but with the number of Project 211 universities remaining the same.

Project 985

In Project 985, the total financial input had reached 30 billion RMB Yuan during 1999-2007, as allocated to 39 universities. Of course, the allocation of these funds varied on the orientation of each university. For example, the top two universities in China, Tsinghua University and Peking University, had received 1.8 billion respectively, which is the highest amount.

In 2004, the Ministries of Finance and Education issued a document called "*Opinions on further implementation of Project 985*", in which the two ministries reviewed the project phase one. They considered that Phase I had already generated significant effectiveness. For example, the project had adjusted and optimized disciplinary structures and directions, strengthened teaching forces by attracting excellent talents who would enter quickly, improved the quality in high level student training, produced some world advanced research achievements and findings, empowered universities' comprehensiveness, enhanced the development of higher education, and made important contributions to national economic, social and cultural development. And in this phase, the project had accumulated experience in building world first class universities in China.

In 2010, the Chinese government promulgated the *Outline of China's National Plan for Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020)*, which aims at becoming an economy with rich human resources by the year 2020. In this latest plan, the tasks of higher education are: to enhance the total quality of higher education; to improve the quality of professional training; to raise the level of scientific research; to

empower social services, and to optimize the structure and produce Chinese characteristics. Obviously, among these tasks, Project 211 and Project 985 are highlighted, especially in speeding up the development of world-class universities and disciplines in China.

Then, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education updated their opinions on Project 985 implementation, which was called "*Opinions on speeding the construction of world first class universities and high-level universities*". In this document while the huge achievements of Project 985 were recognized, the gaps between China and the world in first class universities were also highlighted, including in the training of top and innovative talents, self-innovation capacities and international competitiveness, and institutional and academic environments.

In the new *Opinions,* one significant change in the direction of Project 985 is marked to the effect that *"To further clarify the developmental strategy of first class universities and high level universities in the world, to set up the input mechanism with long-term, steady and continuous increase"*. In this manner Project 985 will be transferred from its previous "phased construction" into "long-term planning, dynamic administration, and step-by-step implementation". In the future, the main tasks in the construction of world first class universities and high-level universities will be to give priority to faculty capacity building and self-innovation competence development. The O*pinions* require that all the Project 985 universities should reform, innovate and pilot in their internal mechanisms through implementing project 985, which should be responsive to the training of students, personnel management of faculty, scientific research organization and systems, the independence of universities, and creating developmental patterns and advanced culture of high level universities.

So far, each Project 985 university had mapped out the blueprint of Project 985 progress for the next decade. A national expert group affiliated with the MOE will be responsible for reviewing and commenting to refine each university's action plan.

Some results of the development and progress of Chinese universities over the past ten years may be found in popular university ranking lists throughout the world.

Reflections

In the context of globalization, there are many challenges and issues for Chinese national development and social progress. At present, China has the largest scale of education in the world both in compulsory education and higher education, and China has become the world's second-largest economy. The typical problem is that Chinese education is not being adapted completely to the demands of national economic & social development and the population's needs for excellent education. The quality and equity in education continue to be two concerns. In the latest educational plan, new operational guidelines for education are listed including: Priority to development, Training students, Innovation through reform, and Improvement of quality.

Table 1: The number of enrollment in all types and levels in 2005-2011. (Thousand)

Year	Higher Ed.	Secondary Ed.		Primary Ed.	Pre-school Ed.
		Senior	Junior		
2005	23,000	40,309	62,149	108,641	21,790
2006	25,000	43,419	59,579	107,115	22,639
2007	27,000	45,288	57,362	105,640	23,488
2008	29,070	45,761	55,850	103,315	24,750
2009	29,790	46,409	54,409	100,715	26,578
2010	31,050	46,706	52,793	99,407	29,767

(Source: Department of Development and Planning, MOE (2011). *Brief statistical analysis of national educational development.* Internal material.

In higher education, how to promote Chinese higher education development through reform is still a priority within the process of educational modernization and internationalism. It is useful to summarize the previous practices in higher education such as Project 211 and Project 985.

Table 2: Data in Higher Education

Type/Level	Institution	Staff	Full-time teacher
1.Providing Postgraduate program	797		
2. Regular higher education	2,358	2,156,601	1,343,127
2.1 Degree course (four-year)	1,112	1,548,043	935,493
2.1 short-cycle (vocational)	1,246	603,201	404,098
3. Adult higher education	365	77,108	45,887

(Source: Department of Development and Planning, MOE (2011). *Brief statistical analysis of national educational development.* Internal material.

Because the two projects were planned through top-to-down administrative decision-making and only small universities were covered, they received much criticism from both the outside and inside of education. Frankly, in the pursuit of educational equity both for individuals and for institutions, these projects resulted in a new imbalance among higher education institutions through the extra fund input for the targeted institutions.

However, to implement the Projects 211 and 985 merely exploits the national system advantage provided by the strong powers of the central government. And these projects were designed to meet the needs and trends of national development and global competition in the 21st century. It is recognized that Project 211 and Project 985 are playing the leading role of higher education improvement and have demonstrated to other higher education institutions the benefits of reform. As a result these universities are becoming more attractive to teachers, researchers, students and parents.

Of course, there are several concerns which remain in future implementation of the two projects.

(1) The operational mechanisms should provide more transparency, especially in the construction of world first class universities and high-level universities. For example, the goals, procedures, processes and results at the central governmental level and/or at institutional level should be more open during the project implementation.

(2) Monitoring and evaluation should be strengthened. The external agencies should be involved independently, including non-governmental organizations. Monitoring and evaluation should be integrated into the project management system. The result-based management system is welcome and a database about Project 211 & Project 985 constitutes urgent needs to be established at the national level.

(3) More responsibilities should be given to each project university, and strict management of project implementation, especially in project expenditures must be adopted. The modern university system, culture and functions should be created and insisted upon, in addition to directly visible results in teaching students, scientific research, social services and international cooperation.

(4) Relationships among the scientific research, teaching of students, social services and international cooperation should be properly undertaken. Teaching in particular should be paid more attention in the future, and may be the priority. At present, the relation between being a world first class university and a research-based university is not clear. It is necessary that these four functions of current Chinese universities should be combined into an integrated whole.

References

Central Committee of CPC and the State Council (1993). *Outlines for Reform and development of Education in China*

Central Committee of CPC and the State Council (2010). *Outline of China's National Plan for Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020)*.

Department of International Cooperation and Exchange, MOE (1999). Project 211: a brief introduction.

Department of Development and Planning, MOE (2011). *Brief statistic analysis of national educational development.* Internal material.

Ministerial level coordinating group for Project 211 (2007). "*Project 211 development report (1995-2005)".* Higher Education Press. Beijing.

Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Education (2004). "*Opinions on further implementation of Project 985*".

Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Education (2010). "*Opinions on speeding the construction of world first class universities and high level universities*".

MOE (1998). *Action scheme for invigorating education towards the 21st century*.

MOE (2008). "*Ten years achievements and information about Phase III of Project 211*" released in No. 3 Press Conference of MOE in March 25, 2008.

Zhou Chuan (2008). *"Project 211 and the development of local higher institutions"*. *Jiangsu Higher Education*, 2008(1).

Higher Education in New Zealand: The Rigour-Relevance Gap and the Example of CANZ
Being Internationally Excellent by Being Locally Relevant

Sally **Davenport**[1] & Roger **Wigglesworth**[2]

New Zealand

Introduction

The Competitive Advantage New Zealand (CANZ) project commenced in 1998 with generous funding of about NZ$1.5m for 6 years from the NZ Foundation for Research, Science & Technology (now the Ministry of Science & Innovation). At the time it was the largest social science grant ever awarded in New Zealand (NZ) and brought together a multi-disciplinary team of academic researchers devoted to understanding how NZ enterprises could develop competitive advantage that was world class. CANZ was unusual for the size of the team and the breadth of interests involved. The research team included specialists in organisation theory, organisation behaviour, human resource management, information technology management, strategy, operations management, technology and innovation management, and decision processes. Members of the team had a long-standing commitment to researching the development of local business. In the following 12 years (and supported by two further tranches of funding), the programme produced case-histories, articles in top international journals, conference papers, seminars and a book 'World Famous in New Zealand' (Campbell-Hunt et al., 2001), on the sources of competitive advantage in some of NZ's leading businesses. It also developed new models of how world-class businesses can emerge from NZ's small and isolated economy.

However, what was particularly poignant about CANZ, and a major measure of its success, was the close engagement with NZ policy officials, particularly those in the Ministry of Economic Development (MED). This was not a case of academics dropping 'pearls of wisdom' for policy managers to take up, but a true collaboration in developing ideas that were not only contributing to international organization theory, but also were useful for the implementation of policy that was well-grounded in local knowledge. It was a model that has subsequently been adapted by Davenport through her participation in two other major projects; as an Objective Leader in 'The Sustainable Biotechnology Project' (NZ$2.5m, 2003-2008) and most recently as the Project Leader for the 'Building Our Productivity Project' (NZ$1.6m, 2007-2011). Like CANZ, both projects brought together diverse academic skill sets spread over a range of institutions and more recently economies, and were dedicated to influencing policy and practice through world-class academic research about the local business context. We propose that

[1] Victoria Management School, Victoria University of Wellington, PO Box 600, Wellington 6140, New Zealand, email sally.davenport@vuw.ac.nz

[2] Ministry of Economic Development, PO Box 1473, Wellington 6140, New Zealand, email: Roger.wigglesworth@med.govt.nz

CANZ and other similar projects are exemplars of research that bridges the 'rigour-relevance' gap in management research.

The Rigour–Relevance Gap

'If the duty of the intellectual in society is to make a difference, the management research community has a long way to go' (Pettigrew, 2001: S61).

The origins of the rigour-relevance debate in management research can at least be traced back to the 1950s when American business education was critiqued for its lack of a strong scientific foundation (Kieser & Leiner, 2009). The debate has, however, been reversed, particularly in recent years, to reflect upon the seeming inability of management research to be relevant to practitioners (Starkey & Madan, 2001), or what has been called 'the knowledge failure problem' (McKelvey, 2006: 822; Gulati, 2007), whereby for various reasons, academic research isn't put into a form that can be applied in practice. At best this is viewed as "our failure to present ourselves – our body of knowledge and our perspective – to the world of affairs", at worst that we are operating in an "incestuous, closed loop of scholarship" (Hambrick, 1994, cited in Gulati, 2007: 775).

Key academic protagonists successively called for the maintenance of quality while increasing relevance, given that the key mission of business schools must be to produce research that advances practice (eg. Simon, 1967; Pfeffer, 2009; McKiernan, 2009). For example, in his address to the 1999 Academy of Management conference, Stanford's James March argued that 'the primary usefulness of management research lies in the development of fundamental ideas that might shape managerial thinking, not in the solution of immediate managerial problems' (March, cited in Starkey & Madan, 2001: S4). In the UK, Andrew Pettigrew argued that there was a tripartite challenge: 'how to build, maintain and recreate scholarly quality; how to construct and exploit stakeholder links which can open the way to relevant management research; and how to build the intellectual, social and political platform to conduct research that is simultaneously of high scholarly quality and relevant' (Pettigrew, 2001: S63). Not all agree that the gap either exists or is an issue (eg. Weick, 2001; Gulati, 2007), but the notion certainly stimulated much debate.

As occurred in other disciplines in higher education (Sandmann, 2008), it was about this time that the notion of engaged scholarship emerged as one approach to generating management research relevant to practitioners by bridging the theory-practice gap (Van de Ven, 2007, Pettigrew, 2001), building on the early work of Andrew Van de Ven who had long been a supporter of high quality but relevant management research (Van de Ven, 1986). Engaged scholarship is 'viewed as a form of collaborative inquiry between academics and practitioners that leverages the different perspectives to generate useful academic knowledge' (Barge & Shockley-Zalabak, 2008: 251). In their influential article, Van de Ven and Johnson (2006: 802) proposed a method for engaged scholarship which they argued 'not only enhances the relevance of research for practice but also contributes significantly to advancing research knowledge in a given domain'. While this

method was not available when the CANZ project was designed, we will use their five-point approach to describe the evolution of the project.

One further concept from the engaged scholarship literature, the 'knowledge food chain' (McKelvey, 2006: 822), is also pertinent to our story. Traditionally the business school food chain is described as: knowledge that is 'created and tested by academic researchers, taught to students by instructors, adopted and diffused by consultants, and practiced by practitioners' (Van de Ven and Johnson, 2006: 805). The rigour-relevance gap is then attributed to the capture of knowledge in the silos such that knowledge transfer doesn't occur. However, as McKelvey (2006) notes, knowledge food chains can be read from either direction and possibly the rigour-relevance gap originates in the tendency of business researchers to assume the transfer direction to originate with them, rather than academics also acting as receivers of insights generated by practitioners. To this food chain, we would add policy officials alongside consultants as key knowledge conduits and propose, through the example of CANZ, to show the important boundary-spanning role the academic-policy official relationship can have (Gulati, 2007).

This growing body of academic debate on rigour-relevance had its counterpart in contemporaneous changes in public policy analysis. The concept of 'evidence-based policy' gained fresh impetus during the 1990s and early 21st century in the United Kingdom and New Zealand where 'New Labour' governments adopted a stance to policy-making that was anti-ideological and pragmatic/rational, influenced by their suspicions of established influences on policy (Solesbury, 2001: 6; Guenther et al, 2010: 2, citing Sutcliffe and Court, 2005). The subsequent emphasis on 'what works' responded to the new mantra and was deemed to eliminate much of the risk associated with the experimental nature of policy development in the period (Guenther et al, 2010: 1; Solesbury, 2001: 7). Of course the prior questions - what's going on? what's the problem? is it better or worse than..? what causes it? what might be done about it? – also had to be answered if sensible policy was to be made and delivered (Solesbury 2001:8).

A similarly sceptical approach was encouraged when examining the 'evidence' – "how *relevant* is this to what we are seeking to understand or decide? how *representative* is this of the population that concerns us? how *reliable*, how well-founded - theoretically, empirically – is it? (Solesbury 2001: 8-9). Moreover, in addition to demanding more hard evidence, softer, more intuitive and more values-based evidence was encouraged (Zussman, 2003:65; Guenther, 2010: 7, quoting Banks 2009). The response in the public service was, armed with increased research budgets, to seek out those who could provide the evidence and informed understanding that had now to be demonstrated before a policy proposal would be accepted. In the business practices and performance space, CANZ was the stand-out candidate as a research partner.

Engaged Scholarship: Design the Project to Address a Big Question or Problem that is Grounded in Reality

Researcher Perspective: The origins of the CANZ research questions can be traced back to the mid-1980s when de-regulation in NZ created one of the most open economies in the world (Evans et al., 1996). NZ firms found themselves in a far more competitive context, virtually un-protected by tariffs or other trade barriers. To survive, they had to establish competitive advantage in a fully globalized economy and in an era of revolutionary change in communication and information technologies. On the success of these efforts hung all of the economy's economic progress and therefore well-being (Overview, CANZ website: http://www.victoria.ac.nz/canz/).

Having just returned from a period of study leave during 1996 at St Andrew's Business School, Colin Campbell-Hunt (the academic originator of the project) was aware of the burgeoning interest in how competitive capability evolves over time (as exemplified in an SMJ special issue: Helfat, 2000). Cognisant also of the local interest in how NZ firms compete in the new global environment given the particular characteristics of domestic firms (eg. small size of the domestic market, long distances to large export markets), Campbell-Hunt facilitated discussions with policy officials at the MED and related agencies over the development of a 'good' research question, while at the same time assembling a multi-disciplinary team that might address the question. The result proved to be very attractive to the main research funding agency of the time, the Foundation for Research, Science & Technology and, in 1998, the first 4 year contract commenced. The key questions posed by the team were:

- What are the bases on which exemplar NZ firms have established their competitive advantage?
- How have these advantages been created?
- What forces act to encourage or impede the evolution of these advantages over time?
- By what steps do NZ firms create businesses of international scope?

Policy Official Perspective: The approach from Campbell-Hunt was timely and welcome. First, working with CANZ (and others) enabled officials to better distinguish the causes from the symptoms of the business performance problems that were being presented to them for solving (Gluckman, 2011: 15). The CANZ network not only helped the practitioners to define the right questions for interrogating the claims from business advocacy groups, but they also worked alongside officials in establishing an analytical framework that identified which levers might be pulled by the government, and what other changes would be necessary, in order for sustained business performance changes to occur. Significantly, at a 2007 OECD conference on enhancing the role of SMEs in Global Value Chains, Campbell-Hunt was the only speaker who provided insightful models/frameworks to anchor his presentation (OECD 2008: 124-135) .

Secondly, it meant that, from the start, the researchers understood the policy imperatives and pressures under which officials were working. It also enabled them to have access to the data government held and, without comprising research standards, to focus their research questions and approaches to deliver answers to issues of relevance to the practitioners.

Engaged Scholarship: Design the Research Project to Be a Collaborative Learning Community

Researcher Perspective: Van de Ven and Johnson (2006: 811) suggest that 'collaboration that fosters arbitrage among researchers and practitioners can be designed into the research teams as well as research review panels and advisory boards'. Certainly CANZ used these practices to good effect, with an Advisory Panel of policy and business representatives who were closely involved, particularly in the selection of 'exemplar firms' to study as well as facilitating many of the 50 or so practitioner briefings that occurred during the CANZ project. Preliminary findings were regularly presented to the Advisory Board for debate and discussion and there is no doubt that far richer insights were gained from this healthy exchange of views and experience.

'Carefully selecting academics and practitioners for diverse and complementary skills and backgrounds, intrinsic motivation in the problem being investigated, and a willingness to work with people of different cognitive styles and different professional cultures' is also recommended (Van de Venn ad Johnson, 2006: 812). As indicated above, members of the research team reflected at least nine different managerial sub-disciplines but despite this, they all had a commitment to understanding NZ firm issues with a view to couching these in the frames of the international literature as well as providing a commentary on practice. The CEOs of firms studied also came from very diverse backgrounds and sectors (electronics, food & beverage, ICT, furniture, mining, to name a few) but, through the feedback sessions to the firms, many also became intrinsically involved in the pursuit of these research questions.

Policy Official Perspective: The advantage of the approach adopted by CANZ was that they did not try to sell policy officials a solution. From the outset it was obvious to the practitioners that they were on a journey. Each member of the multi-disciplinary team was learning from the others and officials were expected not to be passive clients but active learners and contributors, from a 'public policy' perspective, within the community. The researchers were explicit about the assumptions, limitations and uncertainties underlying their evidence; the practitioners were encouraged to challenge the researchers' approaches and assumptions (Gluckman 2011: 8)

When MED officials presented CANZ with data on the practices and performance of 2,756 New Zealand firms (subsequently published as *Firm Foundations,* Knuckey and Johnson*, 2002*) the researchers willing contributed their knowledge and experience to the insightful interpretation of it (Solesbury 2001: 8).

Engaged Scholarship: Design the Study for an Extended Duration

Researcher Perspective: The argument for a project of reasonable duration is to enable trust, candour and learning among researchers and practitioners to build over time. While CANZ was initially designed as a four-year program to match the funder's expectations, the program was able to evolve through two further rounds to become a

12-year project. During this time, new firms and sectors were added as the team enhanced and elaborated the research questions around specific issues of interest, such as capabilities of the quickly developing software industry, a specific focus on high-technology firms in sectors such as biotechnology, and comparisons of more recently founded firms with our original set of older firms. However, the original portfolio of firms remained the core unit of analysis and longitudinal data was also collected for these firms as well, which built the CANZ data set into a substantial resource both for the researchers and policy officials.

Policy Official Perspective: The ability to return to, and interrogate, the growing CANZ database added to government's growing realization of the importance of investing in the construction of longitudinal databases. The New Zealand Department of Statistics, in conjunction with MED, has produced, since the mid-1990s, an annual snapshot of the structure and dynamics of New Zealand firms. The portrait given is effectively a skeleton that shows movements in firm numbers and sizes year on year, but cannot explain the dynamics that might be underlying the data.

The CANZ database was, and remains, a key resource for examining the nature of firm performance. The largely qualitative data it contains would not have, for competitive and privacy reasons, been supplied directly to the government. Officials are regarded with suspicion by firms from whom they seek such information – the CANZ academics, on the other hand, were viewed as neutral. Moreover as skilled interviewers they were acutely aware of bias and other factors that could reduce the value of their work.

Once government had decided that a more regular quantitative survey of business practices was required, the questionnaires prepared, with CANZ input, for *Gearing Up* (Knuckey et al., 1999) and *Firm Foundations* (Knuckey and Johnson, 2002) provided the basis for the annual Business Operations Survey which has been conducted by the New Zealand Department of Statistics since 2005. The Business Operations Survey collects information from a cross-section of New Zealand businesses with six or more employees that have been operating for one year or more. The survey aims to build a better understanding of a range of business practices and behaviours that may have some impact on business performance (http://www.stats.govt.nz/). In turn this led to the development of the Longitudinal Business Database (LBD). The LBD integrates longitudinal administrative and survey data, at the enterprise level, and is beginning to significantly enhance our understanding the dynamics of enterprise performance without increasing respondent load.

Engaged Scholarship: Employ Multiple Models and Methods to Study the Problem

Researcher Perspective: The design of the CANZ project was inherently qualitative, based on multiple interviews in each company supplemented with secondary data, such that historiographic case studies became the base-rich contextual dataset (Eisenhardt, 1989; Goodman and Kruger, 1988; Pettigrew, 1990). Inevitably with the range of disciplinary origins of the researchers involved in the CANZ, multiple methodologies

were employed ranging from systems methodologies to critical management approaches. While the researchers worked independently in many aspects, in others the team processes were likened by Campbell-Hunt to a maypole dance, in that research discussions surfaced coherences and alignment between the models and results that further enhanced their 'groundedness' in terms of drawing out theory from the data.

This strength in collating the various research threads was exemplified in the book produced by the team which became a briefly popular local business read despite the quite complex range of research models proposed. As one commentator stated; 'hopefully the CANZ book will lead to more managers who focus on the fundamentals rather than formulaic clichés' (Easton, 2001). One interesting point to note is that the team, originally all based in one location (Victoria University of Wellington), became quite widely dispersed over the duration of the project as several team members (including Campbell-Hunt) took up professorial chair positions in other universities in NZ, and established CANZ sites in their new homes. This meant the team had to work harder to ensure the research 'bantering' that had been a part of corridor conversations at Victoria and had built up productive trust and candor, continued through face-to-face contact (local meetings and international conferences) as well as by email. Interestingly, the relationships with the policy officials often provided a focal point for bringing the team together for events such as advisory board meetings and practitioner feedback sessions as well as for dedicated projects initiated by the officials.

Policy Official Perspective: A significant advantage of having access to a group of researchers who could view data and issues from a number of perspectives was that it allowed the practitioners to unpack the core of any problem. It also reduced the opportunities for the biases of individual researchers to dominate the interpretation and analysis.

The models developed by CANZ members (such as in *Leading the Way* (Australian Manufacturing Council, 1994)) helped officials to enhance their understanding of the dynamics that might be driving firm performance and at the same time pointed them to the areas where most profit might be gained in undertaking more in-depth research and analysis.

The practitioners also learned from CANZ members the importance of engaging directly with business owners and the interview/conversational techniques needed to extract value from those interactions. Whereas previously officials may have dismissed the views of individual business people as being solely driven by self-interest and therefore unreliable, by applying the techniques they had observed used by CANZ members (and other academics) they have grown in confidence in the use of qualitative data and used that knowledge to good effect when guiding the work of the Government's Small Business Advisory Group (a group of up to 12 SME owners who provide advice to Ministers) which was formed in 2003 (http://www.med.govt.nz/templates/StandardSummary_161.aspx, accessed 2 June 2011) .

Engaged Scholarship: Re-examine Assumptions About Scholarship and the Roles of Researchers

Researcher Perspective: Van de Ven and Johnson (2006) discuss this characteristic as introducing an aspect of self-reflection into the project as well as deciding on the merit of otherwise including action-research based intervention. Certainly the CANZ team used our regular meetings with the case study CEOs and policy officials to reflect and test out the validity of the insights, and over the duration of the project these became more open and rich debates as trust between collaborators increased. While the project did not explicitly include action research approaches to any great extent, some team members did work very closely with certain companies that provided particular insight into research questions of interest. We were also very aware that our very presence in the companies, asking our questions about capability and advantage, influenced the CEOs in that, as a minimum, they had to articulate their views to the team and, over time, engaged us in reflection on their practices and how they compared with others in the sample.
Policy Official Perspective: For officials the opportunity to debate key policy issues with people outside of the public policy making environment was a significant help in exposing and refining the ways in which public servants thought about responses to the problems presented to them by Ministers and businesses.

The opportunity to openly challenge and be challenged by people with the experience, the strong analytical frameworks and the shared language that commanded respect is stimulating. It confers respectability on officials' advice and means that they can provide richer advice that resonates better with Ministers and gives them standing amongst international counterparts. It also means that at least one part of the academic community better understands and can articulate the reasoning behind government policy interventions - though they still may be vocal about shortcomings in the speed and the size (and hence effectiveness) of those interventions.

Conclusion – Was the CANZ Research Rigourous?

There are various measures that could indicate the rigour of the CANZ outputs including the quality of the journals in which the outputs were published as well as the changes in professional status of the CANZ researchers. With respect to the latter, in the early stages of the project all but one of the eight core researchers were sub-professorial in rank (Associate Professor or Senior Lecturer). By the end, five were ranked Professor and 3 Associate Professor, indicating through the stringent quality criteria and peer review involved in the promotion processes that the CANZ outputs were considered internationally rigourous. Although only anecdotal in nature (the results are technically private), this rigour is also reflected in the ranking of the researchers in NZ's Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) exercise whereby all are ranked either B (world class = 'career grade') or A (world-leading ~top 5% of NZ academics).

In addition to the book, 8 book chapters and ten comprehensive case studies, by 2011 the project reported twenty-seven journal outputs and seventy-four conference papers.

Of the journal outputs at least 2/3 of these were published in A or A* ranked publications (as defined by the Australian Business Dean's Council (ABDC) journal ranking system) including journals as diverse as the European Journal of Marketing, Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice, Research Policy, Journal of Management Studies, Regional Studies, Journal of Operations Management, Human Relations and Journal of International Marketing. The paper in the latter journal by Chetty and Campbell-Hunt (2004) subsequently won the 2009 Hans B Thorelli Award which recognises an article published 5 years earlier that has made the most significant and long-term contribution to international marketing theory or practice. Despite the fact that the project was completed in 2009, it is likely that the extensive dataset and collaborative relationships established through the project will support more high quality rigourous outputs well into the coming years.

Conclusion– Was the CANZ Research Relevant?

Management researchers are often concerned that their research is of no use to or ignored by practitioners. However, this paper suggests that where a collaborative, co-operative and learning approach is adopted, the academic community has much to offer officials as they grapple with the tasks and responsibility of objectively advising the government. On the basis of the assessment criteria for scientific advice advanced by Gluckman (2011), the focus CANZ brought to data collection and interpretation, the reduction in bias from CANZ's multi-disciplinary approach, the open communication about the limitations, unknowns and risks in the frameworks and the independence of their thinking meant their work could be relied upon to provide a solid underpinning for policy-making. That MED officials gained value from the interactions is underscored by their continued, regular association with, and support of, CANZ even after core members of the group have moved to other cities and institutions.

By assisting practitioners to better question and analyse the data at their disposal, the CANZ researchers influenced not only business policy directions but also the government's support for the development of better databases, particularly longitudinal databases, that will significantly enhance the understanding of firm dynamics in New Zealand. Those new, voluminous and rich datasets need to be interpreted and the CANZ-based frameworks for analysing business performance still remain useful and relevant to that purpose.

References

Australian Manufacturing Council (1994), Leading the Way – A study of best manufacturing practices in Australia and New Zealand, Melbourne.

Banks, G 2009 Evidence-based policy-making: What is it? How do we get it? Australian and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG)/Australian National University (ANU) Lecture Series, 4 February 2009 (web: http://www.pc.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/85836/cs20090204.pdf

Campbell-Hunt, C., Brocklesby, J., Chetty, S., Corbett, L., Davenport, S., Jones, D. and P. Walsh, (2001) *World Famous in New Zealand: How New Zealand's Leading Firms Became World-class Competitors*. Auckland: Auckland University Press.

Chetty, S. and C. Campbell-Hunt (2004), A Strategic Approach to Internationalization: A Traditional Versus a "Born-Global" Approach, *Journal of International Marketing*, 12(1), 57-81.

Davenport, S. and U. Daellenbach (2011) 'Belonging' to a Virtual Research Centre: Exploring the Influence of Social Capital Formation Processes on Member Identification in a Virtual Organization, *British Journal of Management*, 22(1), 54-76.

Easton, B. (2001) Global Players: The Secret of Some New Zealand Businesses' Success, *The Listener*, 4 August, available at www.eastonbh.ac.nz/?p=63.

Eisenhardt, K. (1989), Building Theories from Case Study Research, *Academy of Management Review*, 14: 532-550.

Evans, L., Grimes, A., Wilkinson, B. and D. Teece (1996), Economic reform in New Zealand 1985-95: The pursuit of efficiency, *Journal of Economic Literature* XXXIV: 1856-1902.

Gluckman, P (2011), Towards better use of evidence in policy formation: a discussion paper, Office of the Prime Minister's Science Advisory Committee.

Goodman, R. and E. Kruger (1988), Data Dredging or Legitimate Research Method? Historiography and its Potential for Management Research, *Academy of Management Review,* **13**: 315-325.

Guenther, J, Williams, E, and Arnott, A (2010), The politics of evaluation: evidence-basedpolicy or policy-based evidence, A paper presented to the NARU Public Seminar Series, Darwin, 30 November 2010.

Gulati, R. (2007) Tent Poles, Tribalism, and Boundary Spanning: The Rigor-Relevance Debate in Management Research, *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(4), 775-782.

Hambrick, D. (1994) Presidential Address: What if the Academy Actually Mattered? *Academy of Management Review*, 19, 11-16.

Helfat, C. (2000) Guest Editor's Introduction to the Special Issue: The Evolution of Firm Capabilities, *Strategic Management Journal*, 21, 955-959.

Kieser. A. and L. Leiner (2009) Why the Rigour-Relevance Gap in Management Research is Unbridgeable, *Journal of Management Studies*, 46 (3), 516-533.

Knuckey, S and Johnson, H (2002), Firm Foundations: A study of New Zealand Business Practices and Performance, Ministry of Economic Development.

Knuckey, S, Keung-Wai, J and Meskill, M (1999), Gearing Up: A study of best manufacturing practice in New Zealand, Ministry of Commerce.

McKelvey, B. (2006) Response: Van de Ven and Johnson's "Engaged Scholarship": Nice Try, But…, *Academy of Management Review*, 31(4), 822-829.

McKiernan, P. (2009) The Irrelevance of Management Research: Nature of the 'Problem' and some European Hope – A Reply to 'Renaissance and Renewal in Management Studies: Relevance Regained' – J. Pfeffer, *European Management Review*, 6, 149-155.

OECD (2008), Proceedings of the OECD global conference on enhancing the role of SMEs in global value chains, Paris (Colin Campbell-Hunt an Lawrie Corbett, Symbiosis or Servant? The dynamics of SME growth in global value chains, 124-135).

Pettigrew AM, 1990. Longitudinal Field Research on Change: Theory and Practice, *Organisation Science*, 1: 265-292.

Pettigrew, A. (2001) Management Research After Modernism, *British Journal of Management*, 12, S61-70.

Pfeffer, J. (2009) Renaissance and Renewal in Management Studies: Relevance Regained, *European Management Review*, 6, 141-148.

Sandmann, L. (2008) Conceptualization of the Scholarship of Engagement in Higher Education: A Strategic Review, 1996-2006, *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 12(1), 91-104.

Simon, H. (1967) The Business School: A Problem in Organizational Design, *Journal of Management Studies*, 4, 1-16.

Solesbury, W (2001), Evidence Based Policy: Whence it Came and Where it's Going, ESRC Centre for Evidence Based Policy and Practice, Working Paper 1.

Sutcliffe, S. and Court, J 2005. Evidence-based policymaking: What is it? How does it work? What relevance for developing countries? Overseas Development Institute, November 2005 (web http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/2804.pdf)

Starkey, K. and Madan, P. (2001) Bridging the Relevance Gap: Aligning Stakeholders in the Future of Management Research, *British Journal of Management*, 12, S3-S26.

Van de Ven (1986) Nothing is Quite so Practical as a Good Theory, *Academy of Management Review*, 14(4), 486-489.

Van de Ven, A. (2007) *Engaged Scholarship: A Guide for Organizational and Social Research*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Van de Ven, A. and P. Johnson (2006) Knowledge for Theory and Practice, *Academy of Management Review*, 31, 802-821.

Weick, K. (2001) Gapping the Relevance Bridge: Fashions Meet Fundamentals in Management Research, British Journal of Management, 12, S71-S75.

Zussman, D (2003), Evidence-based policy making: Some observations of recent Canadian Experience, Social Policy Journal of New Zealand Te Puna Wahaaro, 20, 64-71.

GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE UNIVERSITIES

Edilberto C. **de Jesús**

President of the Asian Institute of Management
Manila, Philippines

A diploma from college or university degree program confirms for potential employers the competencies that its holders presumably command. Because the credential comes at a heavy and rising cost, its quality must be a matter of concern to the many parties involved in the supply chain. These different parties, including the varying types of post-secondary educational institutions, their diverse definitions of quality, and potential disagreements about quality benchmarks complicate the issue of determining that quality has truly been delivered.

The emergence of a global market for higher education appears to offer a way of confirming quality without having to resolve internal, contentious debates. A university that receives accreditation from an international body or a high ranking in a global listing of universities recognized as globally competitive can reasonably claim that it delivers quality higher education services. The argument is persuasive, but must probe the logic and the limits of a strategy that pursues global competitiveness. What does it mean to be a Globally Competitive University (GCU)? How does a university achieve this recognition? What benefits does this recognition bring, and to whom do they accrue? Although the push for GCU is often driven in emerging economies by national governments themselves, we must still ask what quality standards they impose and for whom these are appropriate.

These questions are of special relevance for emerging economies like the Philippines, which look to higher education institutions (HEI) to fulfill multiple roles. Quality assurance is a major concern but tends to overlook the expectations for multiple results. The Philippines also differs from most other educational systems in the Asia Pacific region. Because of its history as a colony, first of Spain, and, subsequently, the United States, the private sector provided the engine for the development of higher education. The community demand for education was high and entry barriers were low, especially if the private schools focused on education and commerce, the programs that attracted the most students. Unlike the sciences, these courses did not require high investments in libraries, laboratories and less available and, therefore, more expensive faculties.
More concerned with access than quality, government imposes minimum conditions for the establishment of colleges and universities. As a first step, it requires registration with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to give the applicant a legal personality. Investors in the venture can then proceed to secure a permit to operate from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) by demonstrating that they have the capacity to deliver the first year of the program. With this permit, they can begin enrolling the freshman class and collecting tuition fees, securing the necessary permission for the succeeding years in pace with the progress of the students.

Following this framework, the Philippines grew a large complex of higher education institutions (HEI) dominated by private colleges and universities that operated under a variety of legal forms, from not-for-profit foundations to corporate organizations trading shares in the stock exchange. They also delivered varying levels of quality, as measured by the performance of their graduates in licensure examinations and their ability to find and retain employment commensurate to their education. Government regulations formally imposed tight controls on administrative procedures, but these have not been rigorously and consistently enforced to maintain a uniform level of academic quality and prevent the continued operation of degree or diploma mills.

The demand for quality may attract foreign institutions to open programs in the Philippines. While foreign students have come to the Philippines for higher education and Filipinos have gone abroad for the same purpose, the Philippines has moved more slowly than economies like Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam in the establishment of foreign colleges and universities in the economy. The Philippines can learn from the experience of these economies in managing the entry of foreign schools.

The competition to the Philippine private sector in education has come, not from foreigners, but from the government. In the last two decades, the legislature, again mainly driven by the politically popular motive of expanding access to higher education, has moved to expand the public education sector. Inadequate financial support for these State Universities and Colleges (SUC) and poor supervision over their operations exacerbated the quality problems in both the public and the private sectors.

Rising educational expectations and the genuine need to meet the knowledge and skill requirements of 21st century jobs are driving the mass demand for post-secondary school training. The Philippines offers an instructive case for the rest of the region as it progressively brings down the barriers against private sector and foreign participation in higher education. As governments improve access to higher education, they must confront, particularly in their emerging private sectors, whether indigenous or foreign, the same need for quality assurance long experienced in the Philippines.

Defining Quality in the Philippines

For some years now, the higher education sector has been under fire in the Philippines, but also in other economies for disappointing quality expectations. Whether the students and their families or the government (and, ultimately, the tax-paying public), carry this cost, they both define quality in terms of expected outcomes. Governments complain that the HEI do not produce the graduates needed by the economy. Graduates complain that they do not get value for money. Their degrees do not deliver the good-paying, secure jobs they expected from their educational investment. Nor do they prepare them for immediate access to post-graduate courses overseas. Employers complain that the diplomas provide little assurance that graduates can be immediately useful to the company.

The criticism is not completely fair. The market moves more quickly than academic institutions can react and 21st century jobs, say, in electronics and bioengineering, demand expensive facilities and teaching staff not easy to deploy. Government cannot expect even those started by for-profit groups, to respond to changes in the environment as quickly as entrepreneurs can; its own bureaucracy and the restrictions they impose also make it difficult for the private sector and even established institutions to offer non-traditional programs for which it lacks the regulatory template.

Graduates must understand that completing a course and getting a diploma will not be enough. If they want to improve their employment prospects, they should proactively plan on how to match their interests, capabilities, and preparedness for the programs of interest to the job market. Unfortunately, students leaving high school at age 16—because of a 10-year basic education system—are not well-prepared to undertake this kind of planning. Their choice of disciplines to study often ignore the elements that must be balanced and often turn on extraneous factors, such as the professions pursued by the parents, the ease of admission into, and completion of, the program, and, increasingly, the tuition costs. They must also recognize that the 21st century has discarded the practice of life-time employment and replaced it with life-long learning.

Employers have become quite realistic about what they can expect from new hires. They are willing to invest in training new employees in the organizational practices and the technical requirements of the corporation. They do have a basis for complaint, when the graduates they hire prove deficient in basic communications and reasoning skills and even in the ability to observe organizational discipline and work ethic.

Rating Quality

However unfair the criticism, universities, whether public or private, must address and articulate their understanding of quality and their strategy for achieving it. The task must include clarifying: 1) their goals and their benchmarks for quality achievement; 2) their performance in complying with standard systems for quality assurance enforced by national regulatory agencies and professional bodies, including licensure examinations to determine fitness for the practice of professions; 3) the benefits of their participation in private, voluntary accreditation. Some HEI, a small minority in emerging economies, would also need to state their appreciation of the quality judgments rendered in international university ranking reports and in the accreditation awards granted by international bodies, such as the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD) and the Association to Advance Colleges and Schools of Business (AACSB), and the Association of MBA (AMBA).

The challenge of maintaining quality standards becomes difficult when the government itself lacks credible policies to ensure that the system responds to global trends in higher education in ways that serve national goals. HEI that aspire to become industry leaders at home and reliable partners abroad face greater problems with the lag in the policy review process: dated policies prevent their timely response to global opportunities and threats.

The quest for quality assurance in the Philippines has brought some consensus among educators that "quality" cannot be established as an absolute and immutable standard. In the 1990s, concerned about the uneven quality of private colleges and universities and need to protect consumers against diploma mills, Dr. Ester Garcia, the Chair of CHED moved to establish a ranking of the institutions subject to its oversight. The institutions at the top levels of the food chain supported this move. Not surprisingly, those below the top tier and especially those which feared landing at the bottom vigorously objected to the plan.

The general public, in fact, had a general sense of the pecking order among the HEI, especially those operating in Manila, where competition for students was most intense. The indicators used were simple, though not necessarily accurate, such as the league in which the school's basketball team played. The schools of the UAAP (University Athletic Association of the Philippines) were generally regarded as of "better quality" than those playing in the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association of the Philippines), on the assumption that universities were held to higher academic standards than colleges. This assumption was not necessarily valid in all cases, but the UAAP does include the University of the Philippines (UP), the premier national university; three of the oldest "elite" schools run by religious orders: the Dominican University of Santo Tomas (UST), the Jesuit Ateneo de Manila University (ADMU) and the La Sallian De la Salle University (DLSU); and the oldest and biggest, private, non-sectarian universities Far Eastern University (FEU) and the University of the East (UE).[1] The informal market of "Recto University" also provided an indicator. Recto, one of the main streets In the University Belt, received the designation because it was the location of the shops that produced "fake" diplomas. The fee that they charged for their products reportedly varied, depending on the school whose diploma the client wanted copied.[2]

[1] The University of the Philippines (UP) was **sui generis**, occupying a status as the national state university that offered the widest range of disciplines for study up to the doctoral level, at heavily subsidized rates. As the UP evolved into a multi-campus system, the original campus in Diliman, maintained this stature. The other UP campuses and the non-UP SUC were not necessarily regarded as better than the top private schools that offered similar programs of study. Among the private HEI, the oldest schools run by the religious orders of the Catholic Church were regarded as the "elite" institutions that accordingly charged the highest tuition fees. The third group of schools consisted of "secular," mass-based institutions located in the University Belt of Manila, most of them for profit and some listed in the stock exchange, although not actively traded. By the eighties, a number of provincial HEI had also emerged, generally regarded as offering higher quality than the small, post-secondary schools in Manila of more recent vintage. Below the top three or four private HEI, the rest competed for the public's rating of quality.

[2] In 1995, P.O. Domingo, the president of the University of the East. Fr. Angel de la Rosa, O.P., president of the University of Santo Tomas and I, as president of Far Eastern University, moved to organize the University Belt Consortium (UBC). The presidents of the ten biggest and oldest universities in the area met once a month over dinner hosted by one of the members, with no fixed agenda and no minutes taken of the discussions, but using the occasion to share information on common concerns and to engage in brainstorming sessions. The UBC brought up the issue of the Recto University shops to the authorities, but they continue to operate. They generate in duplicate not only diplomas but other university documents, such as Exam Permits that confirmed payment of required fees and allowed students to take the examinations. They also copy other public documents.

Presumably, the better schools produced documents with more security features, making them more difficult and expensive to duplicate.

These informal ratings the HEI could not avoid. They resisted the plan for a formal and official CHED ranking that rendered a judgment on their quality relative to competitors, which might impact on consumer decisions. Those who opposed the plan argued that the individual schools should not be measured by one set of metrics because they pursued different objectives.

The protracted discussions between CHED and HEI presidents and among the HEI presidents themselves resulted in an agreement not to establish a single list that force-ranked all HEI. Instead, CHED, in consultation with the HEI, would cluster the HEI under several categories within which the rankings will be established. Colleges would not compete with universities. Comprehensive universities that aspired to produce intellectual capital through the research of their faculty would form one cluster; those mainly focused on the teaching mission would constitute a different cluster. The judgment of HEI quality would not be based, therefore, on a single set of standards that unfairly compared apples and bananas.

What the HEI successfully resisted was the forced-ranking approach that compelled direct, one-on-one comparisons with their peers and resulted in official ratings of quality. The HEI accepted an assessment of individual HEI based on “fitness for purpose.” Unfortunately, Dr. Garcia ended her term of office before the Commission could install the ranking system as a way of holding HEI to standards and putting pressure on them to go for continuous improvement s to move up the rankings.

CHED did introduce a system for awarding its good housekeeping seal of approval through the different levels of autonomy it awarded to the HEI. But the intent of this effort was to promote administrative deregulation and to free both the HEI and the CHED from the stultifying burden of bureaucratic requirements. Before this innovation, a US that wanted to open a new program had to submit assorted documents to CHED, including its registration with the Securities and Exchange Commission and titles to campus lands. There was no SEC when UST was established in 1611; university officials, nevertheless, had to go through the process of submitting their explanations and alternative documentation to comply with regulations. The more serious problem was the delay universities encountered in offering new programs that the market wanted because of the cumbersome approvals process.

Universities granted autonomous status gained flexibility in determining their curricular requirements for the degrees they offered. Without having to secure prior permission, they could open two new courses or programs within one academic year, needing only to give a semester’s notice to CHED. They could also open new branches or satellite campuses, again with timely advice to CHED on their plans and assurances that these were in compliance with CHED regulations.

The HEI and the public recognized some correspondence between autonomous status and academic standards. Autonomous and deregulated status required a "long tradition of integrity and untarnished reputation," including a record of consistent compliance with Philippine laws and CHED regulations. The second criterion was "commitment to excellence," as manifested in programs recognized by CHED as Centers of Excellence or as confirmed by having secured appropriate levels of accreditation by credible agencies.[3]

In the Philippines, accreditation is a voluntary process intended to help institutions monitor, evaluate and improve their performance. Programs certified by the Federation of Accrediting Agencies of the Philippines (FAAP) at Level IV would count towards a university's qualification for autonomous status. To achieve this level, the program must be "highly respected as very high quality academic programs in the Philippines and with prestige and authority comparable to similar programs in excellent foreign universities."[4] The indicators for this level of quality include, among others: well-developed processes which support quality assurance mechanisms; research output published in national and international journals, and evidence of academic linkages with respectable international institutions of higher learning. Although some universities have programs at Level IV, only two reached Level IV institutional accreditation: DLSU and ADMU. DLSU achieved this level earlier, in 1995, but allowed it to lapse. Ateneo maintained Level IV accreditation in 2011.

The rating system adopted by CHED that permitted the grouping of institutions at different grades of autonomy and accreditation encouraged efforts to move up the chain. But it does not force head-to-head competition among the institutions sharing the same level of autonomy or accreditation.

Cross Border Education

The expansion of cross-border education (CBE) organizations that undertake and circulate accreditation and university ranking has made assessment of quality more important. The reference in CHED policies to benchmarking against "excellent foreign universities" and to "international linkages" proves the point. But cross-border education is not a new phenomenon in the Philippines or in the region.

For colonial subjects in the 19th century, higher education was often accessible only within an "international" setting. In Southeast Asia, Filipinos had to go to Spain and,

[3] CHED Memorandum Order No. 1 Series of 2005 (revised Policies and Guidelines on Voluntary Accreditation in Aid of Quality and Excellence in Higher Education).

[4] Programs applying for Level IV accreditation must have excellent outcomes in the following: research in refereed national and international journals; teaching and learning as proven by excellent performance of graduates and continuing assessment of student achievement; community service and the impact of contributions to the economic and social upliftment, on both regional and national levels; evidence of international linkages and consortia; and well-developed planning processes which support quality assurance mechanisms. CHED Memorandum Order No. 1 Series of 2005 (revised Policies and Guidelines on Voluntary Accreditation in Aid of Quality and Excellence in Higher Education).

later to the United States, Indonesians to Holland, Malaysians to England, the Vietnamese to Paris because the opportunities for higher education at home were either limited or non-existent. The fortunate few given the opportunity to study overseas did learn the language and culture of the colonial power, sometimes to the point where they were accused by compatriots of losing their original culture. But the primary objective of the students going abroad was not cultural enrichment; it was to learn the discipline or profession of their interest-- law or science or medicine-- because education in these fields was not available in the colonies or were patently inferior in quality.

New states emerging during the post-war, post-colonial era placed the development of the higher education sector high on the nation-building agenda. National governments established institutions of higher learning, but these could offer only a limited range of courses and could not match the facilities and the faculty available in the West. To raise the quality of indigenous academic institutions, they sent promising faculty for post-graduate training abroad and to import foreign faculty from developed economy universities who could serve as “technology transfer” agents.

The Philippines enjoyed the head start provided by the American colonial government in establishing a public school system from the elementary to the university level. The strategy in the 1950s and the 1960s aimed at investing in proven academic institutions that could then establish the educational standards and produce the faculty for the rest of the system. Assistance from philanthropic foundations, such as Ford and Rockefeller, and grants from the American government through U.S. A.I.D. for the Fulbright Fellowships and similar programs strengthened the faculty of state universities, such as the UP campuses in Manila and Los Baños, and Mindanao State University, as well as the leading private schools. These programs provided funds to bring American professors to teach at Philippine universities and to send Filipino faculty to pursue post-graduate degrees in the United States. Cross-border education was a key component of the higher education development strategy.

The assistance extended to Philippine institutions aimed at building centers of academic excellence that would address the needs of commerce and industry, as well as the requirements of the national educational system. The strategy assumed that the government and the private sector would continue to support and to expand these flagship institutions so that they could provide the human resources required by the other schools and universities.

While assistance programs focused on the development of the national higher education sector, the first mover advantage enabled the top schools in the Philippines to attract students from the neighboring economies. By the last quarter of the 20th century, however, the original members of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Brunei had started to develop their own academic centers of excellence. This was only to be expected; no nation would want the development of its human resources dependent on other governments. Like national airlines and communications satellites, world class universities project an economy’s economic and political progress.

It was not realistic, however, to aim at raising all the HEIs to the same level of quality as the best in the West. Even in the United States, the comprehensive research universities projected as world-class globally competitive institutions represent only a minority of the total universe of HEIs. In emerging economies, those with the financial resources could still rely on the market system and opt for the more expensive higher education in many universities of North America, Europe and Australia perceived as offering higher-quality programs.

A common strategy in a number of ASEAN economies focuses on developing a small number of flagship institutions (nine in Thailand, four in Malaysia). The government would invest additional resources in these institutions to raise them closer to the level of American research universities. The rest of the system would focus on addressing the mass demand for the post-secondary education required by the job market and sought by the citizenry.

Given resource constraints, the strategy makes sense. Aided by UNESCO's Education for All campaign and the support of overseas development agencies to Millennium Development Goals, developing economies had made substantial gains in basic education. Quality issues still required attention but success in meeting access goals spurred the surge to post-secondary education and made access an issue at the tertiary education level. The option for cross-border education became important for students in economies whose HEIs lacked the academic programs, or the quality requirements, or the sheer capacity to meet the mass demand for post-secondary education credentials.

In economies that allowed foreign schools to offer their degree programs, buyers had to learn to discriminate among the providers of educational programs. But governments and local private universities continued to look at partnerships with reputable foreign universities as the way to develop new curricular offerings, introduce faculty to advanced research methods and new teaching strategies, and, overall, to raise academic standards.

Vietnam's Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) and the Commission on Higher Education, for instance, embarked in 2006 on a strategy to leverage foreign partnerships to upgrade national institutions. The goal was to establish in its universities degree programs meeting international quality standards. On the basis of its national development plans, MOET identified ten priority academic areas or disciplines. It invested additional resources in nine national universities, which had already built up some strength in these fields, and chose eight American universities with whom they could partner.

MOET chose the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign to help the Hanoi University of Technology in Material Science and Engineering, the Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology in Power and Energy Systems, and the University of Natural Sciences, Hanoi, in Chemistry. The California State University would work with the Hanoi

University of Technology in Mechatronics Engineering and the University of California, Davis, with the University of Agriculture in Plant Science.

The plan called for the paired universities to run joint undergraduate programs in Vietnam, using the curricula, training technologies, and professors of the American partner universities. The program aimed at producing 20000 Ph.D.s by 2020 to staff the faculty of Vietnamese universities. This goal would raise the ratio of Ph.D.s in the faculty from the starting point of 13% to 30%. To support the universities in the joint degree programs, Vietnam provided a supplemental budget of $1-1.5million so that they could upgrade their laboratory facilities and meet the American curricular requirements.

Silicon Valley companies, such as Intel, lined up to recruit the graduates from these joint programs, which had barely started. The response from American academic institutions and corporate enterprises encouraged Vietnam to plan on adding another nine national universities to the program in 2008-2010. Moving forward, the Vietnamese universities planned to offer Master's and Ph.D. programs comparable to those in American universities.

Global Education Market

A combination of secular demographic change and the decline in government support for higher education posed a challenge to many HEI in the developed economies. The demand for higher education credentials in emerging economies presented an opportunity.[5]

As in the past but now at an increasing rate, international students flowed from the economies of the South to those of the North. Emerging economies in the list of the top ten economies sending students abroad accounted for nearly 65% of the total. OECD estimated a total number of over 3.3 million foreign students pursuing higher education in 11 economies in 2008. Japan and Korea hosted 5% of this number. The rest went to North America, Europe, Russia, Australia and New Zealand. The English-speaking economies accounted for 43% of the total.[6] Beyond simply opening their doors to foreign students, Western universities started offering their programs and opening branches overseas.

Regardless of capacity and quality, a market for CBE would always exist for those with, for instance, the resources and the desire to experience life in another economy, or to learn the language and culture of a specific community. But this market would be limited to the wealthy or those pursuing disciplines such as linguistics and anthropology. But

[5] The top two countries engaged in cross border education trade reported earnings of US$17.8 bn (United States, 2008) and £5.3 bn (the United Kingdom, 2009). Australia, the fifth-ranked education exporter, earned A$13 bn in 2008, making education their largest services export industry. *Sources: U.S. Dept of Commerce, UK Higher Education International Unit, Australian Education International.*

[6] Among the most favored destination countries for cross-border education for 2010 were the United States of America (624,474); the United Kingdom (335,870); Germany (245,522); France (243,436); Australia (230,635) and Japan (126,568). OECD Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators 2010.

the global demand for higher education around the world and the global disparity in the development of the higher education sector opened up opportunities for institutions committed to benchmark against the standards of world-class universities. Japan, China, Korea and India also attracted foreign students.[7] Even the Philippines in 2011 had over 17000 foreign tertiary students, with over 11000 coming from Korea for English and the social sciences, and nearly 3000 coming from Iran for dentistry, medicine and allied programs. About 1000 came from the United States, but many of them probably of Filipino descent.[8]

In the Asia Pacific region, Singapore aspires to be a global education center. The motive is not directly to generate revenue. A small city-state lacking a hinterland, for control of its own natural resources Singapore must rely on its ability to exploit the opportunities opened up by the emerging knowledge sectors. But its earlier success at controlling population has resulted in a need to import the human resources to run the economy. The government must invest in incentives to attract the top brand universities to locate within its territory. These HEIs will enable Singapore to develop fields such as biotechnology and robotics that will allow it to move up the value chain. Liberally dispensing scholarships, these universities and research centers will also bring in talent from around the region, the best of which can be offered the chance to become Singapore citizens.

The goal of parity with the global best universities meant accepting their standards. Only a few emerging economies can really aspire to compete for students on a broad front with the best universities in the developed economies. But the ability to attract foreign students would enhance a university's reputation for quality and its ability to market its courses.

Although the competencies that constitute global learning remain subject to discussion and debate, the issue has clearer resonance and urgency and a stronger market for some disciplines or professions, such as engineering and, in particular, business management. Technology has introduced radically new options for the conduct of business. Production chains now girdle the globe. Business and knowledge process outsourcing possibilities pose opportunities and threats for business organizations. The Association to Advance Colleges and Schools of Business (AACSB) undertakes the accreditation of its member management schools. As the business world responds to the new challenges brought by globalization, it is correctly concerned about how

[7] In 2008, Japan hosted 126,568 foreign students, followed by China with 50,146 and Korea with 40,322. India hosted 7,738 foreign students in 2005. UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2008.

[8] The Philippines is fast emerging as a major educational hub in the Asia-Pacific region attracting over 26,000 foreign students, 17,087 of whom are holders of the 9/f student visa, allowing them access to Philippine tertiary learning institutions. Students from Korea make up the biggest segment, numbering 11,612 followed by students from China with 3,961 and Iran with 3,225. Philippine Bureau of Immigration News, March 18, 2011, August 21, 2011.

business schools in turn should prepare their students, who aspire to become the world's future business leaders.[9]

The current mantra in trade books and magazines calls for the training of global managers—executives equipped with the functional business skills who can move seamlessly from one economy to another and each time hit the ground running to manage the organization with the necessary cultural sensitivity. Whether business schools can really deliver these ideal global managers, they recognize the need to prepare their students with the appropriate skills for this challenge.

These skills are clearly more urgently needed by multinational organizations in developed economies that have been responsible for driving the globalization of business. They see more promising growth prospects in the emerging economies and seek managerial talent to exploit them. These organizations are increasingly recruiting executives from the emerging economies themselves, but this pool of talent, though increasing, is still limited.[10]

To expand this supply, the need may be for better training in the functional and technical skills than for global learning. Presumably, they would already be familiar with the environment and the idiosyncrasies of doing business in their own economy. The ability to communicate with expatriate managers or colleagues would be a decided advantage, but there would be less need for local staff to understand the business environment of the foreigners. The pressure to reduce the length of degree courses makes the issue of determining curricular priorities for institutions focusing primarily on national training needs.

Global learning, for sure, would give an edge to developing economy nationals who leave home to find employment abroad. Competence in their specific line of work, however, would appear to be the major requirement. The ranks of internationally mobile labor have grown without much change towards global learning in the higher education curricula. Migrants have found jobs in economies about which they know little because they have the skills or the willingness to do work those in the host economy do not possess.

---

[9] The AACSB published in 2011 the report of its Task Force on **The Globalization of Management: Changing International Structures, Adaptive Strategies and the Impact on Institutions** Emerald Group Publishing Ltd: UK, 2011.

[10] Edmundo Vallejo Venegas, former CEO of GE Latin America and Professor at the IPADE Business School in Mexico, in the closing keynote speech at the 6th Annual GBSN (Global Business School Network) conference, noted the following: "Emerging markets will be growing 7% plus by 2015, the developed world will grow 2%. In this decade for the first time in the last 200 years . . . the contribution to the global growth coming out of developing markets will be more important than that coming out of the advanced world. But there is a huge problem: there is not enough [skilled] people. There is a huge talent scarcity in emerging markets. . . . only 15% of graduates in Russia and 20% in India are employable by major corporations. Companies in emerging markets have to import talent from around the world and are struggling to find people." *Source: Generating Leadership: Developing Human Capacity in Emerging Economies. Conference Report, 6th Annual Conference of the Global Business School Network, pg. 7. 20-22 June 2011. Mexico City.*

Globally Competitive Universities

Universities do compete with each other: for public funds, for philanthropic and research grants, for the most accomplished faculty and for the most promising students (hopefully, who can also pay full fare), and for public acclaim. At the highest levels of the industry, the competition has clearly become global. Not many institutions outside the English-speaking economies and even fewer in the developing economies can compete at this level.

There is some competition emerging among institutions at the regional level, and one of the areas in which they compete is in the character of the alliances they forge with the brand-name global universities. Cash is an element in this competition; the new economic powers, China, India, Russia and Singapore are now in the game.

But money is not the only issue, although it may be more important now after the global financial crisis and the budgetary constraints confronting many First World governments. The top European and American universities had been cool to invitations to set up foreign branch operations, even when financial resources were offered. First, they had to ensure the bona fides of the institutions and the governments offering partnerships. Second, the advocates of international expansion had to assure their own stakeholders that there would be no entangling alliances that could tarnish the brands they carried. Third, they had to see broader, long-term interests in going global.

Most developing economy institutions are still focused on international partnerships as a strategy to help them ensure that their graduates learn the latest tools of their respective trades so that they can meet the expectations of First World employers.

This, I believe, is what HEI in emerging economies mean when they make a claim to "global competitiveness": that they produce graduates who can find jobs in other economies and do it better or more cheaply than migrant labor from other foreign sources.

We are familiar with, and may even use the rhetoric of how a shrinking globe and an expanding global market drive the demand for international education. But the most vigorous proponents come from the developed world.

Speaking on internationalization of education in the United States at a conference in Berlin in 2007, Dr. John Yopp of the University of Kentucky underlined the objective of global learning—"the knowledge, skills and attitudes that . . . enable [students] to understand world cultures and events; analyze global systems; appreciate cultural difference; and apply this knowledge and appreciation to their lives as citizens and workers."[11]

[11] Presentation of Dr. John Yopp, Associate Provost for Educational Partnerships of the University of Kentucky, The Many Faces of Internationalization, Academic Cooperation Association (ACA) Annual Conference, 13-15 May 2007, Berlin, Germany.
http://www.aca-secretariat.be/fileadmin/aca_docs/annual_reports/AR2007_final.pdf

Throughout its history, the United States has balanced between an isolationist and an internationalist impulse, perhaps reflected also in the attitude of academic institutions. At the beginning of the 21st century, the balance appeared to be tipping towards internationalization. A survey conducted by the American Council on Education in 2001 recorded 80% of respondents who believed that the United States should be involved in world affairs.[12] A December 2005 survey showed that more than 90% of Americans believe it important to prepare future generations for a global society. [13]

The title of the policy statement issued in 2007 by the Association of International Educators and the Alliance for International Educational and Cultural Exchange concisely captures the reasons for internationalization: "An International Education Policy for U.S. Leadership, Competitiveness, and Security." To maintain its competitive edge, the American workforce must acquire "strong international and cross-cultural skills." Not surprisingly, corporate leaders place an international curriculum high on their wish-list for American higher education.[14]

Security concerns intensified after 9/11. The terrorist attack brought home the continuing need "to understand a dangerous world, to speak the world's language, and to promote better understanding of the United States by the world's citizens." But a government report in 2002 noted that such agencies as the FBI, the Departments of State and Commerce, and the U.S. Army lacked translators and interpreters, as well as diplomats and intelligence specialists with adequate language and cross-cultural skills.
At the height of the Cold War, of course, the Soviet Union also invested in developing a corps of experts with these cross-cultural skills because of similar concerns, as well as in providing higher education opportunities for nationals of communist bloc and non-aligned economies. The collapse of the Soviet Union left the United States as the dominant military power, but did not eliminate competition among nations seeking international influence. In this contest, the projection of "soft power," the appeal and the value of an economy's institutions and achievements, was a major counter, and the ability to offer high quality educational opportunities was part of the arsenal. China is preparing to put an aircraft carrier into operation, but it has already established Confucius Institutes around the world to spread Chinese language and culture, as well as political influence.

In its 1996 report to UNESCO, the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century identified four pillars upon which education for life should be based:

---

[12] Fred M. Hayward, Laura M. Siaya, Public Experience, Attitudes and Knowledge: A Report on Two National Surveys About International Education, Academic Council on Education, 2001, pg. 6.
http://www.acenet.edu/bookstore/pdf/2001-intl-report.pdf

[13] Survey commissioned by the National Association of Foreign Student Advisors (NAFSA): Association of International Educators, 2005.
http://www.nafsa.org/press_releases.sec/press_releases.pg/american_public_international

[14] An International Education Policy for U.S. Leadership, Competitiveness and Security, a policy statement co-written by NAFSA: Association of International Educators and Alliance for International Educational and Cultural Exchange, October 2007.
http://www.nafsa.org/public_policy.sec/united_states_international/toward_an_international/

learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be. History and current events clearly show that building the third pillar, learning to live together, remains a major challenge. For many developing economies still in the nation-building process and for developed economies facing the problem of ethnic minorities in their territory, addressing this issue may be the greater priority for the higher education sector.

A global learning or international education agenda could aim to buttress the UNESCO pillars, but the discourse on the subject has tended to focus on the competitive edge that such an agenda could provide. Ironically, the United States and the rich economies of the north cannot really achieve peace and security objectives, unless underdeveloped economies also gain greater access to the opportunities for global learning and the respect for cultural diversity that it fosters.

APEC Quality in Higher Education Meeting
The Role of the Federal Government in Quality Assurance
In U.S. Higher Education

Eduardo M. **Ochoa**
Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education

August 3, 2011

OUTLINE of Presentation

- Trends in Higher Education
  - President's 2020 education goal
  - Reductions in State funding
  - Expansion of Pell grants
  - Transition to 100% Direct Lending by U.S. government
  - Growth of for-profit Institutions of higher education
  - Disruptive technological change
- Implications for HE environment
  - Greater autonomy from States for public Institutions of higher education
  - Increased State focus on graduation numbers
  - Increased Federal regulation of higher education aimed at quality assurance
  - Change pressures on institutional accreditation agencies
- A new agenda for US higher education
  - The need for a strategic vision
  - The productivity imperative and the need for a cultural transformation in Institutions of higher education
  - New mechanisms for concerted action
    - Across Institutions of higher education
    - Across States
  - A supportive leadership role in higher education for the Department of Education
  - A new national compact with higher education
    - HE commitment to continuous productivity growth & quality improvement
    - Commitment by States & US to fund remaining capacity gap to reach 2020 goal

Good morning. I am pleased to address representatives from the APEC member economies, to share with you the experience of the United States in addressing what President Obama considers one of our most important challenges: to raise the educational level of our economy to the highest level In the world. This is a stirring transformational goal, one that will enhance the global competitiveness of our economy, and allow our graduates to be engaged citizens of a thriving civil society and democracy, and to lead culturally rich, rewarding lives.

It is because education has become critical to reach these goals in a complex, diverse, information-rich global society that President Obama set his transformational goal to increase the proportion of Americans with a postsecondary credential or degree from 40 to 60% by the year 2020. For baccalaureate degrees in particular, this would mean an increase in annual production from 2.5 to 3.5 million by that year[1].

In working to reach the President's goal, our educational system is contending with a number of significant challenges. The most prominent one is the dramatic reduction in support for public higher education by State governments. In California—the state that I come from—cuts to the UC and CSU systems averaging 23% on the last budget have come on top of a cumulative reduction of 40% over the past twenty years, a mind-boggling dismantling of a system of higher education that has been a model for the world.

The 2020 goal is meant to address a stagnant college-going rate that—when combined with strong growth in other economies—has seen the US slip from first to ninth in the world in the proportion of 24-29 year-olds with college degrees. As American children reach college-going age, and given the demographic shifts under way, we can reliably predict that at historical college-going rates of minority youth—especially Latinos—the US will see the educational level of its workforce decline significantly over this period.

In tandem with the shrinking support for higher education by the states, the Federal government has dramatically increased spending on Pell grants, nearly doubling it to $30 billion in 2009-10. In addition, the Department of Education has completed a transition to 100% Federal Direct Loans, phasing out the FFEL program, which will yield a savings of $68 billion over eleven years, according to the official CBO estimate. The combined effect of the reduction in state support, the resultant tuition increases by state colleges and universities, and the increase in Federal financial aid is that there has been a significant shift from state to Federal support for public higher education (as well as expanded Federal support to private higher education—both non-profit and for-profit, since Federal financial aid is also available for that sector).

This shift in public support for higher education from direct funding to public institutions of higher education to indirect support for all institutions through student financial aid created a new market space for for-profit educational enterprises. The expansion of Federal financial aid coincided with explosive growth of the for-profit sector, especially its publicly-traded corporate sector, which attracted capital to serve segments of the market passed over by traditional institutions (i.e., low-income and underprepared students). As a result, for-profit colleges enroll 10% of students while drawing 23% of all Federal financial aid. The growth in the for-profit sector has compensated to some extent for the reduction in capacity of public higher education, but at the cost of higher indebtedness for students and some serious quality issues with some of the education providers.

[1] "Boosting Productivity in US Higher Education," McKinsey Public Sector Practice report, April 2011.

Another factor in the rise of the for-profit sector is the emergence—possibly for the first time in its history—of the kind of disruptive technological change that has toppled market leaders in other industries, through the technology of online learning. The general process that has been brilliantly analyzed by Clayton Christensen in *The Innovator's Dilemma* and applied to the education sector in *Disrupting Class* and *The Innovative University* poses both a significant threat to all but the strongest institutions and an opportunity to break out of the iron triangle of cost, access, and quality and improve all three simultaneously.

In the midst of these trends affecting U.S. higher education, some actual and potential policy responses emerge. One of these is a call for greater autonomy from state control by a growing number of public universities. As the share of the operating budget from state sources continues to shrink—in some cases as low as 10%--institutions such as the University of Minnesota, the Madison campus of the University of Wisconsin, schools of business within universities, and a number of other institutions are calling for the end of public funding in exchange for autonomy in governance. While this may be a rational response by some institutions, it puts their individual interest at odds with their public mission and the general societal interest.

Another response to the current landscape is increased focus by states on graduation numbers as a basis for state funding, rather than enrollment levels or even graduation rates, since the latter can be managed upward by raising the selectivity of admissions, leaving unmet the larger policy objective of increased overall access and completion.

The growth of the for-profit sector and the quality and consumer protection issues that have emerged in that sector led my Department to develop the program integrity regulations—in particular the so-called "gainful employment" rules. The rules were intended to assure that students and the taxpayers were getting value for their money in those professional programs intended to lead to "gainful employment in recognized occupations" (in the language of the 2008 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act).

The gainful employment rules represented a new direction for the United States government, which has traditionally relied on accreditation by peer-membership organizations for quality assurance in determining eligibility for Federal student aid. The emergence of the for-profit sector (with strong financial incentives for aggressive growth) and also concern about the quality of the education provided by substantial portions of the traditional higher education sector, however, have raised questions about the continued viability of the current accreditation system, and about whether stronger independent state and Federal mechanisms for quality assurance are called for.

The US approach to quality assurance has relied principally on accreditation by industry associations based on peer review of entire institutions. For historical reasons, these accreditation agencies—membership associations with nonprofit status and boards of directors selected principally from the member institutions—have emerged in six distinct non-overlapping regions of the economy, each with its own set of accreditation

standards (although they are similar from agency to agency). The accreditation is granted by the governing board based on an institution's self-study and the recommendation of peer visitation teams.

Once the institution achieves initial accreditation based on a threshold level of compliance with the standards, the traditional emphasis has been on feedback aimed at continuous improvement. The process has been collegial and respectful of the faculty's central and largely independent role in setting curriculum and academic standards. It was largely due to external pressure from government-both at the Federal and state level—that a movement began toward articulation of learning objectives and assessment of student learning as an intentional mechanism for not only continuous improvement but also accountability to external stakeholders.

This pressure has intensified as the Federal government has dramatically expanded its support of higher education through the mechanisms of Pell grants and direct loans. The centrality of this source of revenue for colleges and universities has increased the interest of the Federal government in assuring quality of education, and made the conditions for eligibility of institutions for Federal student aid a critical issue. Currently, the United States relies on accreditation by agencies it recognizes as the quality assurance mechanism.

One unfortunate byproduct of these developments has been the increased focus on employment and income outcomes of postsecondary academic programs to the exclusion—at least in some policy circles—of consideration of broader and more fundamental dimensions and measures of quality. As such, the policy discussion has been disconnected from the vigorous work on development and assessment of fundamental learning outcomes, and consequent improvement of programs, that has been going on in higher education for over a decade. The driving role of regional and professional accreditors in this movement has also gone largely unnoticed in Washington policy circles. However, it must be admitted that the pace of reform in the higher education assessment movement has been painfully slow. Not only is there still a large share of institutions that have not progressed beyond the early stages of this movement, but there has not yet been movement toward national baseline agreement on what college graduates should know and be able to do, either in general or for specific disciplines. A hopeful development to address this shortcoming is the support by the Lumina Foundation for the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and North Central's Higher Learning Commission to test the usefulness of Lumina's degree qualifications profile for their institutions' continuous improvement and accreditation work.

The challenge of the dramatic growth of the for-profit sector and the concerns about educational quality raised by such authors as Derek Bok in *Underperforming Colleges* and Arum & Roksa in *Academically Adrift* led to NACIQI (the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity) being asked by the Secretary of Education to envision possible alternatives or improvements to our current system of accreditation as the basis for Institutions of higher education to qualify for financial aid.

Among the alternatives being contemplated are: (i) national institutional accreditation as an alternative to the regionals; (ii) national accreditation standards; (iii) replacement of regional divisions among institutional accrediting agencies by divisions based on Carnegie classification; and (iv) division of responsibilities for quality assurance, with direct Federal QA of financial and governance integrity and accreditation agencies' sole focus on academic quality. The Commission is currently deliberating on these matters and will forward its recommendations by the end of the year.

Never has the role of higher education been as critical to the economic, social, and civic health of our economy as it is now; and never has higher education been faced with such challenging conditions as it is now. In such times, the natural inclination is for public institutions to conclude that we are going through one of our periodic cycles of boom and bust funding, to respond with individual strategies for hunkering down without major restructuring, and to wait out the lean years until the next upward cycle. This is not one of those times. The current recession—which would have been much worse without the administration's economic stimulus package—is not part of a short inventory business cycle. Rather, it is the bursting of a financial and housing bubble that has left all three sectors—household, business, and government—seriously overleveraged with debt. The drama in Washington over the debt ceiling is a sideshow to this fundamental reality. There is no way to avoid a protracted period of debt deleveraging and slow growth. In particular for public higher education, state revenues will not grow at rates that would allow for the funding levels needed to expand higher education's capacity to meet the 2020 goal based on current cost structures and technologies in higher education.

And yet, if the US economy is to recover, it will require a highly skilled work force to capitalize on the needed new industries and markets. And that will require that our economy find the way to educate that work force—hence the 2020 goal. What is missing, as UC President Mark Yudof has pointed out, is that "There never has been an integrated national strategy in this economy for higher education. There needs to be one now."[2] In order for such a strategy to be developed, a number of preconditions must exist:

- There must be a heightened awareness by our institutions, the public, and policymakers of the stakes involved;
- There must be a knowledge and data base that quantifies the magnitude of the capacity challenge;
- There must be wide engagement in a vigorous conversation about possible strategies for dealing with the challenge.

I believe that these conditions are starting to develop. The American Council of Education has decided to form a blue-ribbon presidential commission drawn from all segments of higher education to grapple with the challenge of the 2020 goal under current conditions. The Department of Education has formed a College Completion

[2] "Exploring a New Role For Federal Government [sic] in Higher Education," manuscript, Mark Yudof, October 2009.

Task Force that is focusing all of our efforts on behalf of the goal. The task force is housed in the Office of Postsecondary Education and is being coordinated by Special Advisor Dr. Rosemarie Nassif.

There are many tactics that can be brought to bear on the challenge and can make a contribution to reducing costs: better prepared incoming freshmen (the common core standards can help bring that about); better retention and graduation rates; shorter time to degree; streamlined business operations; greater economies of scale for common business functions in higher education systems; program consolidation. But the reform with the greatest potential to bend the curve of higher education costs is transformation of the fundamental technical basis of teaching and learning, based on continuing advances in information technology, and a corresponding transformation of academic culture that incorporates continuous quality and productivity improvement as a fundamental academic value: faster, better, cheaper. As Carl Weiman, the Nobel-prize-winning physicist serving at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy has pointed out, this ethos is already part of the faculty's research culture: we just have to find a way to port it over to the teaching side of their work.[3]

But the States will continue to play what I believe is an indispensable role. Public higher education will continue to be organized at the State level; some level of State funding will continue to be necessary; and institutional transformation will need to be led by State higher education system heads. There may be an expanded, qualitatively different role for the Federal government in public higher education in the future, but the consensus and the political will for it is nowhere near formed at this point. It is possible to imagine as an outcome a grand national compact, where higher education commits itself to increase its productivity at a particular annual rate to meet a portion of the capacity challenge, the states and the Federal government each commit to covering another portion, and the states commit to increase the numbers of graduating students by the requisite amounts. We at the Department of Education will strive to play a supporting and convening role in a process that could lead to such an outcome, but the development of the strategic vision will need to be done by the states and the higher education institutions themselves. The U. S. Department of Education will continue to play a convening and supporting role in this process, one that is vital to the future welfare of our economy. Thank you.

[3] A new model for post-secondary education, the Optimized University," manuscript, Carl Wieman, September 2006.

US Accreditation and the Influence of European Quality Assurance

Linda K. Johnsrud

Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost,
University of Hawaii System

The system of voluntary accreditation used in the United States, a process of peer review and continuous quality improvement, is a well known system, highly respected, and actually pursued by many institutions of higher learning outside the US. But at home, our process of accreditation is under attack. This attack began most formally in 2006, when the National Commission on the Future of Higher Education was commissioned by then US Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings. The final report called for improving accessibility, affordability, and accountability—and in the action plan, the secretary commented on each of these:

Accessibility. "There are far too many Americans who want to go to college but cannot—because they're either not prepared or cannot afford it."

Affordability. "There is little to no information on why costs are so high and what we're getting in return."

Accountability. "No current ranking system of colleges and universities directly measures the most critical point—student performance and learning."

At the time, many in higher education thought this was a partisan attack that would go away with the next change in the political party holding the White House. It has not. Yesterday our keynote speaker, Assistant Secretary Ochoa, shared some of the current criticisms of higher education in general and accreditation in particular. He addressed the public interest in increased productivity. The role of accreditation in productivity is not straightforward, but in many respects, accreditation and the access to federal financial aid that comes with accredited status is the federal government's only leverage for change.

The call for public accountability in higher education has not only continued, but it has also grown more urgent. There is national concern about our decreasing international competitiveness, the decreasing educational attainment of our population, the low retention and graduation rates of our institutions, and our inability to supply workers with the skills and competencies needed by employers for an increasingly global marketplace. Most simply put, there is increasing public concern over access, affordabililty, and accountability, and just under the surface, there is concern about the meaning and value of degrees awarded by US campuses.

I believe that at the campus level the toughest pill to swallow is that the public interest is more than the sum of institutional interests. Faculty and administrators want to add those positions, programs, or services that will increase their competitiveness; that will increase the quality of what they offer. There is a real mismatch between how we in

higher education define and measure quality and what is being called for in the public interest. Higher education has long defined quality for itself; we hold peer review sacred. Our decisions in regard to tenure, promotion, and publication are all internal matters; they are all decisions we make about the quality of each other's work. There are few professions so closed, so impervious to external review. Our notion of external review extends only to our peers; for example, we value program review teams because the members are our peers from other institutions; we value external letters of support for tenure and promotion because they are written by our national disciplinary peers. Can we really argue that our peers bring an external perception to their reviews? External to what? Certainly not external to higher education. Our definition of quality needs to expand to serve the public interest.

Let's take another example—rankings. The majority of US institutions and the majority of faculty members pay some amount of attention to the rankings in the US News and World Report. We may criticize the rankings, but we read them, and most of us would think twice about making a move to an institution that is lower in tier ranking than where we currently are located. What does this ranking reward? The lower your student/faculty ratios, the smaller your class size, the more selective your admissions standards, the higher your ranking. Taken together, these measures increase costs and reduce access. What is it that most of our external stakeholders are calling for? More students educated with fewer resources. Some rankings use measures of quality that run absolutely counter to increasing the educational capital of the nation. Our notion of quality is being challenged by the policy makers concerned with improving the productivity of the nation.

Our logic in regard to quality plays out in our finance models as well. There is an old saw in the finance literature: How much does it cost to deliver higher education? The answer—depends entirely on how much we have to spend. Can you imagine the faces of state legislators, when they ask about cost, and we reply with expenditures? The more you give us, the more it costs. Why? Because we equate high cost with high quality—the more we pay for a faculty star, the more quality we believe we have bought. The smaller the class size, the higher the quality of learning. The lower the student faculty ratio, the higher the prestige of the institution. So we spend every dime given to us and ask for more, because we believe that the more we spend the better we are, the higher the quality. And we wonder why we are under attack, why we are accused of being cavalier with taxpayer's money. I repeat--higher education's notion of quality is being challenged by the policy makers concerned with improving the productivity of the nation.

US accrediting agencies are considered to be "a reliable source for determining the quality of education and training of institutions of higher education." Currently, there are a variety of different types of accrediting agencies recognized by the federal government, and recognition is important, because federal financial aid--$150b annually--is available only to institutions holding accreditation from a "recognized" accrediting agency. The US has national accrediting agencies in the vocational fields, and we have professional accrediting agencies for the professions. But overlaying this assortment of programmatic accreditors are the regional agencies that accredit

institutions. The six regional agencies are membership organizations, non-profits, and they range in size from approximately 140 – 1100 institutions. The geographical scope of these commissions varies widely, with the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association covering 19 States, while WASC encompasses two; California and Hawaii, and the historic Pacific Island territories.

For the past 20 years regional accreditors have been undertaking a significant reform. They have been responding to the public interest. Traditionally, visiting teams examined inputs, that is, the number of volumes in the library, the credentials of faculty, and the selectivity of student admissions. Attention has shifted to student success, and more specifically to outputs, that is, retention, graduation, and most importantly, student learning outcomes. Visiting teams today seek evidence and/or data which documents that faculty are establishing student learning outcomes at the course, program, and campus levels; that they are assessing whether students have met those outcomes, and that they are using the outcomes of their assessments to improve their curriculum. This shift has moved accreditation from a focus on compliance with standards to a focus on continuing improvement. These reforms are far reaching, and they have not come without cost—earlier I mentioned that accreditation is under attack. At the same time that accreditors are defending their processes to the US Department of Education and Congress, they are also under attack by their member institutions. Many feel that the new process—assessing student learning-- has become too intrusive, too burdensome, and too costly. Some of the elite institutions, both public and private, are calling for major reforms to the current system of accreditation; in many respects, they do not believe that the public call for accountability is directed at them.

Regional accreditors are caught in the crossfire. The public interest demands that the quality and rigor of all degrees be ensured; rather than simply determining whether students have learned what the faculty expect, we are now being asked whether what students have learned is “good enough.” Accreditors have always looked first at the institutional mission and goals, and determined whether the institution was achieving their purposes. Today higher education is challenged as to whether students who receive degrees are achieving against an externally benchmarked set of standards. Are student outcomes reflective of the rigorous standards they need to be globally competitive?

Two major foundations in the US, the Lumina Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, have invested heavily in projects to improve the performance of higher education, especially to improve the completion rates and quality of learning of students. Most recently, the Lumina foundation has looked to developments in Europe to inform and inspire US reforms, and what is happening in Europe is truly exciting. The advances the European Union is making in assuring the rigor and quality of the degrees they award should give US higher education pause.

The mission to modernize European higher education emerged as a result of the widely known Bologna declaration of 1999, and the equally important but less well known Lisbon declaration in 2000 which focused on innovation and research. It is important to note that the Bologna Declaration was not about learning when it began. Rather it was

the outgrowth of the larger agenda for Europe to compete on a global scale, an agenda that built upon a unified, cohesive Europe in which national interests were less important than the economic development of Europe as a whole. It is no surprise that higher education became a centerpiece for this undertaking. Education ministers from 49 nations are now engaged in what has become the transformation of higher education in Europe. What began as an internal effort to align the structure of degrees (bachelors, masters, and doctorate) and to align the basis for academic credit in order to promote mobility across nations has now become a matter of global competition, economic development, and modernization. This shift has underscored the need for quality and quality assurance mechanisms. It is widely recognized that Europe's goal to be globally competitive requires an innovative, well educated, mobile workforce.

In 2001 the European Commission sponsored the Tuning Project which clarifies learning outcomes for different degree levels within specific disciplinary fields (e.g., what should a student with a bachelor's degree in psychology know, understand and be able to do. Tuning is faculty driven; it is by academics and for students. Tuning focuses on what competences students are to achieve; it shifts the paradigm from teaching to learning. It involves consultation with employers and alumni who hold degrees in the particular field. Disciplinary faculty members from multiple institutions come to a shared understanding of what is important across the subject area; e.g., faculty members in history come to agreement on what students should know, understand and be able to do if they receive a bachelor's degree in history. The process ensures that quality is agreed upon and aligned with each degree level. The process builds trust among academics, and it is gaining traction. In the US, Lumina has sponsored Tuning projects in three states—Utah, Minnesota, and Indiana. Each chose 2-3 disciplines. This work has the potential for establishing what our students should know and be able to do within their major fields of study—the first step toward knowing whether the learning our students acquire is good enough to warrant a degree.

Work on the Tuning Project quickly exposes the fact that there is more to a degree than the work in the major. Once faculty recognized that Tuning within their fields was not enough, then the focus shifted to learning that is more generic to the degree itself--learning that is not specific to the discipline. As a result the European Qualifications Framework was developed and endorsed by the European Union. Frameworks are being actively developed in many APEC economies as well. Qualifications Frameworks define what learning outcomes apply to all students who receive the degree. For the US this would be the first time that a definition of a degree goes beyond the total of credit hours awarded, or the general notion of three parts to a degree -- general education, the major and electives. The European Qualifications Framework is intended to serve as a translation device to make national qualifications more readable across Europe, promoting workers' and learners' mobility between countries, and facilitating their lifelong learning no matter which country is home.

In the US, we are just beginning to examine the potential for a Degree Qualifications (DQ) Framework to ensure the quality of degrees across institutions and across states. Lumina sponsored the development of a DQ Profile (DQP) geared to US degrees. There should be a copy of the DQP on the table for each of you.

The US does not have the European challenge of mobility across nations with distinct languages and cultures, but the US has a strong tradition of independence and autonomy at the institutional level. Institutions are not inclined to adopt an externally derived framework for their degrees. Thus, our approach in the US will be to engage multiple campuses on a voluntary basis in reviewing, adapting and endorsing a DQP for their use. The usefulness of an agreed upon set of student learning outcomes for every degree is huge—they could be used as a guide for developing new programs, they could be used for program review, they could be used to enable transfer, e.g., from the associate's degree to the bachelor's degree to the master's degree. But the underlying potential, and the real importance, is the capacity for the DQP to ensure the quality and rigor of the degrees that are awarded by each and every institution, at each level, and together with tuning, within every discipline.

This will be a mammoth undertaking, but one that has enormous pay-off for higher education in the US. There will be detractors; many of whom will argue that a DQP will undermine the autonomy of the system of higher education in the US. Autonomy or accountability—both are critical. As of now, it is the regional accreditors, WASC in particular, that are stepping up to the challenge of accountability. At WASC we are looking at the DQP and saying "This is the natural evolution of our processes. We have been measuring student learning outcomes and using the data to improve programs, but now it is time to look at those outcomes and ask "are they good enough?" Are the degrees awarded by the institution we accredit sufficient in quality and rigor?

Accreditation is expected to be a "reliable authority" in defining and evaluating institutional quality—and institutional quality must be measured, at least in part, by the quality and rigor of the degrees awarded. For US accreditation to remain vital and maintain credibility, we will need to establish external benchmarks, profiles, or frameworks by which we evaluate institutions. WASC is taking this charge very seriously. The DQP serves as one such framework. It provides a learning-centered profile against which WASC can evaluate current and new institutions and their degree programs to ensure the public that the degrees are of the highest quality.

It is evident that we are all concerned with a similar goal--the European nations, the Asia-Pacific economies, and the US—we want higher education to prepare our students for a future in which success in the global marketplace will demand highly skilled, innovative workers. Most importantly, we want quality education for our students so they are able to improve the quality of life for themselves, their families, and their communities. We will all continue to work toward this goal, I am sure, and it is evident that we have much to learn from each other.

Thank you.

Quality Assurance and Qualification Recognition of Higher Education in APEC: Status and Comparison

Molly N.N. **Lee**

UNESCO Bangkok

Introduction

The context of higher education in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) region is changing rapidly due to demographic changes, technological advancement, increased mobility, globalized economy and other factors. The article begins by examining some general trends and a number of key issues in higher education. Two key issues are the quality of higher education and the recognition of higher education qualifications. A major part of this paper is devoted to reviewing the status of quality assurance and qualification recognition in the APEC region, highlighting international variations as well as common practices among quality assurance agencies. The article ends with a section on UNESCO's roles in promoting quality assurance in higher education and facilitation of qualification recognition among member states.

Higher Education in APEC

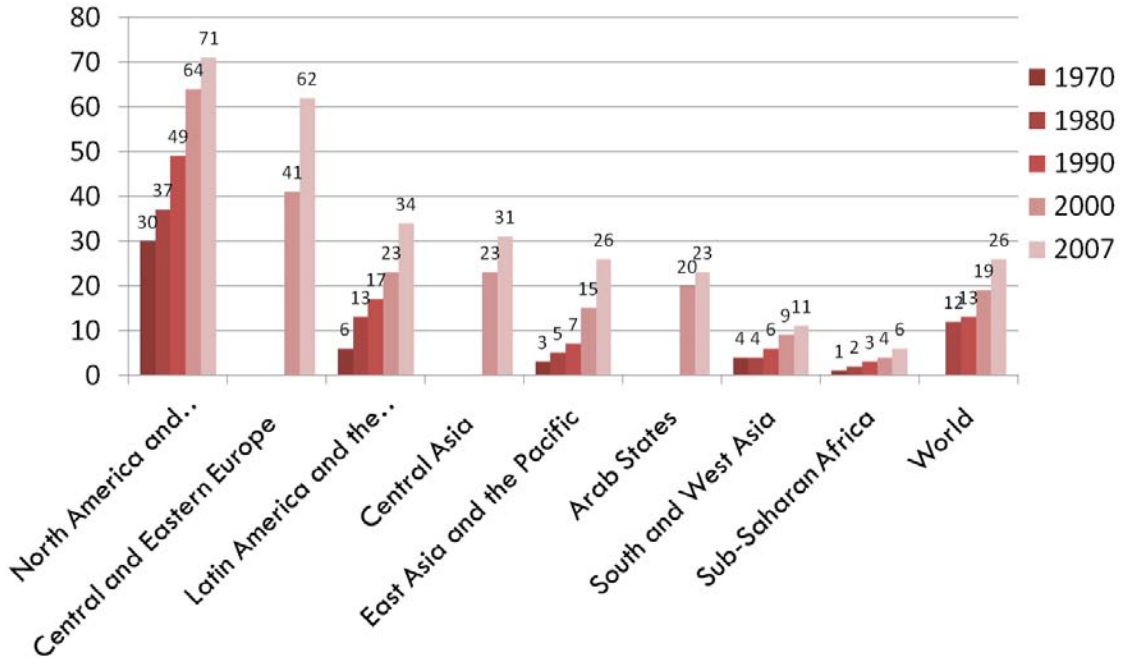
The UNESCO 2009 World Conference on Higher Education identified several trends in higher education including the massification, diversification and internationalization of higher education (Altbach, et al 2009). Globally, the gross enrollment ratio in tertiary education has increased from 19% in 2000 to 26% in 2007, with most significant gains in upper middle and upper income economies. There were about 150.6 million tertiary students globally in 2007, approximately a 53% increase over 2000. In 2007, North America and Western Europe have the highest participation rate of 71%, Latin America and the Caribbean have a participation rate of 34%, followed by East Asia and the Pacific with a participation rate of 26% (see Figure 1).

Higher education in the APEC region has undergone massive expansion due to ever increasing social demand partly brought about by population growth, the democratization of secondary education and the growing affluence of many economies in the region. However, the higher education systems in Japan and Korea are contracting due to decline in birth rates.

The massive expansion of higher education has brought about a differentiation of higher education institutions. There are different types of higher education institutions with different missions or purposes to cater for the different needs of the diverse groups of students. The different types of higher education institutions include the traditional universities, virtual universities, polytechnics, technical institutes, open learning institutes, and community colleges. There are also different types of providers such as

public and private provision, for-profit and non-for-profit providers. As higher education systems expand, there is an urgent need to seek alternative sources of funding. The multiple sources of funding include public, private, community, philanthropic, public and private partnerships. In recent years, many economies have privatized higher education, corporatized their public universities, implemented cost-recovery through tuition fees, developed off-shore programmes, set up foreign branch-campuses and recruited more foreign students, all of which are aimed at mobilizing resources for higher education.

Figure 1 Tertiary Gross Enrollment Ratio by Region, 1970 to 2007



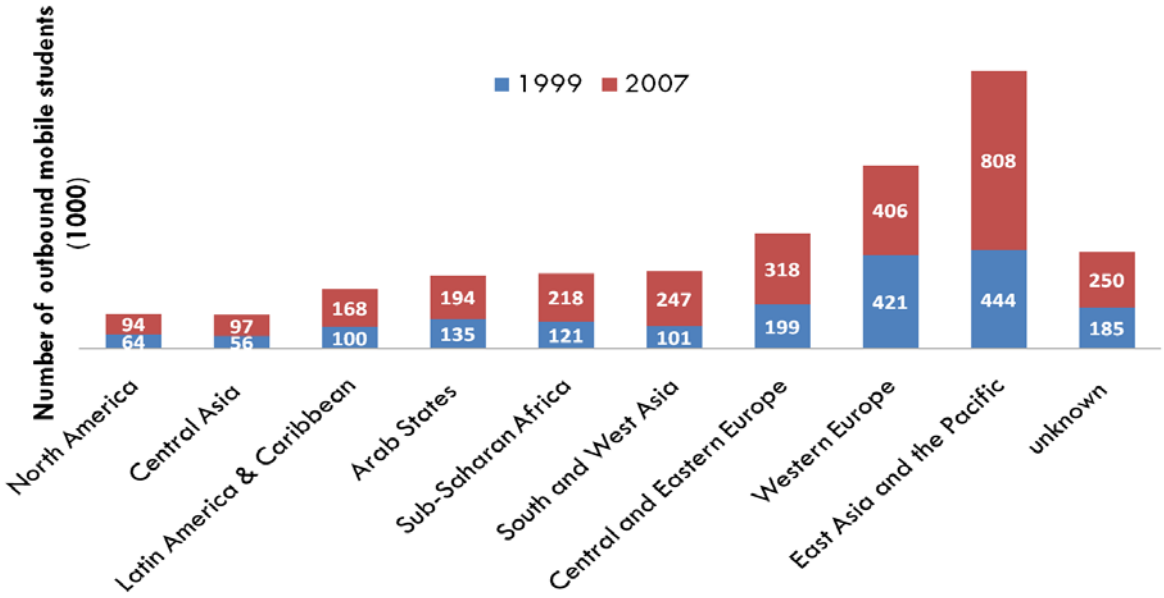
Source: UNESCO-UIS (2009), Global Education Digest 2009

The internationalization of higher education is another significant trend in the APEC region as reflected by the increased mobility of students, academic staff, education programmes and higher education providers across national borders. The driving forces for internationalization include greater demand for foreign education by students, families, and governments. In recent years, more emphasis has been placed on economic growth and income generating opportunities that are associated with cross-border higher education, leading to the fact that education is now one of the 12 service sectors in the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS). The number of importers and exporters of cross-border higher education in the APEC region has expanded rapidly in the past two decades.

UNESCO estimates that in 2007 there were more than 2.8 million internationally mobile students, an increase of about 53% over the estimated figure of 1.8 million in 2000 (UNESCO-UIS, 2009). The number of tertiary students studying abroad is by far the highest from the East Asia and the Pacific region (see Figure 2). The top destinations of

international students are: USA (21%), UK (13%), France (10%), Australia (8%), Germany (8%) and Japan (5%).

Figure 2 Number of Tertiary Students studying abroad in 1999 and 2007



Source: UNESCO-UIS (2009), Global Education Digest 2009

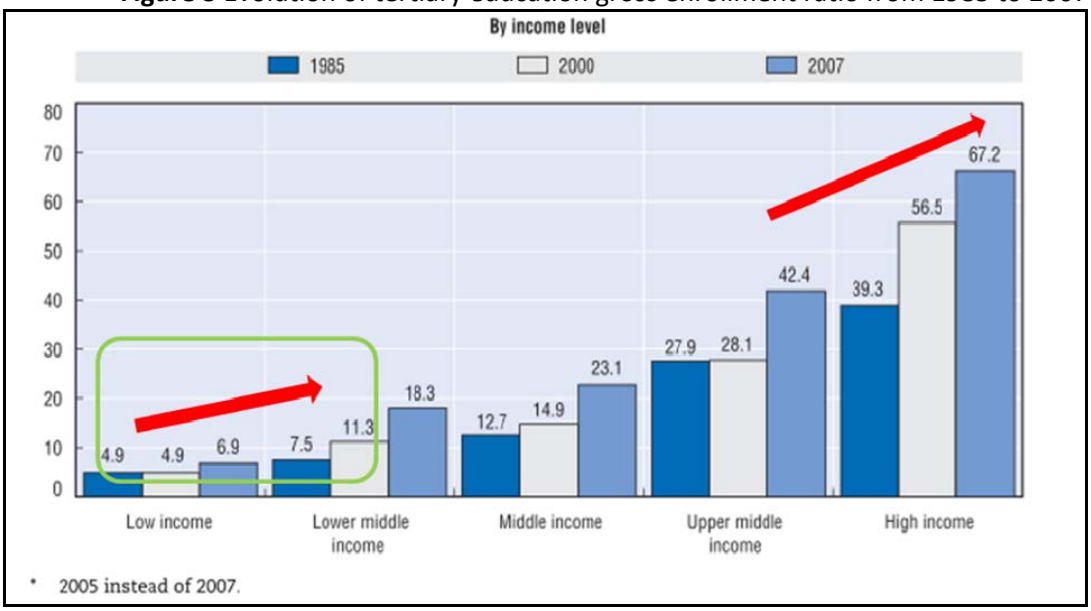
International mobility has not been limited to people but also includes the increasing numbers of programmes and institutions that are operating internationally. At the programme level, there are twinning and franchise arrangements which allow for partial mobility to more substantial mobility. Complete mobility is achieved when the parent institution establishes a branch campus in its own name in another economy. There is also the case of distance and e-learning where the programme can be delivered in another economy through the use of ICT.

The key issues relating to higher education in the APEC region would include access and equity in higher education, financing higher education, problems of quality and relevance, and changing governance structures and management practices (World Bank, 2002). Although much progress has been made in increasing the participation rate in tertiary education, poorer economies are likely to enroll fewer students than wealthier economies (see Figure 3). Inequalities in higher education participation are evident within most economies in terms of gender, ethnicities, regions, social class, religious groups and along other social disadvantages. The issue is that to what extent is the widening access to higher education accommodating a more diverse population? More importantly, to what extent can access to higher education ever be equal without corresponding policy to address the social conditions of the disadvantaged groups?

The relationship between higher education institutions and the state is largely dependent on the issue of autonomy and accountability. The state and higher education institutions are constantly engaged in the redefining of their mutual relationship, with the state demanding more accountability and the higher education institutions insisting on

more autonomy. Another significant trend in the APEC region is an increase in institutional autonomy in return for more accountability among the higher education institutions.

Figure 3 Evolution of tertiary education gross enrollment ratio from 1985 to 2007 (%)



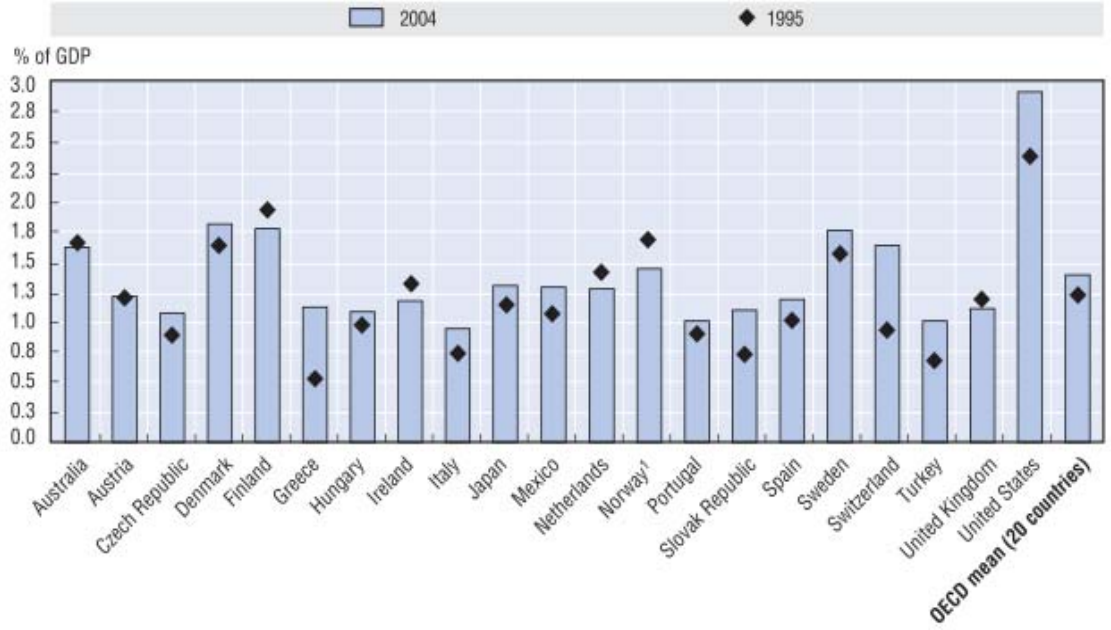
Source: OECD, 2009

A number of economies such as Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Japan have corporatized their public universities whereby universities are given more institutional autonomy in terms of financial and human resource management as well as developing their own educational programme and deciding on their student intakes. At the same time, the universities are increasingly subjected to external pressures to achieve greater accountability for their performances. For example, New Zealand funds for higher education institutions are dependent on the institution's performance and its contribution to national priorities.

As for the financing of higher education, there is reduced dependence on state funding and an increase in resource diversification. Figure 4 shows the change in total expenditure of higher education as a percentage of GDP in 1995 and 2004 in OECD economies (OECD, 2009).

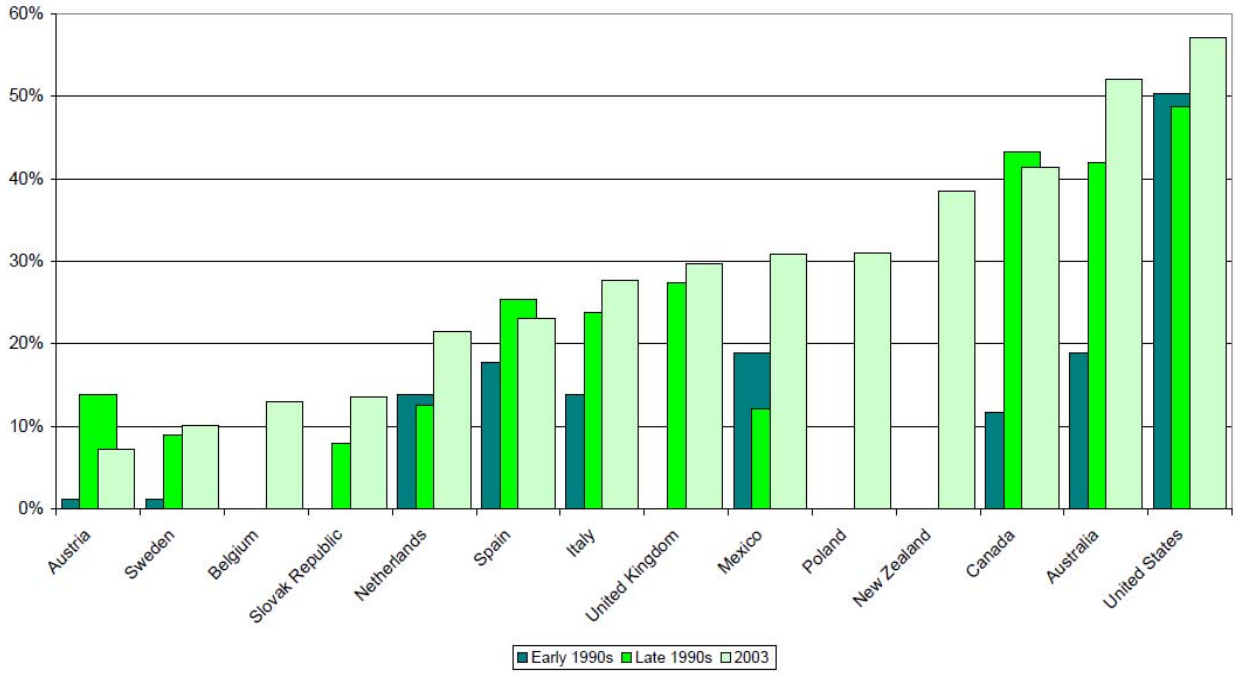
The lack of increase of state funding for higher education in this ten-year period is quite significant in Australia, Ireland, United Kingdom and several Scandinavian countries. Over the past decades, the share of private sources of funding of higher education institutions has increased in economies such as Canada, Australia and USA (see Figure 5).

Figure 4 Evolution of total expenditure on HE institutions as a % of GDP (1995 to 2004)



Source: OECD, 2009

Figure 5 Private expenditures to HE institutions (% from all expenditures to HE institutions)



Source: Kärkkäinen, 2006

Quality Assurance Practices

The massification, diversification and internationalization of higher education are bringing about many changes in higher education institutions in terms of redesigning the academic programmes, reviewing the procedures for recruitment and management of staff, reformulating policies on recruitment and support services for students, and restructuring university organization and management. All these institutional restructurings are aimed at improving the efficiency, productivity and accountability of higher educational institutions. Directly or indirectly they are also aimed at improving the quality of higher education.

The quality and relevance of higher education is a key concern in many economies. The concerns over quality have emerged against the background of massification in higher education where there are budget cuts on one hand and the expansion of higher education systems on the other. Many governments are demanding greater public accountability and transparency from higher education institutions with regard to their performance in the various university ranking tables. At the same time, key stakeholders such as businesses, professional bodies and employer organizations are losing confidence in the ability of higher education institutions to meet the needs of modern workplaces and labour markets in an increasingly competitive and changing economy. In addition, new modes of delivery of higher education have emerged with the advancement in information and communication technologies (ICTs) which makes it even more necessary to regulate the quality of such provisions.

However, the quality of higher education may mean different things to different stakeholders. Each group may have a different perspective and expectation on quality. Different stakeholders will have their own ideas as to what constitutes quality and how to measure it. It has been observed that the state will tend to favour performance indicators as a means of assessing quality; the academic community will tend to favour peer review, whereas a market-led higher education system will generate consumer oriented approaches to quality assessment. In general there is a shift away from peer review to both state-led performance indicators and market-led approaches.

A brief review of the literature shows that there are “five discrete but interrelated ways of thinking about quality” (Harvey and Green, 1993). Quality can be viewed as exceptional, as perfection, as fitness for purpose, as value for money and as transormative. The exceptional notion of quality is the traditional view of quality which is associated with distinctiveness and excellence such as Oxford, Cambridge and Harvard. The notion of quality as perfection is the strife for “zero defects” and “getting things right the first time”. Fitness for purpose relates quality to the purpose of a product or service. This notion implies that universities can determine their definitions of quality, and the quality assurance system is to ensure that a university achieves its mission and objectives. Quality as value for money sees quality in terms of return of investment. The transformative view of quality sees quality in terms of qualitative change. A quality education is one that develops and empowers students by enhancing their knowledge, abilities and skills as well as enabling them to take charge of their own development.

Not only are there different notions of quality of higher education, there are also international variations on how quality assurance mechanisms are set up in different national contexts (Kis, 2005). As mentioned earlier, the interpretation of the concept of quality itself can vary in different contexts. The purpose and functions of quality assurance mechanisms may differ depending on whether they are playing internal functions or external functions. Internal quality assurance mechanisms are usually aimed at improving the quality of educational programmes and services within the higher education institutions. On the other hand, external quality assurance agencies can play a variety of functions such as accreditating programmes, auditing institutions for the purposes of funding, recognition, accountability and transparency. In many higher education systems, both internal quality assurance mechanisms and external quality assurance agencies are put in place to ensure the continual improvement and accountability of the systems. A number of methods are used for quality review, which include self-review, peer-review, and external review. Some of the quality assurance agencies are established by governments such as the Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA) in Malaysia, Office of National Educational Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) in Thailand, and National Accreditation Board for Higher Education (BAN) in Indonesia. Other agencies are established and owned (or supported) by the higher education institutions themselves such as those in the United States and the Philippines. Some of these agencies are publicly funded while others are self-supported. A number of agencies were established with initial funding from the government and have moved towards being self-supporting such as the Korean Council of University Education (KCUE) and the Hong Kong Council on Academic Accreditation (HKCAA). The nature of participation by higher education institutions can either be voluntary as in the United States, Philippines, and Malaysia or compulsory as in Thailand and Hong Kong (at the sub-degree level). The focus of the evaluation can be on research only, teaching and learning only, or on both. The review can be on the educational programmes as practiced in Malaysia and Indonesia or on the educational institutions as in Thailand, Australia and Philippines. The final report can be confidential or made public, or include ratings as in India and Philippines.

Despite all these variations, it is possible to identify some similarities among the different quality assurance agencies. A common practice is the three stage peer-review approach which involves self-evaluation, site visit, and report. Usually, the institution that undergoes the quality assurance process provides relevant information to the agency through a self-assessment report. This is followed by a site visit of an external review team that results in a report about the quality of the institution (UNESCO, 2010). The criteria employed in external evaluations include input- and process-characteristics as well as learning outcomes. The review process usually includes an examination of: curriculum quality, human resources, budget resources, quality of students and faculty, teaching quality (e.g. peer evaluation of teaching quality, student evaluations of teaching quality), efficiency criteria (e.g. pass through rate, first year failure rates) and output criteria (e.g. quality of graduates, employment data, research output, service output and contributions) (Hayward, 2006). The three main approaches to quality assurance are accreditation, assessment, and audit (Kis, 2005). Accreditation is an

evaluation of whether an institution or programme meets a threshold standard and qualifies for a certain status such as permission to operate or whether its students are eligible for grants. The focus of accreditation is comprehensive, examining the mission, resources, and procedures of higher education institutions or programmes. The output of an accreditation is usually a yes or no decision. Programme accreditation is commonly practiced in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Hong Kong. Assessment is an evaluation that makes graded judgment about quality. Assessment asks "how good are your outputs?" The output of an assessment is a quantitative evaluation which is usually a grade as in India or a band as in the Philippines. A quality audit checks the extent to which the institution is achieving its own explicit or implicit objectives. Academic audits are carried out at the institutional level and these audits focus on processes implemented by the higher education institutions in order to assure and improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Another common practice is to develop national qualification frameworks as found in Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, and Thailand. A national qualifications framework sets out the levels against which a qualification can be recognized in a particular economy. It helps learners make informed decisions about the qualifications they want to pursue, by comparing the levels of different qualifications and identifying different progression routes. The accreditation of qualifications ensures they are of high quality, and that they meet the needs of learners and employers.

Nowadays where there is increasing mobility of students, academic programmes, and labour force across national borders, the issues of qualification recognition is very pertinent. However, there is a close link between recognition of qualifications and quality assurance and accreditation. In the field of recognition of qualifications, it is becoming increasingly difficult to determine exactly what the value of a foreign qualification is. This is because of the diversity of programmes, qualifications, delivery modes, and the proliferation of non-formal learning. Assessing the value of a qualification has become more complicated and yet at the same time, evaluators, employers, professional bodies and other stakeholders have become very interested in determining the quality of an institution, programme or qualification. Therefore, recognition and credential evaluation agencies increasingly appeal to quality assurance agencies to inform them of the quality status of an institution or programme. Thus, there is a need for international cooperation and information sharing.

UNESCO's Roles in Quality Assurance and Qualification Recognition

UNESCO as an inter-governmental organization has played an active role in facilitating international cooperation and information sharing in the areas of quality assurance and qualification recognition. UNESCO has several normative instruments which are directly related to quality assurance and qualification recognition, namely:

- UNESCO Regional Conventions on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education;
- UNESCO Portal of Recognized Higher Education Institutions;

- UNESCO-OECD Guidelines for Quality Provision of Cross Border Higher Education;
- UNESCO-APQN Toolkit on Regulating Cross Border Higher Education.

The first two normative instruments deal with qualification recognition and the other two instruments deal with quality assurance of cross border higher education.

UNESCO Regional Conventions

UNESCO has five regional conventions on the recognition of higher education qualifications, one for each of the following regions: Latin America and the Caribbean, Arab States, Europe, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, as well as an inter-regional convention for the Arab and European States bordering the Mediterranean. The 1979 Regional Convention for Europe has been revised in 1997 and now it is commonly known as the Lisbon Convention. Currently, the 1981 Regional Convention for Africa and the 1983 Regional Convention for Asia and the Pacific are undergoing revision which should be ready in the next couple of years. The main objectives of these regional conventions are to promote international cooperation in higher education and to reduce obstacles to mobility of students and teachers through mutual recognition of degrees and qualifications. Twenty-one economies[1] have ratified the 1983 Regional Convention for Asia and the Pacific. Economies such as Australia, Russia, Turkey and Kazakhstan have ratified both the Asia-Pacific Convention and Lisbon Convention. The key ideas embedded in these regional conventions include fair recognition of qualifications, developing supporting instruments, guidelines, good practices and recommendations, and facilitating information sharing as well as networking at the expert level. Under the principles of these conventions, applicants have the right to fair assessment of their qualification by a competent authority and recognition is granted if no substantial differences can be demonstrated. If recognition is not granted, then the competent authority has to identify the substantial differences between the applicant's qualification and that of the host economy, and the applicant has the right to appeal.

UNESCO Higher Education Portal

To facilitate information sharing, UNESCO has developed a web portal on recognized higher education institutions. About forty economies are participating in the web portal and among them eleven economies are from the APEC region. For each of these economies, there is a list of higher education institutions and programmes recognized by the national competent authorities, information for students planning to study in the economy, information on the higher education system, foreign credential assessment and recognition, information on financial assistance opportunities, cross-border higher education, national information centre, other information sources and definition of key terms. UNESCO is inviting more economies to participate in the web portal so as to provide relevant information, especially to students and recognition bodies.

[1] The twenty-one countries are China, Australia, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Republic of Korea, Nepal, Maldives, Russian Federation, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Holy See, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, India, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Philippines, and Indonesia.

UNESCO-OECD Guidelines

The UNESCO-OECD Guidelines is an international educational response to the challenges and opportunities posed by the globalization of higher education. The Guidelines are aimed at the provision of good quality cross-border higher education. The principles advocated by the Guidelines include mutual trust and respect between sending and receiving economies, recognition of national authority and of the diversity of higher education systems, recognition of the importance of international collaboration and exchange, and access to transparent and reliable information. The Guidelines consist of recommendations to six groups of stakeholders, namely, government, higher education institutions, student organizations, quality assurance agencies, recognition bodies and professional bodies.

UNESCO-APQN Toolkit

The main purpose of the UNESCO-APQN Toolkit is to provide a reference tool to assist governments and other relevant parties in the establishment and ongoing development of regulatory and quality assurance frameworks for cross-border higher education. The Toolkit highlights important issues and considerations of cross border higher education, different models of regulatory frameworks, the practical steps in setting up a regulatory framework as well as problems and pitfalls drawn from the experience of some systems to date. The Toolkit analyzes the problems related to the quality of cross-border higher education. At the macro-level, there may be inadequacy of quality assurance systems at the national level to control or monitor the quality of cross border higher education as well as the inadequacy of information sources for students and consumers. At the institutional level, institutions may underestimate the complexity of issues involved with cross-border higher education. They may not have adequate institutional quality assurance mechanisms and they may have difficulty in obtaining local resources of appropriate quality. These factors can lead to specific problems arising in course delivery, content and structure. There are also financial issues which can include default of fees or cessation of programmes due to financial difficulty of providers or even complete provider collapse. The Toolkit proposes several types of regulatory frameworks drawing from existing examples and practices in various economies.

Concluding remarks

Higher education in the APEC region is very dynamic and competitive. The new dynamics in higher education which was the theme of the UNESCO 2009 World Conference on Higher Education include issues such as the quantity and quality dilemma in the provision of higher education; higher education being viewed as a public good or private commodity; the tension between world ranking and meeting local needs; the balance between competition and cooperation among higher education institutions; the trade-off between institutional autonomy and public accountability; the benefits and risks of internationalization of higher education; and the issues of qualification recognition and quality assurance of higher education.

References

Altbach, P. G., Reisberg, L., & Rumbley, L. E. (2009). *Trends in Global Higher Education: Tracking an Academic Revolution*. Paris: UNESCO.

Harvey, L. & Green, D. (1993). Defining Quality. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, *18* (1), 9-34.

Hayward, F. M. (2006, June). *Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education in Africa*. Paper presented at Conference on Higher Education Reform in Francophone Africa: Understanding the Keys of Success, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. Retrieved August 28, 2011, from http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1121703274255/1439264-1137083592502/QA_accreditation_HE_Africa.pdf

Kärkkäinen, K. (2006). *Emergence of Private Higher Education Funding within OECD Area*. Retrieved August 28, 2011, from http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/19/20/38621229.pdf

Kis, V. (2005). *Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education: Current Practices in OECD Countries and a Literature Review on Potential Effects.* Retrieved August 28, 2011, from http://www.oecd.org/edu/tertiary/review

Materu, P. (2007). Higher Education Quality Assurance in Sub-Saharan Africa: Status, Challenges, Opportunities and Promising Practices. *World Bank Working Paper No. 124*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.

OECD. (2009). *Higher Education to 2030, Volume 2: Globalization*. France: OECD Publishing. Retrieved September 1, 2011, from http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/communia2010/sites/communia2010/images/OECD_2009_Higher_Education_to_2030_Volume_2_Globalisation.pdf

UNESCO. (1983). *Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific 1983*. Retrieved September 1, 2011, from http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13523&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

UNESCO. (2005). *UNESCO-OECD Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education.* Retrieved September 1, 2011, from http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=29228&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

UNESCO. (2006). *UNESCO-APQN Toolkit: Regulating the Quality of Cross-border Education.* Bangkok: UNESCO Bangkok. Retrieved September 1, 2011, from http://www2.unescobkk.org/elib/publications/087/APQN_Toolkit.pdf

UNESCO. (2011). *UNESCO Portal to Recognized Higher Education Institutions*. Retrieved September 1, 2011, from http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/resources/unesco-portal-to-recognized-higher-education-institutions/

UNESCO-UIS. (2009). *Global Education Digest 2009: Comparing Education Statistics Across the World.* Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Retrieved September 1, 2011, from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001832/183249e.pdf

UNESCO-UIS. (2009). *Education Statistics*. Retrieved August 28, 2011, from http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/ReportFolders/ReportFolders.aspx?IF_ActivePath=P,50&IF_Language=eng

UNESCO (2010) *A Comparative Study of External Quality Assurance Systems in Europe, U.S. and Asia Pacific*. Hanoi: UNESCO.

Van Damme, D. (2002, May). *Trends and Models in International Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education in Relation to Trade in Education Services*. Paper presented at the OECD/US Forum on Trade in Educational Services, Washington, D.C. USA. Retrieved September 1, 2011, from http://www.unizg.hr/fileadmin/upravljanjekvalitetom/pdf/docsmjernice/oecd_trends_and_models.pdf

World Bank. (2002). *Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank. Retrieved September 1, 2011, from http://siteresources.worldbank.org/TERTIARYEDUCATION/Resources/Documents/Constructing-Knowledge-Societies/ConstructingKnowledgeSocieties.pdf

Quality Assurance of Cross-Border Higher Education in China: International Perspectives, National Policies, and Institutional Practices

Zhou Nanzhao

East China Normal University
Shanghai, China

It is a pleasure to speak to you this morning and contribute to the APEC Conference on Quality in Higher Education. In the time I have I would like to comment briefly on some features of cross border education as it relates specifically to China. This is a rapidly emerging field and one that will become increasingly important as time goes by.

I would first like to note that cross border education takes place in an international context that is quite complex. There are issues that relate to the very nature of higher education (HE) including such areas as whether HE is a public good or a service trade. Some of the features that define the context of quality in HE have to do with the rapid expansion of HE in response to growing demand. The APEC region has one of the highest rates of expansion and China particularly has grown dramatically in terms of enrollment from 9% to 23% in the years from 1998-2000. There has also been an increase in private provision currently standing at 22% in China.

Quality assurance is also affected by a number of "movements" such as globalization, internationalization, distance education, cross-border education (CBHE), and the expansion of teacher education. QA is linked to access, availability, affordability, and the use of new technologies. In response to all of this activity a number of international frameworks of QA have emerged: the international and regional convention for mutual recognition of academic degrees, diplomas, and studies, UNESCO/ECCO guidelines on quality provision in HE; and the UNESCO/APQN toolkit for cross border education, among others. It is in this complex of activity that the Chinese HE system has been and is evolving, and developing its own unique QA protocols.

Let me now turn to our general national policies on QA. The context of China's national HE system consists of a stratified and diversified system, with three layers at the national, provincial and municipal levels, each with a specific form of QA. But in a general sense, recent QA policies have focused on the overall improvement of quality as a core task for HE reform and development. Two specific goals have to do with the relationship of quality with equity, and a meritocratic system. A new emphasis has been placed on the quality of teaching, and upgrading research for knowledge creation and technological innovation. Progress has been made in defining QA policy for expansion of HE in workforce development, for professional degree programs, and continuation of support for "211/985" projects, as well as the quest for "world class university" status, implementing performance based assessment, and engaging in joint research projects with top universities worldwide. This latter activity includes university-industry

partnerships, HE-enterprise cooperation, and improving services to community development. These policies provide some of the general context for China's QA efforts for cross border education (CBHE).

Prior to discussing China's CBHE QA activities, it is important to briefly outline some pilot practices that preceded our current programs. In line with the "211" project involving 110 universities, and the "985" project involving 39 universities, efforts were made to do a pilot study of undergraduate teaching quality and teaching reform. The focus here was largely on setting standards, restructuring programs, curriculum development, faculty professional development and student competencies. Increase in HEI's autonomy was a prerequisite for these QA efforts. One of the most visible of the pilot studies was the "Outstanding Engineers Education Project" because of its strategic importance and the scale of engineering education (90% of all undergraduate HEIs have engineering programs). The goal of this pilot project was to increase the quality of these programs through developing university-industry partnerships, and inter-sectoral and university-occupational collaboration. The overall goal was to develop a set of international standards for engineers to assure accreditation by American-European QA systems. The lead in these efforts was taken by Qinghua, Beijing, and Beijing-Jiaotong universities. Study abroad was promoted so students would get the best international HE experiences in the engineering field.

All of this context and background leads now to a discussion of CNHE as an important international dimension of QA. Study abroad is a major driving force of CBHE in China with close to two million Chinese students going abroad in the period 1978-2010. In 2010 alone about 300,000 participated in study abroad. Close to that number were international students who studied in China. The impact on Chinese HE has been significant with study abroad students comprising the backbone of China's university faculty, and over 85% of China's university presidents having participated in study abroad.

Some forces and factors that influence CBHE in China are:

- Policy issues: China's participation in WTO-GATS (World Trade Organization and General Agreement on Trade in Services)
- Market issues: over 90% of out-flow of Chinese students is self-financed, leading to an increased number of applications for recognition of degrees and diplomas
- Increase in distance education and issue of QA for open course ware
- Local governments developing China-foreign joint/branch campuses
- CBHE offering opportunities for institutional capacity building for QA

All of this activity has led to efforts by the Chinese government to develop a national regulatory framework for the recognition of quality assured degrees from foreign economies.

In order to provide a flavor of how these policies work in practice let me discuss some institutional cases of QA in CBHE. In 2004, the University of Nottingham-Ningbo (UN) was founded as the first China-foreign university in China. The general goal was to provide Chinese students with an affordable, high quality international education without the major expenses of studying abroad. All undergraduate and postgraduate programs

are conducted entirely in English with the same teaching and evaluation standards as at UN. Internationalization is at the heart of the development of the university, with a teaching staff from twelve different economies and 400 full time exchange international students from over thirty economies.

A second example is the Xijiao-Liverpool University in Suzhou China. Founded in 2006, this university focuses on science, engineering, and management. The priority is to produce first-rate research and in the 2010 rankings in China, the faculty, who are recruited globally, were ranked 12th in terms of their quality. This venture also provides a supportive environment for university-industry partnerships and collaborates with businesses that are part of the Suzhou Industrial Park. The university works harmoniously with the Chinese and British governments and has been granted a high degree of autonomy with a board of directors having major authority over decision-making. Quality assurance relies heavily on an internal QA set of procedures. Finally, a major goal of this venture is to promote innovative thinking and research.

A third case is that of the China-Europe International Business School of Shanghai. Founded in 1994, this institution was a joint venture with the EU and the Chinese government with the goal to train high level, innovative managers that are internationally mobile. Faculty members are recruited from both China and the EU and shift regularly so that students gain a high level of exposure to the very best faculty. The MBA program has gained international attention and is highly ranked. Once again, efforts have been made to assure that there is high quality in all programs and among the faculty. It is the only business school in Asia ranked among the world's top 25 in terms of recognition of MBA, EMBA, and the training of high level managers.

The fourth case I want to talk about is the relationship between East China Normal University and New York University, called the Shanghai New York University. NYU of course is a high ranked US private university, ranked globally 33rd, with the number one rank in mathematics, and number two in finance. NYU can boast of thirty-three Nobel Prize winners. Shanghai NYU is meant to be a non-profit, "high quality" China-joint venture university, with faculty and students recruited worldwide. This is an example of importation of quality by linking up with a first rate institution, expanding areas of up-graded collaboration, and building capacity in specific areas to focus the impact that would be gained. There are many other such ventures in China at this time including a number of South-South partnerships (China 20-Africa 20, advanced human resource development (HRD) training for Vietnam and other SE Asian economies and so on), an overall increase in the number and quality of international students, joint research and teaching institutional relationships, among others. In all of these CBHE cases much is being learned about the varieties and complexity of QA methods, reinforcing the idea that "no one size fits all".

Let me conclude with some final observations. It is clear that while we must all pay policy attention to QA in CBHE, it must be in the context of the close linkage to issues of access, availability and affordability. There is also a complex relationship between the quality of individual institutions and those of diversified systems. Capacity building is key

to developing a national qualifications framework and a QA system relevant to specific national settings.

With respect to the area of learning outcomes, it is important for QA stakeholders to focus on standards that are relevant for 21st century core skills, going beyond math, science, language, and information and computer technologies (ICTs) to include entrepreneurship, creativity, employability, adaptability and team work. Let there be standards but not standardization. QA should be a shared responsibility for all stakeholders as we create a culture of quality assurance among policy makers. CBHE must be placed in the larger context of policy formation within the complex web of relationships that extend beyond the nation-state. There certainly need to be more seminars of this type, with joint efforts between UNESCO, APEC, the East West Center and other interested bodies that will illustrate the complexity of the QA process. There is an urgent need for institutions of this type to come together to develop a regional approach to QA, institutional frameworks, and database capacity to fill in the very large information gap that currently exists.

Let me take this opportunity thank our organizers here for preparing a first-rate, high quality seminar that will begin to take us in this direction.

Thank You.

Conference Summary and Reflections

Ralph A. **Wolff**

President and Executive Director
Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)
United States

Over the course of this conference, nineteen presentations were organized into four clusters:

1. What is quality and what is quality assurance? (5 presentations)

2. University rankings (3 presentations)

3. Exemplars from regions and economies

4. The globally competitive university (5 presentations)

Remarkably, each of these presentations complemented the others and contributed to an extraordinary overview of each of the four areas across the APEC region. While there were many common issues, the approaches and stage of development of each economy in addressing them was quite diverse. Thus, as described further below, differences were as much related to an economy's stage of development of its higher education system as to culture and geography. What was remarkable throughout the conference was the openness and willingness of representatives to share and learn from one another based on their experiences and interactions. The exposition of issues and challenges raised in each of the four areas warrant further research and dialogue so the APEC economies can learn how to build quality within institutions and quality assurance systems across institutions to serve the needs of citizens and prepare them for the 21st Century.

What was common across all economies was the fundamental understanding that economic growth and development in each economy is highly dependent on a globally competitive higher education system, and that the jobs of the future across the entire APEC region will increasingly require a workforce and citizenry with higher order capacities and skills. In addition, common across all economies was the view that increasing the research capacity of the higher education system would drive economic growth and increased well being. These core principles were the underpinning for each presentation.

1. What is quality and what is quality assurance?

Quality takes many forms and definitions across the APEC region. It can represent access – the ability of the higher education system to serve increasing numbers of students to meet and even increase demand. It can also mean the development of

infrastructure within institutions to support teaching and learning, research, community service, outreach and many other functions. For emerging economies, quality initially tends to be defined as increasing systemwide capacity to serve increasing numbers of students desiring higher education. In more developed economies, strategic planning and allocation of resources tend to emphasize the development of needed capacities across the higher education system. Strategic investments are often made to promote such specific areas as scientific research, innovation and entrepreneurship. The goal of such strategic priorities is not only to increase economic development within each economy, but also to develop regional or global areas of distinctiveness in the increasing “arms race” of national higher education systems reputations.

As higher education systems throughout the APEC region have grown in size and complexity, assuring quality has become an increasingly important need. Quality assurance systems are designed to assure at least a minimum level of quality at either the program or institutional level (or both) across all institutions in the higher education system. Quality assurance has become increasingly important as economies compete with one another and graduates need to be competitive within each economy and across national boundaries. Nearly all economies within APEC now have developed quality assurance systems applying a wide range of methods. There are those that undertake reviews only of programs, others that focus only on the institution as a whole, and a few that undertake both. Some are at early stages of development, and others are more mature and multidimensional.

Even with this range of difference many common elements exist. For example, in virtually all cases the evaluation of quality that takes place does so in relation to a defined set of standards. While systems again differ in how such standards are created, they usually involve some balance between internal institutional standards to which all units are meant to measure their performance on a continuous basis and external standards (for both programs and institutions) which tend to be derived from various comparative sources. Overall, this intention to measure against external standards is meant to encourage institutions and programs to “look beyond themselves” for standards of quality to which they might aspire and be measured.

An emphasis on peer review at both the program and institutional levels is common throughout the APEC region, as are efforts to account for the values and inputs of external stakeholders. Reviews tend to start with questions about capacity: what is an institution or program *capable* of doing given the resources that it possesses or that are available to it? This first stage of quality reviews is essential and fundamental to all subsequent models of QA as they build on this framework. Common elements of capacity reviews include inventories and assessments of faculty quality, the nature and extent of internal systems, management structures and their operation, and patterns of program review. The presence or absence of these elements tells one much about the extent to which QA work has proceeded. The next stage, or level, of quality assurance and assessment tends of focus on program and institutional outcomes, including learning outcomes, placement of graduates, and relative success in efforts to achieve external accreditation.

Virtually all such systems of quality assurance are based within expectations of public accountability. Indeed, in the significant majority of cases among APEC economies, QA efforts have been government initiated and are framed by expectations that through a transparency of reviews, the public interest will be served, while simultaneously stimulating institutions and programs to pursue and improve quality through such transparency.

Finally, in cataloguing these elements common to QA we can note an increasing trend to extend the frame of evaluation and assessment beyond the traditional core of elements that comprise the teaching and learning aspects of higher education institutions (HEIs). These include the development of segmented reviews, focused on other aspects of the institution, such as management or research, or the separation of individual elements of institutional performance and their scoring on some system that moves in the direction of providing cumulative results.

2. University Rankings

While three presentations of this meeting focused directly on the subject of rankings, many other papers raised issues associated with ranking efforts or discussed the impacts that ranking "behavior" is having on other aspects of the QA process, and the role that they are coming to have in national higher education policy in many economies.

From their very early efforts within some national systems, rankings have "come into their own" as it were over the past decade, led largely by the efforts of Shanghai Jiao Tong University rankings of World Universities (Academic Ranking of World Universities-ARWU) and those of the Times Literary Supplement. Currently over ten such systems of rankings tend to be included within the common expression "university rankings," which as a totality of effort have shifted a good deal of focus on efforts to position universities within global and/or regional contexts.

Much of the discussion about rankings deals with their relative subjectivity. Some are based on interviews or surveys, the so-called "reputational" rankings. The shortcoming of these is the inability of the ranking entity to control or effectively assess the relative value of the incoming data. The ARWU has received much attention in this regard as it seeks to construct its rankings based on "non-reactive data" such as the presence of an institution's faculty in various publications, or publication indexes. Such data have been underscored for their relative reliability and transparency. Perhaps the source of greatest controversy has been the weighted scoring given to Nobel Laureates in the rankings. Critics argue that undue weight is given these figures, that they have sometimes won their prize at institutions other than those of their current employment, and that the very nature of the Nobel fields of award imparts a narrow science-based bias to these rankings. This concern leads to a broader critique that while the rankings are heralded as those of world universities, they tend to significantly privilege science

and technology focused research universities to the implied deficit of other aspects that constitute a fuller understanding of a “university.”
Critiques of this feature of current university rankings have led to discussions about whether we might be better served by a different title for these rankings, such that the implied “totality” of university activities is not circumscribed by such a label. Alternatively, it has been suggested, and from this some efforts have been forthcoming, to engage other aspects of universities, especially those associated with teaching and learning.

A separate, but importantly related issue, is the competition that ensues from ranking activities. If the drive is to be “the best”, or if the direction that rankings impel universities toward is increased global competitiveness, is there room at the top? Can there be more than one # 1? Further, ranking universities in this manner implies—perhaps necessarily—some kind of structured spacing between such ranks, raising questions such as: how much better is # 1 than # 2….or # 5…or # 20. The compilers of such rankings are not insensitive to such conundrums (for example, once over rank # 50, universities tend to be bundled together in lots of 50 or 100 institutions. Thus, one can be in the top 50, second 50, etc. without a discrete rank. Other systems continue to let their aggregated numerical scores dictate all rankings).

These and other related issues raise the question that if such global competition is good, and if it is desirable that such competitions drive national higher education public policy, then should we aspire to a world in which all *good* universities are necessarily *research* universities? What might be the implications for how societies in general seek to educate their citizenries and workforces with resources available for higher education? And, if such competitions come to drive public policy (because of the national stakes involved), what do these competitions imply for notions of university autonomy—the ability of institutions to design higher education, to create and respond to innovation, and to meet distinctly national needs?

3. Exemplars from Regions and Economies

From the papers presented in this cluster one can see that a clear set of goals is held in common by economies throughout the region: providing access and effective capacity are critical both for economic development and to meet the broad needs of citizenries; institutions of higher education need to be of quality, responsive to societal needs, and capable of adapting to the changes being wrought by increasing global interdependence; and quality assurance needs to be effectively engaging all institutions of higher education with both transparency and accountability. Within this broad agreement over goals, however, one sees significant diversity of means and structures. Where quality assurance is concerned, many roads are perceived to lead to the commonly desired outcomes.

In virtually every economy of the region, in part significantly stimulated by the need to create greater access for expanding populations, the private sector has come to play a larger role within the higher education sector. Some economies with long traditions of

private sector involvement, e.g. Japan, Korea, the Philippines, United States, and Canada to mention just a few, have witnessed expansion in both size and type of HEIs, and in many cases significant shifts from private not-for-profit institutions to for-profit. In some cases, such as the private *minban*s of China, promoted as an access solution in its early higher education expansion period, regulation of such institutions have required entirely new approaches. Quality assurance has been viewed by multiple sectors in society as the appropriate vehicle for gauging and reviewing the performance of these novel, and in many cases transforming, private sector institutions.

It goes almost without saying that across the vast expansion in numbers of students and institutions that typify most of the APEC economies, the varied institutions that have come to make up this recently expanded higher education sector are themselves at very different stages of development, ranging from the newly-raw to the most sophisticated institutions in the sector. The task for quality assurance, therefore, has been daunting as it must simultaneously seek to set standards that will assure some measure of global competitiveness at one end of the continuum while also working with newly established and under-resourced institutions to appreciate their value and meet minimum standards. In truth, higher education quality assurance seeks to be a culture into which institutions enter for their own benefit, but also for that of the broader society as well.

Within the exemplars provided in this cluster are numerous examples of economies seeking to expand and enhance higher education quality by providing challenges to a number of institutions through a variety of incentive and targeted-objective programs to raise their quality in significant ways. Such programs exist in one way or another across many of the APEC economies, perhaps having their most notable instances in celebrated programs like the 985 and 211 programs of China, the Brain 21 project of Korea, and the Centers of Excellence Program of Japan. These more recent programs join other older programs wherein national governments have provided special resources for competing universities to fund research (across disciplines), to fund educational innovation, or to extend international programs. It is not too much to say that one of the critical policy objectives that underlies these efforts is to “lift” the quality of the whole higher education sector through the targeted funding and support of these endeavors.

Beyond such programs are numerous efforts to promote innovation within the higher education sector either through governmental subsidies, or through institutions’ own initiatives to explore new modalities of education, research, and service and to extend these throughout the sector. Examples of this include the creation of innovation centers (sometimes geographically distant from the historical concentrations of higher education quality institutions), twinning programs in which one set of institutions seeks to improve the quality of others through the use of shared faculty, curricula, and other resources, and national strategic planning efforts that specifically target investment to create or improve quality within a specified frame of activities.

4. The Globally Competitive University

The papers of this cluster focused in part on perceiving the globally competitive university through the lens of rankings—seeing this rubric as a label that comes to be adopted by those universities that set for themselves the specific task of rising within one or another set of rankings. Another emphasis, however, was on the realization that contemporary globalization, defined in large measure as increased global interdependence, is creating a class of universities that comes to perceive itself (or is perceived by others) within a kind of circuit of exchange in which such institutions compete for talent and resources, including faculty, administrators, students, post-docs, researchers, and ultimately—resources. Some economies and universities, the National University of Singapore would be a clear exemplar, are seeking to position themselves within the multiple "vertices" of these global exchange nodes and benefit from their strategic position therein.

For those institutions seeking to be so globally competitive a key set of attributes appears to be required that includes a viable strategic plan that clearly lays out directions to be taken and the resources required, long term commitment to the task and sufficient funding to support such an endeavor (often from public sources) and highly selected areas of excellence that become the focus of developing comparative value. Notification of the intention to gain such status or retain it often takes the form of assuring the presence of one or more Nobel Laureates on staff, or in affiliated status.

Within this body of discourse that is arising to frame and describe the globally competitive university and the practices that flow from it is an apparent increasing desire to create outcomes or learning outcomes that are themselves global. This can be viewed as a part of the many efforts that are emerging under the rubric of mutual recognition of qualifications for students. It can also be viewed as an early effort to identify and support criteria and practices that can be employed as meaningful currencies for exchange of qualifications and value within this global environment.

5. Key Points

The papers that comprise these four clusters and the keynote addresses that accompanied them have emphasized the following:

- Across the APEC region there is an increasing recognition of the role and importance of higher education for human and economic development. Seemingly, each stage of globalization through which these economies traverse implicates the world's economies within both their own and others' education agendas. However these dynamics play out (e.g. through the invention of international quality assurance), it seems clear that national development agendas need to recognize the critical role being played by higher education.
- However one views them (and critics and critiques abound) the ranking phenomenon is "here to stay" and has become an important component of how economies seek to build and maintain their national standing.

- QA systems with all their similarities and differences have become increasingly important to assure both institutional and system quality of higher education, and (seemingly) will be of similar importance to the making and implementation of public policy across a variety of content areas (e.g. economic, environmental, civic engagement, etc.)
- Across the globe and certainly within higher education (however conceived and realized) the rate of change is increasing. This is creating a need for new and ongoing forms of information and knowledge exchanges across a wide variety of content areas.

6. Roles for Quality Assurance Agencies

With the increasing relative importance of the higher education sector across economies has come an expanded role for Quality Assurance agencies. An increased awareness seems to have permeated many national higher educational systems that external assessment creates a useful and potentially powerful framework for institutional engagement, and a realization that there is power in defining criteria for improvement and then utilizing these to generate change at the institutional level. At the same time, QA systems in many places are moving to adapt to the realization that instruments of assessment must themselves be sufficiently differentiated to accommodate different stages of institutional and system development. While standards are essential to this process, so is the realization that "one size does not fit all" and for quality assessment to be of value to institutions and to create productive change, instruments of assessment and evaluation need to be sensitive to ranges of difference across HEIs.

What much of quality assurance activity seeks is the creation of a culture of quality—one that can be embraced and explored by institutions and that can cumulate in the ways that HEIs can contribute positively to both economic and social development. Such change, which tends to occur relatively slowly, requires significant commitment by institutions to affect it. To do so requires institutional leadership and commitment and the means for effective exchange between institutions (where the works goes on, as it were) and QA agencies. Whereas aspects of this process can be adversarial (in that most institutions are resistant at some level to external evaluation and assessment), for success to be achieved in the long run—for institutional change to take hold and proceed—requires some measure of cooperation with the spirit of quality improvement and achievement. This is especially true for promoting learning and a commitment to learning centeredness, which is unlikely to occur without institutional leadership and commitment. Nor is it likely to occur without significant faculty re-training and development, because without some combination of incentives and means, faculty are unlikely (especially in an institutional context of wide-spread part time employment and high teaching loads) to take steps to initiate or improve new modalities of learning centeredness.

This leads us to consider what we want the impact of impact of QA to be. The following figure indicates the various levels of application and dimensions that are at issue. Critical at the APEC regional or economic level is the creation of institutions and

practices that can promote and assure the sharing of information and practices, promote mobility, and move toward the difficult business of creating the conditions for mutual recognition. At the economy level, public policy, and by this is implied policy that applies to both public and private sector institutions, needs to promote the conditions that can lead to access and equity and meet national needs. At the system level where multiple institutions are bundled together, decisions must be made that can lead to a focus on raising quality where it is needed. At the institutional level a culture needs to be created that focuses efforts in realistic but achievable ways on improvement and an authentic concern for outcomes. At the program level, the aspirations for quality need to be translated into explicit demonstrations of how quality outcomes are achieved. And finally, at the faculty/course level explicit actions are required to improve teaching and to assure that the rapidly changing technologies of education can be available and productively used.

DIMENSIONS OF QUALITY ASSURANCE: What do we want the impact of QA to be?

Level	**Desired impact**
APEC Regional	Sharing, mobility, recognition
Economy	Access, equity, meet national needs
System	Raise quality where needed
Institution	Focus on improvement, outcomes
Program	Demonstrate quality outcomes
Faculty/Course	Improve teaching, use technology

7. The WASC Experience

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), of which I am honored to be the President and Executive Director, has sought to transform itself over the past decade or so into a learning-centered entity that also functions as a learning organization. WASC now defines itself as a capacity building agency with a regulatory role. WASC stands for: "**W**e **A**re **S**tudent and Student Learning **C**entered." In its accreditation activities WASC has developed evaluation rubrics that institutions have adopted and adapted to assist themselves in achieving a learning centered and learning outcome orientation. To assist in this process WASC offers assessment and program review workshops that have come to serve thousands of faculty and administrators throughout the region. More recently it has initiated a hybrid "Assessment Leadership

Academy," which is attended by faculty and administrative staff from any of the region's institutions.

In the midst of our transformation into a learning-centered entity we have been led to ask "what is the role of QA agencies and learning outcomes?" Barr and Tagg indicated in the mid-1990s the nature of the paradigm shift that was needed in higher education to achieve quality outcomes.

> "In its 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: "From Teaching to Learning," (1994).

In effect, this paradigm shift requires QA agencies to ask some difficult questions and engage in demanding processes of self-assessment. For example they need to ask of learning outcomes: who decides what they are and if they are current? In a higher education world increasingly characterized by constant change, these become central questions. Who determines how learning outcomes are to be evaluated? Are grades enough? (In the US, grade inflation is sufficiently common to dramatically affect the "meaning" of the grade other than at the most gross level of differentiation.) Does learning aggregate into a coherent set of skills, or is it just an accumulation of courses? In virtually all higher education institutions the forces of inertia alone whittle away at the presumptive rationality of curricula and cumulatively detract from their value. And, finally but critically, who determines what is "good enough" when seeking to assess quality?

A familiar expression has been applied to the US economy and higher education throughout its history, from Thomas Jefferson, though John Dewey, and most recently in the popular comment/critique of education, *Shift Happens.* It runs to the effect that "We are responsible for preparing our students to address problems we cannot foresee with knowledge that has not yet been developed using technology not yet invented." (Did You Know: Shift Happens, *www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljbI-363A2Q)* The wisdom of this observation is paralleled by the well-known remark of Albert Einstein that "The problems we have cannot be solved at the same level of thinking at which we created them." Both of these sentiments underscore the enormous challenge higher education faces in seeking to identify and prepare students with 21st Century skills, and they raise the critical question of what the role of QA agencies is in defining those skills.

A question one can hear being asked across the range of the APEC economies is whether we are preparing students for the jobs of the future. Just consider these disciplines that did not exist 10 years ago: bioengineering, neurobiology, computer game design, digital media, e-marketing, organic agriculture, and nanotechnology. That these disciplines now populate hosts of university curricula, recruit students, offer degrees, and seek to place graduates is an arresting fact. Or consider these job titles in 2020: personal bot mechanic, powered exoskeleton engineer, hydrogen station manager, and personal education coach. What higher education institutions help

students learn and how to assess the outcomes of these efforts is a daunting question, but one necessary to ask.

As part of our current handbook redesign project WASC has created a taskforce to explore the "changing ecology of learning." Its early work has focused on an increasingly complex range of new providers including for-profit institutions, education aggregators, outsourced instruction, and Do It Yourself (DIY) Learners. Varieties of new technologies continue to emerge, for example course management systems to employ adaptive software. New approaches to learning expand, almost weekly. Some of the better known include the MIT Open Courseware (a model that is being replicated by other universities, e.g. Yale), YouTube, and the Khan Academy. The Kahn Academy may be an exemplar of the kinds of dynamics present in this "educational market." Salman Kahn's channel views at the time of this writing had reached 3,959,888, and his total of upload views 35,547,067. Operating since November 2006, the Academy has 97,071 subscribers. Kahn describes his mission to: "Accelerate learning for students of all ages. With this in mind we want to share our content with whoever may find it useful." (http://www.khanacademy.org.)

8. Conclusion

Let me conclude by suggesting just a few of the implications of this conference for quality assurance, for learning, for ranking, and for some of our other subjects of mutual interest.

There is much here that requires a careful digesting. As we have said throughout the conference, we are situated within a kind of vector in which we are led to employ common terms, e.g. quality assurance, higher education, learning, learning outcomes, and above all *quality*, when in practice the referents to these terms differ significantly by economy, by culture, by experience. A first task for us therefore, is to digest the richness of these presentations, to sort them by subject, implication, need, and interpretation. Above all, we need to digest them in ways that seek to advance our common and related efforts.

On that score it is clear that this conference has provided us new journeys to undertake, diving deeper into many of the key areas we have explored such as learning outcomes, the varied and emerging roles of QA agencies, degree frameworks, and developing additional indicators for identifying and measuring institutional performance.

Above all, it would seem, we need to explore ways in all our varied settings to incentivize quality improvement, to enjoin and encourage our colleagues throughout higher education to assist in the search for and achievement of greater quality. From our many papers and presentations it is apparent that a clear and necessary feature of this endeavor will need to be a commitment to staff development for both QA and institutions. Perhaps the most evident, if frustrating, need for these kinds of commitments and investments is what for lack of a better term we can call "Futuring"—by which I mean in this particular instance identifying 21st Century learning skills and

assisting our learners to acquire them in order to become productive citizens in the world that we are collectively creating. Thank you.