

Changing Patterns of Diversity in Higher Education in Europe

The Second IMHE Study Tour

In October 2000, nine participants from IMHE member institutions in Quebec, Finland, the Netherlands, the Slovak Republic and the United Kingdom sought to examine, first-hand, developments in newer and traditional universities in Europe that face the managerial challenges of responding to changing economic, social, and educational needs.

All institutions are trying to relate higher education more closely to the economy, to offer access to a wider range of non-traditional students, and to create new forms of study appropriate to these needs. Institutions in continental Europe are also reorganising to create a two-tier structure of bachelors or masters degrees, following the Bologna Declaration.

Diversifying Higher Education to Respond to Change and to Survive

All the national systems visited are trying to diversify higher education to cope with new circumstances and to survive. The study tour suggested that national systems and individual institutions probably should be thought of as being located on a continuum rather than as two ends of a spectrum. They are particularly concerned with the role of professional education. In the United Kingdom, a unified system has replaced the binary system and polytechnics can now award their own degrees and university titles. In the Netherlands, thirteen traditional universities offer courses on the continental European model, leading to *doctoranders* (master's) level and to the PhD. Some 70 *hogeschoolen* comprise the vocational (HBO) sector, offering courses for students from age 17 to around bachelor's level. In Amsterdam, the first steps are being taken to bridge the binary divide despite significant obstacles to a full merger.

Most participants were surprised to discover similar sectoral divisions at British Oxford Brookes, Westminster, and Oxford universities where there is a perceived de facto binary system despite the 1992 unification. The new universities were seen as very competitive and concerned about their funding disadvantages, particularly concerning research. The University of Westminster, for example, actively recruits overseas students yet is concerned to offer access locally to a wide range of students from the multicultural London community.

The Pôle Universitaire at Lille is one of 11 similar organisations outside of Paris with trans-institutional and sectoral links. It has

been very successful in securing communication throughout its network of six state universities, a private university, an association of 6 *Grandes Ecoles* (public and private), teaching hospitals, regional and local government, chambers of commerce, and research centres.

Many responses to change were common to all the institutions visited. Institutional and supra-institutional strategic planning is widespread. In the Netherlands, the power of the academic staff and student body was contrasted with the more managerial model and very flat hierarchy established in the Hogeschool von Amsterdam, where departments provide resources from their institutional budgets for their overheads, and report directly to the executive board.

The increased role of the State was noted in most institutions. The British institutions expressed concerns about the pressure under which they now operate. The tradition of maintaining the state at arm's length has been replaced by state intrusion through quality assurance and funding agencies. Elsewhere, an elaborate system of performance evaluation was also evident in the internal processes. At the *Hogeschool van Amsterdam*, staff and students (using an independent research bureau) and the HBO-Raad all evaluate programmes.

The Role and Funding of Research

Research was an important concern in all the institutions visited. Expanding the mission of universities into commercial areas was a problem in many institutions. At the Université Libre de Bruxelles, despite its mission to diffuse science and valorise research (through patents, etc.), concerns were expressed about funding sources for basic and applied research, and about the pressure to become expert in all things. How far should the university go into research and development and commercial development while preserving the core business?

Universities are clearly responding in novel albeit similar ways to the challenges they face and demonstrate the clear need to constantly reinterpret what it means to be a university. The study tour encountered a variety of approaches to common problems across Europe, conditioned and sometimes compounded by local, regional, national or trans-national circumstances.

John Pratt, study tour leader

The Advantages of IMHE Membership

Universities and other institutions are continually solicited for membership by international organisations and associations. We realise that while the cost of IMHE membership is a good value, it is not insignificant. Sinikka Mertano, Director of one of the most active IMHE member institutions, tells how her university makes the most of its participation in IMHE

The University of Helsinki has been a member of the IMHE Programme for many reasons, one of which is the many-faceted benefits we can get from IMHE's activities for our personnel development.

We have systematically sent our new Rectors to the joint CRE-IMHE seminar for university leaders, and senior administrators to a number of IMHE specialist seminars. These seminars have provided excellent exposure to the international context and have helped our staff create networks amongst colleagues world-wide. The seminar on legal issues arranged in Oxford in 1999 is a good example. The two recent study visits, expressly designed for senior administrators, have also provided an excellent opportunity for in-depth

discussions with colleagues with similar problems and have familiarised participants with new and creative solutions within university administration and management. We are the only university to have sent someone on both occasions, and we plan to continue to do so if there is space.

We have also been able to contribute by participating in the preparation of meetings. Our experience in connection with the Management of University Museums seminar held in Paris in September 2000 was a highly useful experience for an administrator.

From personal experience I can say that being involved in the IMHE General Conference brings you a good network of friends in many universities around the world and offers insight into learning how to organise a conference and to benefit from older colleagues' experiences. And it is amongst these various IMHE activities that we have found some of our "Benchmarking" partners with whom we continue to co-operate on a bilateral basis.

The OECD environment with all its resources - publications and databases, analysis of higher education policy,



Sinikka
Mertano

reports on wider societal issues - is a mine of useful information and advice for administrators. If only one had more time to make a better use of everything that OECD offers...

I would like to see IMHE take its collaboration with members one step further by establishing a "traineeship" arrangement where a university would send a younger colleague, relatively new in university administration, to spend some weeks or months working with the Secretariat at the IMHE Paris headquarters. This could be highly profitable both for the member universities and their personnel, and for IMHE.

Towards Accreditation Schemes for Higher Education in Europe

Report from the CRE Seminar

The Association of European Universities (CRE) organised a seminar on accreditation on 8 to 10 February 2001 at the Technical University of Lisbon. The seminar was designed to provide a forum and open a public debate for the different social actors concerned by this question, which is important for the future of higher education in Europe. In addition, the various European accreditation systems that are possible in the context of Bologna Declaration were set forth. The seminar drew more than 200 participants from the CRE, representatives from the non-academic sector, accreditation and quality assurance agencies, and from international and student organisations

Several participants suggested that a non-bureaucratic platform be created to bring together the social actors concerned by accreditation. Everyone agreed on the need for a flexible, transparent structure. The issue of quality assurance was raised several times and ultimately became the sine qua non of accreditation.

Participants at the Salamanca Conference will receive the final conclusions of the seminar and will examine a series of issues linked to the implementation of the Bologna Declaration. The final paper will be presented as a message to the Education Ministers when they meet in Prague in May 2001.

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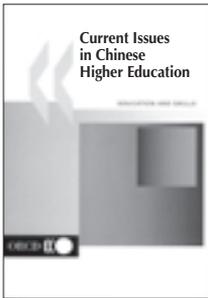
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Publications of Interest

- *Current Issues in Chinese Higher Education*. IMHE/OECD Publications. 2001. ISBN 92-64 18619-0.

As China's open door economic policies result in remarkably high and sustained levels of growth, demands on the skills and knowledge of the population have changed fundamentally. Inevitably, the pressure on the education system has increased.



This volume gives a distinct flavour of the challenges and opportunities inherent in the very fundamental reforms under way in the higher education sector in China. The articles are selected from presentations made by participants at the seminar co-sponsored by IMHE, the David C. Lam Institute for East-West Studies (LEWI) of Hong Kong, in conjunction with and at Tsinghua University in Beijing, on *Changing Patterns in University Management*. They describe the situation in China from the inside. Surprising, perhaps, in their realism and candour, these articles sketch the challenges and strategies to meet them being undertaken in Chinese higher education. As a mosaic of the issues facing Chinese administrators, this volume offers an uncommon insight into problems of university autonomy and funding, among others.

- *Reviews of National Policies for Education: Romania*. OECD Publications. 2001. ISBN 92-64-17635-7.

Romania began its transition to a democratic society and market economy in 1990, but the real impetus for the reform of education, training, and human resource development came in 1997, when the Ministry of National Education published *The Reform of Education Now*. The challenge was to promote and support changes that meet the needs of the new economy and society as well as the

interests of all young people and adults, this despite a shortage of financial and human resources.

This book briefly describes the history of education in Romania and its development since the transition. It analyses the entire education system, and identifies key directions for reinforcing the reforms given the challenges and changing conditions. It concludes with key recommendations for learning effectiveness, outcomes and the curriculum, management and governance, responsiveness and change, and resources and financing.

- *Implementing European Policies in Higher Education Institutions*. Werkstattberichte 57, 2000. Association of European Universities (CRE). ISBN 3-934377-63-7.

With the inauguration of the European exchange programme, SOCRATES, institutions of higher education in eligible countries had to take a more targeted view of their European and international activities, and formulate a European Policy Statement with their application to SOCRATES. A team established by CRE and the Centre for Research on Higher Education and Work undertook two studies of European policies. This publication results from the second study of

the policies and activities one year into SOCRATES support. It suggests an increase in institutional inclination to take stock and reflect European and international activities, but less than hoped for student mobility and curricular innovation.



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News from the Secretariat

■ The IMHE Welcomes New Members

Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sol, Brazil • Karl-Franzens-Universität, Austria • The Higher Education Authority, Ireland • The University of Auckland, New Zealand • Universidad de Oviedo, Spain • International Center for Higher Education Management, University of Bath, United Kingdom • Université Henri Poincaré, France.

■ News from IMHE Members

The International Centre for Higher Education Management (ICHEM) at the University of Bath announces an

international programme designed for senior academic and administrative staff in universities, other institutions of higher education and higher education government departments. Of particular interest to all levels of staff with responsibility for higher education management. www.bath.ac.uk/management/ichem/course.htm

■ Elsewhere in the OECD

On 2-4 April, the OECD Education Ministers will meet at OECD headquarters in Paris, France. Held once every five years at ministerial level, these meetings seek to set an agenda for the work of the OECD in the area of education.

■ At its seminar on the impact of new information and communication technologies on different educational systems (Aix-en-Provence Dec. 8-9, 2000), the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation invited 29 high school and university-age students from different OECD Member countries to describe their experience of the impact of ICT in their establishments. According to OECD co-ordinator Pierre Duguet, this true collaborative effort made an objective evaluation of the current state of the use of ICT possible, and enlivened the discussions with national delegates.

IMHE Calendar 2001

11-15 May

IMHE Management Seminar for University Leaders in collaboration with Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong SAR, China.

20-22 May

Seminar on Governance and Leadership of Higher Education, IMHE and the Centre for Higher Education Studies, Prague, Czech Republic.

16-17 August

Seminar on *The Universities and The Health Sector*, OECD, Paris, France.

29-31 August

Seminar on *Financing Higher Education*, in co-operation with the

Association of Nordic University Rectors' Conferences (NUS) and the Nordic Association of University Administrators (NUAS), Helsinki, Finland.

7-12 September

CRE/IMHE Management Seminar for University Leaders (in French), in co-operation with the Université Joseph Fourier, Grenoble, France.

8-9 October

Seminar on *Managing Change (provisional title)*, in co-operation with the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), Mexico City, Mexico.

November (dates to be announced)

Seminar on *Research Management* in

co-operation with the Centre for Higher Education Management and Policy, University of New England and the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Australia.

December (dates to be announced)

Seminar on *Institutional Responses to Changing Student Expectations*. OECD, Paris, France.

For updated information, please check the IMHE homepage regularly:
www.oecd.org/els/education/imhe/

Other Meetings of Interest

18-19 May

Ministers' Higher Education Summit, Prague, Czech Republic.

25-26 May

6th WHE Seminar, *The End of Quality*, Birmingham, United Kingdom. www.ac.uk/crq/endofquality

19-23 August

13th International Meeting of University Administrators (IMUA), *Values and Culture in Higher Education*, Helsinki, Finland. www.helsinki.fi/imua2001

9-12 September

23rd EAIR Forum, *Diversity and Harmonisation in Higher Education*, Porto, Portugal. www.org.uva.nl/eair/porto/index.html

23-25 October

Inaugural international forum of the Southeast Asian Association for Instructional Research: *Enhancing the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Tertiary Education in the 21st Century*, Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. rsharma@groupwise.swin.edu.au

6-8 December

13th Annual EAIE Conference, *International Education: Realising Human Potential*, Tampere, Finland. For further information: www.eaia.org/CONF2001



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