



Centre for Educational Research and Innovation

The future of higher education: the stakeholders' perspective

OECD Seminar
Hosted by İisik University
Sile, Istanbul, Turkey

22-23 June 2006

Draft annotated agenda

This seminar will convene around 60 invited higher education stakeholders (government, local authorities, institutions, academics, students, business, civil society) from the OECD area to discuss their changing expectations about and roles in higher education. The seminar is organised in partnership with İisik University as part of the ongoing project of the OECD Centre for Educational Research and Innovation on the future of higher education. It will be the occasion for stakeholders to share their views and contribute to the foresight study. While it will include presentations on trends and recent policy reforms in different OECD countries, the seminar will leave much room to debates and exchanges of ideas, through plenary discussions and break-out sessions. The meeting will aim to provide a forum where stakeholders from the OECD area will:

- discuss recent trends in higher education, nationally and internationally;
- share their views on their possible impact(s) for the future;
- discuss their preferences for the future of higher education;
- envisage different possible and probable future scenarios;
- discuss how their preferred accessible scenarios could realistically be reached.

Wednesday 21 June

20.00: Welcoming cocktail

Thursday June 22, 2006: Trends: Where are we? Where are we going?

9.00-9.20: Introduction

- Tom Schuller, OECD
- Öktem Vardar, Isik University

9.20-11.00: Trends and scenarios

- Stéphan Vincent-Lancrin, OECD

Discussion

11.00-11.20: Coffee

11.20-13.00: What new (and old) needs will higher education have to deal with in the next two decades?

The discussion will be kicked off by short interviews of stakeholders (academics, student, university, business) on the following topic: what are the 3 most important issues that higher education will have to address (from your perspective) in the two coming decades that could generate a shift in its missions (or their relative importance compared to today)? The answer can build on the evolutions proposed in the scenarios.

Panel (interview): Student representative; Academic representative; University representative; Business representative

Discussion

13.00-14.15: Lunch

14.15-16.00: What approaches will ensure the quality and accessibility of higher education systems in the face of competing spending priorities?

This session will focus on the future funding, governance and quality issues of higher education. The expansion of tertiary education has been, and continues to be costly. It has intensified the debate on the sharing of funding between stakeholders and the modalities of its financing. Three models of financing and governance have emerged. There is a model with more private provision and funding such as in the United States. There is an adequately publicly financed model in the Nordic countries, where higher income tax claws back much of the benefit going to students. There is a third model largely publicly financed, but inadequately resourced to meet the costs of expansion. This is the case in many continental European countries. Under-funding and governance raise specific quality issues.

What approaches will ensure the quality and accessibility of higher education systems in the face of competing spending priorities? Assuming that these models exist, what are their main challenges and opportunities for the future? How could they evolve in the future? What would it change for tertiary education and its stakeholders?

- Üstün Ergüder (İstanbul Policy Center, Sabancı University, Turkey)
- William Thorn (Australia)
- Daniel Uribe Jorquera (Chile)

Discussion

16.00-16.20: Coffee

16.30-18.30: Differentiation and stratification of tertiary education

Transformations in the purpose and scope of higher education have taken place in recent decades. Public officials throughout OECD member nations have come to hold ambitious goals for higher education, viewing it both as a means to foster economic growth - through its capacity to create a highly skilled workforce and research that underpins a knowledge-based economy - and as a principal instrument for the fostering of social cohesion, widely dispersing the benefits of economic growth. Higher education has expanded in many OECD member nations to encompass half or more of all young adults. And it has simultaneously become much more diverse; in its providers, in its learners, in the range of skills and training it provides, and in connections to the commercial life of knowledge-based economies.

In response to this expansion of the scope and purposes of higher education, systems have become more differentiated, following a political will or not. Faced with the growing diversity of students and institutional missions, some governments have responded by creating newer more vocationally-oriented non-university institutions, assigning to them a leading role in the training of a skilled workforce, as with the Universities of Applied Sciences in Finland and Switzerland. Elsewhere - as in the United States and Japan - higher education systems are highly differentiated and policies have encouraged the development of competition among institutions that vary in mission, reputation, price, and ownership. A number of countries increasingly differentiate their system through the competitive allocation of research funding.

There is now an intense debate on the differentiation and stratification of tertiary education systems. The differentiation can take several forms: by educational level and by institutions; private and public; general and applied or vocational; research-intensive or teaching-only; etc.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of different types of differentiation within tertiary education systems? What could be desirable forms of differentiation to meet all the missions of tertiary education and be more responsive (and relevant) to individual and social needs?

- James Mc Kenney (American Association of Community Colleges, USA)
- Daniel Vitry (France)
- Anthony Mann (United Kingdom)

Discussion

20.00: Seminar Dinner

Friday June 23, 2006: Shaping the future: Where do we want to go? How to get there?

9.00-10.30: Breakout sessions

The participants will meet in 4 groups and do a scenario building exercise. The themes could be redefined in the light of the discussion of the first day. They reflect the themes that will be addressed in the coming OECD Ministerial meeting.

1. How should the cost of higher education be shared to improve quality in higher education?
2. How should systems diversify to better respond to (future) individual and social needs?
3. What kinds of systems would facilitate the production of the most relevant academic research in a competitive, global, knowledge-based economy?
4. How could persistent inequality in higher education be addressed?

10.30-10.45: Coffee

10.45-12.30: Break out sessions (continued)

In the light of the previous discussion, the participants will discuss what they would see as desirable and probable scenarios for the future. They could use the OECD scenarios as a starting point for the discussion, and possibly recombine some of their elements to imagine their best scenario.

- What would be the characteristics of your preferred scenario?
- What would it realistically take to get closer to this scenario?
- What are the most probable scenario in different national contexts?

12.30-13.45: Lunch

13.45-15.45: Discussion of the scenarios and of their possible implementation (Plenary)

This last session will be a discussion of the different scenarios designed by the groups. It will discuss the necessary steps to implement them in practice and discuss the role of different stakeholders in driving the policy changes. It will also discuss the differences of feasibility and desirability of the scenarios in different national contexts.

15.45-16.00: Conclusions and next steps

16.00: Close of the seminar