

WINDS OF CHANGE IN LATIN AMERICA'S HIGHER EDUCATION FOSTERING AND MANAGING ITS TRANSFORMATION

An International Seminar organised by the OECD Programme on Institutional Management of Higher Education (IMHE/OECD) and the Centre for University Studies of the National University of Mexico (CESU/UNAM)

8-9 October, 2001, Mexico City

Introduction

The expansion and diversification experienced by Higher Education all over the world has been accompanied by a multiplication of the venues and initiatives oriented to a better understanding of its role, structure and practices in different regions, and to the dissemination and exchange of ideas regarding its future development. In spite of the profound disparities that still exist in HE systems and structures, progress has been enormous particularly in the degree of awareness and acceptance of the need to improve, and on the existence of experiences on which to build the desired changes.

Whether self-imposed or forced by circumstances, this more open attitude to change and to external scrutiny has given momentum to a greater concern within countries and institutions regarding the state and management practices of their HE systems and institutions, as well as to important international efforts to increase mobility, add an international dimension and improve data and comparative studies on HE.

For many years now, programmes have been going on to review and reform HE systems and institutions through funding mechanisms, quality assurance procedures and governance practices amongst other approaches. Furthermore, several movements are now in progress - both at the national and international level - to analyse and implement the necessary reforms in structure, in teaching contents and methods, in evaluation and quality assessment procedures that can lead to a greater world-wide coherence in HE.

Worth mentioning in this respect are the important work on Tertiary Education carried out by the OECD, on the one hand, and the Bologna European Education Ministers declaration on the other. The former represents the first major international work attempting to bring light and point directions regarding HE practices and structures in a transitional setting. The second signals a commitment to action in order to "harmonise" HE systems, which has led to various national agendas for the achievement of such goal in the near future.

What is taking place in Europe and in some OECD countries is also happening in other regions, albeit with differences in pace, orientation, paradigms and goals. Whether by comparison or stirred by similar forces, many countries also face the possibility of HE reform. That is the case of several Latin American nations, whose governments and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are debating over the strategies they should follow in order to improve the quality, variety and size of their HE offer. The majority of these reforms have been, however, designed only with national or even local considerations

and parameters in mind, not taking into account the movements, experience and wider view of the international scene.

Some efforts to integrate the Latin American HEIs to the European process and debates have been initiated. But it is clear that many more actions and concerted programmes are needed if the present opportunity for a wider convergence and harmonisation of HE systems is to include Latin America.

The Seminar

With such broad and long term goals in mind, the National University of Mexico (*Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, UNAM*), and the OECD's programme on Institutional Management of Higher Education (IMHE/OECD) decided to jointly organise an International Seminar. Its specific purposes are to foster the need for change in HE, and to bring focus on the strategic issues for institutional management in the face of the change and the increasing convergence of HE systems.

The seminar is addressed to rectors, vice-rectors, and policy makers of LA universities and HEIs but welcomes the participation and input of all those interested in the themes of HE transformation and restructuring.

Organised around invited presentations and working groups sessions, the Seminar will review the forces behind the change, the main trends, and the action programs striving either for transformation or for regional or international convergence and compatibility of HE systems. The seminar will first analyse and then work on ways to overcome the difficulties and implications for the HEIs and the HE Systems of the various possible courses of action.

Topics to be covered in the Seminar

- The global trends in HE from European, North and Latin American perspectives.
- The strategies, obstacles and resistance to change in state-driven and institutionally-agreed movements for change in HE.
- Structural transformations taking place in Latin America and elsewhere regarding the goals, length and relation of the HE cycles of study, the curricular organisation, flexibility, modularity and content of undergraduate education, and in the relations between the diverse HE institutions and with the government.
- Issues of quality assurance and accreditation. Among them, the duration, credit systems, and core-skills in undergraduate education, the accreditation, certification, and licensing of professions, and the recognition of diplomas and courses not part of a formal degree study program.

- The implications of international providers, Internet-based education, and lifelong learning and training. The horizontal and vertical movement between the educational setting and the work place.

Official Languages.

The seminar will have simultaneous interpretation between English and Spanish, the two languages that will be used in the seminar.

Programme Outline

Sunday 7th October

Welcome reception, cocktails

Monday 8th October

Opening plenary

First session: presentations, discussion

Coffee

Second session: working groups

Lunch

Third session: presentations, discussion

Dinner

Tuesday 9th October

Fourth session: presentations, discussion

Coffee

Fifth session: presentations, discussion

Lunch

Sixth session: working groups

Seminar closure

All activities of the Seminar, with the exception of the welcoming reception and the dinner, will take place at the National Library Building-Auditorium and Foyer—, located in the Cultural Section of UNAM's main campus in Mexico City.

Registration

In addition to all Seminar papers and participation, the registration fee includes coffee and biscuits, lunch and refreshments on Monday and Tuesday, the evening cocktail reception on Sunday and the dinner on Monday. Participants who are IMHE or UNAM members are eligible for a discount.

Registration forms should be sent to CESU/UNAM.

Lic. Mayra Razura

CESU / UNAM

Seminario Internacional

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Accommodation

A number of rooms have been blocked at three hotels close to the university campus. **Reservations should be made directly to the hotel as soon as possible, indicating attendance to the Seminar.**

Paraiso Radisson Hotel

Cúspide 53
Col. Parques del Pedregal
14020 México, D.F., MÉXICO
Tel. (525) 606-4211
Fax (525) 606-4006
E-mail: radisson@prodigy.net.mx

Rates

Mexican Pesos 900
USD 98
plus taxes

Royal Hotel

Periférico Sur 4363
Col. Jardines en la Montaña
14210 México, D.F., MÉXICO
Tel. (525) 449-4000
Fax (525) 645-7964
E-mail: royalp@net.fm.com.mx

Rates

Mexican Pesos 850
USD 93
plus taxes

Fiesta Inn Hotel

Periférico Sur 5230
Col. Pedregal de Carrasco
04700 México, D.F., MÉXICO
Tel. (525) 096 9300
Fax (525) 096 9310
Web page: www.fiestainn.com.mx

Rates

Mexican Pesos 750
USD 82
plus taxes

Additional Information

To see the program, abstracts, and other information regarding the Seminar, visit its Web Site at <http://www.cesu.unam.mx/intseminar> or contact us at <salmano@prodigy.net.mx>