

## Francisco Marmolejo



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Francisco Marmolejo serves Executive Director of the Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration (CONAHEC), a network of more than 130 colleges and universities primarily from Canada, the U.S. and Mexico. CONAHEC is headquartered at the University of Arizona, where Francisco also serves as Assistant Vice President for Western Hemispheric Programs. He has taught at several universities and has published extensively on administration and internationalization. Marmolejo has consulted for universities and governments in different parts of the world, and has been part of OECD and World Bank peer review teams conducting evaluations of higher education in Europe, Latin America and Asia. During the 2005-2006 academic year, while on sabbatical leave, he collaborated as an international consultant at the Organisation for Economic and Co-operation Development (OECD), Programme on Institutional Management of Higher Education (IMHE), based in Paris. Marmolejo holds a M.A. in Organizational Administration from the Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí, received professional training at the JFK School of Government, Harvard University, and has conducted doctoral work at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

### **In your view, what is the most probable or desirable future scenario for diversity and equity in higher education?**

A desirable scenario is one in which diversity and equity will be properly addressed in higher education at the international level. However, I am afraid that a most probable scenario is the one in which on a worldwide basis unequal access to higher education will prevail, and in which still important sectors of our societies will have limited options for access and success.

### **In your opinion, what is or should be the most important objective for higher education in the future? Why?**

To provide equitable, accessible, and meaningful social and economic mobility for our societies through the means of teaching, research and public service.

### **What do you consider to be the main future challenge(s) for higher education systems? Why?**

The main future challenge for higher education systems, no matter where, will be to provide relevant education, research and public service, in an environment will be characterized by increasingly competing social demands, limited resources, and increased accountability

### **In your opinion, what would be the worst, but possible, way to tackle these future challenges? Why?**

Unfortunately in some countries/regions a response to this present/future challenge in higher education has been the development and implementation of policies and strategies which limit institutional autonomy, constrain academic innovation, and dramatically reduce the possibilities for

higher education institutions to become more flexible, entrepreneur and relevant to the needs of the surrounding communities.

**What do you consider to be the best possible way to tackle the above mentioned future challenges? Why?**

Experience has proved that it is more effective to establish higher education policy at the national and regional levels empowers institutions, provides appropriate incentive based funding and allows institutions to become more flexible in their academic offerings and in their administration. Sound accountability mechanisms provides appropriate counterbalance.