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THE CHANGING NATURE OF SPACE IN UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS

Universities are increasingly under pressure to use their facilities more efficiently and effectively. The OECD's Centre for Effective Learning Environments' (CELE) work in this area reveals some of the changes occurring in the design of university buildings.

Many universities are focusing on how to either reduce the size of their estate or find better ways of using what amounts to a significant portfolio of buildings. At the same time, they are under pressure to cater for more students with greater expectations of what a higher education institution should offer. It seems counter-intuitive then, to see large areas of space in new university buildings with no particular function. However, that indeterminate quality of space may be vital for creating facilities that encourage greater interaction between the various people.

A good example of this is the use of atria large floor areas that extend the full height of the building. Generally, these spaces are a place where everyone can meet: the public who can enter the building, but perhaps get no further, students, academics and staff. Often they are spaces that are used for various functions at different times because the furniture can be easily moved; perhaps from a café style layout enabling students to work together in groups, to an auditorium arrangement for a lecture, or cleared of all furniture for an evening reception.

At the same time, there is a drive to use space more intensively to maximise use of the buildings for longer periods during the day and, indeed, year. However, whether this is successful depends on many interrelated policies within a university; for example, allowing student late night access, security and the provision of support staff.

Information technology (IT) is an important enabler by which people can do much more within the physical constraints of a particular space, such as a classroom. IT has liberated people *within* space. However, mobile devices – smart phones, tablets and the like – have liberated people *from* space: in other words, people perform these tasks at anytime and, crucially, anywhere. Some of the spaces that were once seen as either non-utilisable, such as corridors, or incidental to the core function of the institution, such as cafés, are now being used differently. Spaces like corridors, foyers and courtyards are more than just circulation routes. They are spaces in which people can interact, hold *ad hoc* meetings, or work together. There is greater focus on providing furniture to facilitate such use. Circulation routes tend to be designed to encourage people from different parts of an institution to meet rather than be used just as means for getting from one place to another. Greater use of cafés and similar spaces inside and outside the university foster the idea of learning as a social process.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that there is emphasis on providing more generic teaching space, such as lecture theatres and classrooms, while reducing specialist skill space, like





laboratories. Also, there is an increase in creating space dedicated to learning resources, less space devoted to support functions and greater use of circulation and informal-type spaces – cafés, etc. – for informal learning.

Spatially, the challenge for those responsible for managing the facilities is to find more efficient ways of meeting the needs of learning, teaching and research, while enabling the institution to meet the needs of greater numbers of students. While much of the learning activity is not done in the classroom, universities are places of knowledge exchange. The spatial design can facilitate this.

*Alastair Blyth, Analyst,
OECD Centre for Effective Learning Environments*

 www.oecd.org/edu/facilities

QUALITY TEACHING: AT UNICAMP, PEER-TO-PEER EFFECTIVE LEARNING LEADS TO TWO NEW PROGRAMMES

UNICAMP (Universidade Estadual de Campinas) is continuously improving its two teaching assistants (TAs) programmes, the PAD (undergraduate teaching assistantships) and the PED (graduate teaching assistantships), in which students are trained and receive a scholarship as teaching assistants. This is the direct result of setting up informal tutorials in Latin, calculus and physics in which better performing students were matched with under-achieving students. Both groups of students learned more.

Upon appointment, TAs receive a scholarship for four and a half months, starting 1 week prior to the beginning of term and terminating 1 week after the end of term. A one-day orientation and three half-day seminars provide selected candidates with an overview of required general skills (e.g. public speaking, pedagogy, safety, etc.). Both programmes also have many volunteers participating without a scholarship, which indicates



student awareness of the programme's value added. An assigned professor monitors their performance and they are evaluated on the basis of student feedback (through the formal course rating process), as well as the reflective paper TAs must submit upon completion of the term.

The range of responsibilities varies depending upon the TA's status. Undergraduate students only assist professors; they do not teach or mark exams. Graduate student assistants can teach up to 25% of the course in the presence of the supervising professor, but do not evaluate students. Currently, the PAD and the PED programmes offer 600 and 400 scholarships per semester, respectively, but this number is sure to increase during 2011.

In addition to the PED programme, doctoral students can also be assigned as instructors to teach a course. In this case, these students are fully responsible for the course and are remunerated at a comparable rate as professors.

Overall, these programmes have several advantages. First, they provide additional teaching resources to enhance the quality of learning for all students. Second, students selected to serve as teaching assistants receive a one-day orientation and three half-day seminars on their role and responsibilities. Albeit short, this is a formal introduction to a key role that is not often offered in university curricula. Third, the scholarship provides monetary remuneration and serves as financial assistance to the recipients. Finally, these programmes offer undergraduate and graduate students the opportunity of a more in-depth study of the subject, so as to be able to teach it to others.

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Marcelo Knobel,
Vice President for
Undergraduate
Education

IMHE NEWS

IMHE welcomes the following new members:

- > University of Canberra – Australia
- > University of Bahrain – Bahrain
- > Escola Superior de Propaganda e Marketing – Brazil
- > Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario – Canada
- > Universidad de Playa Ancha – Chile
- > Taipei Medical University – Chinese Taipei
- > Democritus University of Thrace – Greece

- > Alexander Technological Institute of Thessaloniki – Greece
- > Technological and Educational Institute of Messolonghi (T.E.I.) – Greece
- > The Hong Kong Polytechnic University – Hong Kong, China
- > Korean Council for University Education (KCUE) – Korea
- > Universidad de Cádiz – Spain
- > Kadir Has University – Turkey
- > Institute for International Education – United States

HIGHER EDUCATION IN REGIONAL AND CITY DEVELOPMENT: SEVILLE CONFERENCE URGES HEIS TO COME OUT OF THEIR IVORY TOWERS

Approximately 250 participants from 40 countries attended the Conference for *Stronger, Cleaner and Fairer Regions*, held on 10 and 11 February 2011 in Seville, Spain, at which the results of the second round of reviews were presented. The Conference focused on three core ideas: i) widening access to tertiary education; ii) fostering an innovation model that generates employment and enterprises; and iii) mobilising higher education institutions (HEIs) to support their regions and cities by being both globally competitive and regionally engaged.

Keynote speakers conveyed several important messages. Jamil Salmi, the World Bank's tertiary education co-ordinator, focused on the economic consequences of limited access to higher education. Susan Christopherson, of Cornell University, stressed that greater collaboration between HEIs and economic sectors could generate employment opportunities leading to innovation. John Hearn, Chief executive of the Worldwide Universities Network, urged HEIs and regions to "think global, act local". He encouraged international universities to be involved in global challenges, such as adapting to climate change, which could accelerate the transfer of knowledge for the economic, social, cultural and environmental development of their regions.



Education in Cities and Regions

(L to R): Francisco TRIQUERO, Universities in the Regional Ministry of Economy, Innovation and Science of Andalusia; Màrius RUBIRALTA, Ministry of Education, Spain; Joaquín LUQUE, University of Seville; Barbara ISCHINGER, OECD Directorate for Education; Aart de GEUS, Deputy Secretary-General to the OECD.

During the conference, six new regions and localities expressed interest in joining the third round of reviews.

For more information, contact oscar.valiente@oecd.org.

AHELO MOVES ON TO PHASE 2

The AHELO (The Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes) project has made much progress over the past few months, with all strands of work now underway, new countries joining in – Colombia and the Slovak Republic – and some encouraging insights emerging from Phase 1 of the work.

The Group of National Experts, the National Project Managers and the Stakeholders Consultative Group all met in their respective meetings during the week of 28 March and all groups commended the project's progress and were pleased to see the work move ahead at such a steady pace.

Phase 1 of the work (instrumentation and small-scale validation of assessment instruments) is now completed for the Generic Skills strand initial group of countries and underway for latecomers. In the disciplinary strands, provisional frameworks and draft instruments for the economics and engineering strands have been developed and their translation, adaptation and small-scale validation in focus groups of students in each country is now being undertaken.

The emerging insight from the international adaption of the CLA (Collegiate Learning Assessment) instrument for the generic skills strand is encouraging and well on its way to proving that an international tool measuring generic skills can be developed. Likewise, the focus groups in the disciplinary strands shall provide similar insights into the feasibility of developing discipline-specific instruments in the selected fields over the next couple of months.

With the work of Phase 1 coming to completion, attention is now turning to Phase 2, *i.e.* the implementation of these assessments in participating countries and institutions. Work on the contextual dimension instruments has now started, *de facto* moving the project into Phase 2!

Provided more funding is secured for the implementation *per se*, student testing is scheduled to begin in July/August 2011 for Southern hemisphere countries and January 2012 for the Northern hemisphere.

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MANAGING INTERNATIONALISATION – LAUNCHING THE INITIATIVE ON 1 APRIL 2011

On 1 April 2011, 27 IMHE members and partners met at the OECD to discuss IMHE's new initiative on managing internationalisation. To kick off the debate, participants were asked to respond to the question: What impacts have globalisation and internationalisation had on your institution? Responses were diverse and far-reaching, including, among others, differing perceptions and approaches related to individual institutional strategic objectives, country-regional-global goals, obstacles, resources and need. Participants identified a wide-range of potential activities and areas of focus for IMHE to address. An outline of the approach was presented to the IMHE Governing Board by John Hearn, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Sydney. It was agreed that work should build on and complement existing literature and approaches. Therefore the first steps will be a review of relevant and authoritative information (research-based articles and discussion papers, etc.) examining challenges and trends; and a review of internationalisation

projects and initiatives currently being carried out within and beyond OECD countries. On this basis, the team will develop an issues paper examining the various strategies adopted by higher education institutions and by governments and identifying priority issues for in-depth analysis. At the same time, groups of interested members will be set up to look into specific issues – for example, the pros and cons of offshore campuses; providing instruction in English; facilities for international students; responding to cultural diversity; reputation management; recognition and double degrees; ethics and diversity. The outcomes of this work will be discussed at the *Conference on Strategic Management of Internationalisation* to be held in Lund, Sweden, 15-16 December 2011, in conjunction with the Nordic Universities Association (NUS). Further work will feed into the IMHE General Conference, taking place in Paris on 17-19 September 2012.

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PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST



Innovation Workplaces: Making Better Use of Skills within Organisations

OECD Publishing, ISBN: 9789264095670

As human capital is the source of innovation, one of the policy principles of the OECD Innovation Strategy is to "foster innovative workplaces". Education and training systems must rise to the challenge of providing people with the means to learn and re-train throughout their life. Companies and organisations need to maximise the human resources they have at their disposal.



PISA 2009 Results: What Students Know and Can Do: Student Performance in Reading, Mathematics and Science (Volume I)

OECD Publishing

Are students well prepared to meet the challenges of the future? Can they analyse, reason and communicate their ideas effectively? Have they found the kinds of interests they can pursue throughout their lives as productive members of the economy and society? The OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) seeks to answer these questions through the most comprehensive and rigorous international assessment of student knowledge and skills. Together, the group of countries and economies participating in PISA represents nearly 90% of the world economy. ISBN: 9789264091443



Higher Education Management and Policy, Volume 23 Issue 1

OECD Publishing

This issue includes articles on budget-balancing strategies in higher education, the democratisation of access success in higher education, university systems, and public vs. private universities' fields of study.

Higher Education in Regional and City Development

OECD Publishing series

Catalonia, Spain; Bío Bío Region, Chile; State of Veracruz, Mexico; State of Victoria, Australia; and Rotterdam, the Netherlands

These reviews help mobilise higher education institutions to contribute to the economic, social and cultural development of cities and regions. They analyse how the higher education system impacts upon regional and local development and bring together universities, other higher education institutions, as well as public and private agencies to identify strategic goals to work towards.

Designing for Education: Compendium of Exemplary Educational facilities 2011

OECD Publishing

This forthcoming publication will show examples of university buildings as well as other education facilities.

www.oecd.org/edu/facilities/compendium



Managing the University Campus

Eburon Academic Publishers, ISBN: 9789059724877

Universities are managing what are often large estates within increasingly tight budgets, greater numbers of students and concerns about the environmental benefits of using scarce resources for constructing buildings and operating them. To this end, Alexandra den Heijer's book provides valuable insights into the problems facing university managers. Sub-titled "Information to support real estate decisions", the book summarises the author's doctoral research.

See: www.managingtheuniversitycampus.nl

UPCOMING EVENTS

Find all our meetings on
www.oecd.org/edu/imhemetings

SAVE THE DATE:

The next IMHE General Conference is being held in Paris from 17-19 September 2012.

Be sure you have these dates in your agenda!

29 September 2011 *Celebrating 50 years of Educational Facilities: Designing for Education*, Paris, France

5-6 December 2011 *What Works*, Mexicali, Mexico

15-16 Dec. 2011 *Managing Internationalisation*, Lund, Sweden

OTHER MEETINGS OF INTEREST

16-17 May 2011 *UNESCO Global Forum - Rankings and Accountability in Higher Education: Uses and Misuses*, Paris, France

25-27 May 2011 *OBHE 2011 Global Forum: Levelling the International Playing Field*, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

27-28 May 2011 *Eurasian Inter-university Dialogue on Cooperation for Higher Education Development*, Bucharest Romania

27-29 May 2011 *International Higher Education Congress*, New Trends and Issues (UYK 2011), Istanbul, Turkey

30-31 May 2011 *Better Value for Schools: Making Public-Private Partnerships Work for Educational Infrastructure*, Athens, Greece

22-24 June 2011 *EducationUSA forum 2011*, Washington, DC USA
www.educationusa.info

16-18 Nov. 2011 *IAU International Conference 2011*, Strategies for Securing Equity in Access and Success in Higher Education, Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya
www.iau-aiu.net/



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IMHE-Info is published in English and French by the OECD Programme on Institutional Management in Higher Education (IMHE). Excerpts from this newsletter may be reproduced with full reference. Please send inquiries, comments and items to be considered for publication to:

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