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## ADMINISTERING HIGHER EDUCATION IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

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### Introduction

To neglect an individual's education today is to condemn him or her to mediocrity tomorrow. So it is with nations. Education is the cornerstone of a free society, the bedrock upon which a strong, healthy state is built and sustained.

The demands of the modern era are being pushed at ever increasing speeds by extraordinary advances in technology. Those societies which anticipate these advances and best prepare their children for the future are likely to reap the most benefit from them. Those which do not, will not.

It was the third president of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, who said: "Enlighten the people generally and tyranny and oppressions of both mind and body will vanish like evil spirits at the dawn of day." Jefferson's may be a somewhat idealized view of the matter, but the connection between education, democracy, and economic opportunity is vital to the well-being of any free society.

If there are no perfect democracies, there are successful ones, and useful lessons may be drawn from their

experiences--including those in the field of education. The purpose of this paper is to point to specific practices in the administration of higher education in the United States and other Western democracies that may have applicability across national boundaries.

Ideally, an American university is a laboratory of democracy, in which teachers and students participate in a free exchange of ideas drawn from an ever-expanding world of information. If students and teachers sometimes fall short of the mark, the ideal is nonetheless important. An open dialogue is as fundamental to the system of higher education in the United States as it is to the political system.

Naturally, there are many challenges to university life in the United States. First and foremost is finances. The federal government contributes little to the country's universities and institutions of higher learning. While this leaves them free to determine their own curriculum and policies, it nonetheless imposes substantial financial demands on the institutions themselves.

There are other, related difficulties: maintaining high academic and research standards; ensuring the quality of faculty appointments; assuring flexibility and rigor in a curriculum; maintaining political and intellectual freedom; balancing a moral obligation to educating the poor and disadvantaged against the costs of financial aid.

In the United States, it is not just the university administration which determines how these challenges are to be met. Interested groups--faculty, students, alumni, professional associations, and employees--often influence the discussion. These complementary--and sometimes competing-- voices help ensure that the process will remain democratic, and in the end, enriching.

### **Variety in Higher Education Institutions**

A characteristic of modern democracies is the freedom citizens have to select from a wide variety of goods and services. Quality improves when competition is vigorous. The same principle of choice holds true with institutions of higher learning; increasingly, it is being applied to primary and secondary schools as well.

Students in the United States have a larger number of colleges and universities to choose from than any other country in the world. The existence of this number of choices directly benefits students, who can select--from a vast array of sizes, programs, and locations--the colleges and universities which offer the best opportunities to meet their academic and cultural goals.

The many choices available to students force schools to compete for qualified students. This leads some schools toward specialization; for others, the competition obliges them to offer the widest possible selection of courses. Schools which fail to meet student needs lose enrollment and can eventually be forced to close. Those which offer the best choices and maintain the highest standards attract the most talented students.

There are approximately 600 public four-year colleges and universities in the United States. Over 1,550 colleges and universities are entirely private. (Although the two terms are often used interchangeably, a college refers to an institution which offers students only one degree, typically, a bachelor's degree in liberal arts or science. A university, on the other hand, can award more than one degree, and typically a number of specialized graduate degrees as well.)

**Public Higher Education.** U.S. state colleges and universities are generally funded in part by the taxpayers of an individual state. Student fees and tuition cover the remainder of the costs. These are public institutions; by definition their primary purpose is to educate students who live within the borders of the state. Thus students may transfer from one college to another within the state with little difficulty, provided they have the

proper academic standing.

Out-of-state residents may be accepted to state schools, but in most instances they are required to pay higher tuition costs.

State colleges and universities average one full-time teacher or research faculty for every 16.9 students. As of the 1991-1992 school year, the average annual cost for a full-time student to attend a state school was about \$5,700, or about 15.5 percent of the average annual income per member of the labor force.

These public institutions vary greatly in size and enrollment. There are small-to-medium size four-year colleges, ranging from 500 to 2,500 students; comprehensive state universities, with about 10,000 students; and large multipurpose universities, where more than 20,000 students are enrolled.

**U.S. Private Higher Education.** While some private colleges may also receive support from state legislatures, most of their revenues come from student tuition, private donations, foundation or corporate funds, endowment revenues, and federal grants.

By and large, private colleges and universities have more full-time faculty and researchers per student than state institutions, approximately one for every 12.8. This is in large measure attributable to the higher tuition costs and larger endowments found at many private colleges.

In 1991-92, the average annual cost per full-time student at a private university was about \$14,350, or approximately 39 percent of the annual income of an average member of the labor force.

While the size of private institutions varies as much as that of public institutions, two-thirds of them have enrollments of under 2,500 students.

Another distinguishing characteristic of private colleges is their diversity. Many were established for specific religious or cultural missions. In many ways, these schools reflect the diversity of the United States and the freedom of individual groups to pursue religious and academic experiences of their own choosing.

In the past, virtually every religious denomination in the United States had at least one college or university affiliated with it. While many of these ties remain, in general, they are much looser than in the past, and the students they attract come from widely diverse backgrounds.

A similar phenomenon is taking place in colleges and universities that were originally all-male or all-female. Over the past two generations, many men's and women's institutions with long traditions have opened up their doors to students of the opposite sex. This move corresponds to a general evolution in U.S. views on the subject of co-education and, furthermore, has enabled many colleges with flagging enrollments to add substantially to their numbers.

In general, small private colleges and universities strive to create an atmosphere of community and learning, to define a clear mission and identity for themselves, and to ensure that their curriculum and programs reflect this special tradition. Many of these smaller institutions focus specifically on undergraduate education. Quality of instruction is their lifeblood and highly regarded professors are often the subject of vigorous competition by rival institutions.

**Admission Standards.** Nothing defines an institution of higher learning more than the quality of its student body. Naturally, in a country like the United States where competition is the norm, and there are many schools to choose from, universities go to considerable lengths to attract the most talented and promising students they

can. Others seek students with more specifically defined skills or interests, whether in science, the arts, or athletics.

This same competitiveness and specialization defines the process of admissions in most of the country's respected colleges and universities. Small religious colleges, for example, may emphasize the spiritual goals of their incoming students as a part of admission consideration. Private colleges of all kinds tend to be highly selective; that is, they scrutinize the academic preparation of the applicant, along with scores on national tests, performance in secondary school, and the nature of their extracurricular activities.

With some notable exceptions, comprehensive state colleges and large public research universities generally have somewhat lower standards of admissions. Generally, they will accept anyone who has earned a high school diploma in their states. They offer a range of flexible undergraduate programs, stressing professional training, technology, engineering, agriculture, and physical sciences. Typically, they offer hundreds of courses to fulfill graduation requirements.

### **Administration of Higher Education: Typical American Structure**

**The President.** The most visible administrator in American higher education is the college president, or chancellor, who is the chief executive officer of the institution. His primary responsibility is the smooth functioning and financial management of what are generally multimillion-dollar institutions.

The power and prestige accorded to a college president is a uniquely American tradition. As the university is often the largest employer in a city, a local college president is one of the most visible members of the community. He or she thus plays an important role in projecting the image of the university academically as well as economically.

Hired by a board of trustees after an often arduous national competition, presidents generally come to their positions from other institutions where they have served in a similar capacity or in another high-level administrative position. A university vice president in the state of Alabama, for example, may become president of an institution in North Carolina. Presidents must bring to the institution a track record, or at least the potential, for raising funds; they must bring evidence of decisive leadership, strong moral character, and commanding communication skills. To sustain respect from the faculty, the president should also have acquired some renown as a scholar. The president exercises power mostly through influence and persuasion. Almost all decisions that the president makes are backed by a series of recommendations and broad consensus-building efforts by senior administrators.

**Board of Trustees.** The men and women who make up the board of trustees are often alumni of the institution who have gained distinction in their professional life or individuals of prominence within the local community. Trustees decide on policy as it affects the institution as a whole. They guide investment strategies; they approve budgets to implement the policy; and they often decide on key personnel appointments. In the best of institutions, the president works closely with the trustees, soliciting their advice on programs and enlisting their efforts to raise funds.

The average number of trustees for a private institution is 30. When their terms expire, replacements are generally selected by the sitting members. Many times, a special interest group will have an important voice, or even selecting authority; for example, the alumni association may be in charge of selecting one or two seats on the board.

In public colleges and universities, boards of trustees average about 11 members and are most often appointed by the state governor and confirmed by the legislature. In some states, however, trustees are elected. In either

case they serve for prescribed terms and come from different geographic areas of the state. They are usually business executives or professionals, having gained success in corporations, small business, law, or medicine, for example. Their careers equip them to steer the institution toward financial stability and continuing professional integrity.

**Senior Administrators.** The operations and programs of the institution are managed on a day-to-day basis by a senior administration team including, for example, academic, financial, and foundation vice presidents, sometimes called provosts, who are responsible for education programs, budgets, and fundraising, respectively.

The next level of administrators is the deans who manage the affairs of smaller units of the institution, such as the colleges within the university or discrete administrative functions, such as the dean of the college of commerce or liberal arts, or the dean of admissions.

Senior administrators often meet as a group to ensure consistency in policy matters and to advise the president. Should a dispute among students escalate beyond ordinary procedures, for example, the president would assemble senior administrators to advise a course of action that would best safeguard the integrity of the institution.

**Department Chairman.** Academic departments are run by chairmen, sometimes called department heads, who usually teach a course or two in addition to their administrative duties, and who report to the dean of their college. For example, the college of engineering, governed by the dean of engineering, is likely to have departments of civil, electrical, mechanical, and/or chemical engineering. Often the title of chairman rotates among faculty members every three years.

Typically, the chairman of an academic department monitors the curriculum, coordinates teaching assignments for the professors in his or her department, and carries out a host of administrative duties in addition to teaching. He or she also convenes the department faculty to decide on routine matters of department procedures and policy, and serves as a kind of informal judge in matters of dispute within the department. From among the department faculty, subcommittees are often appointed to search for new faculty and to make recommendations regarding promotion and tenure.

**Faculty.** A college or university's faculty has the largest role in deciding who will teach at the institution and who will be made permanent among their number. Tenure, the guarantee of permanent position, is accorded on the strength of a professor's teaching and the merit of his or her scholarship. Typically, tenure is recommended for a professor who has been teaching full-time with distinction for seven years and who has published a book or several significant articles. The department tenure committee, selected from among tenured faculty members, evaluates the professor's work and makes its recommendation to the institution-wide tenure committee, which makes the final decision. If the professor is not granted tenure, he or she will likely move to another institution.

Faculty divide their intellectual energies between teaching and research. In research-intensive universities, according to one recent survey, 29 percent of the faculty devote more than 20 hours per week to research. In a teaching institution, such as a small liberal arts college, only two percent of the faculty spend over 20 hours per week in research. Conversely, 81 percent of the faculty in a liberal arts college spend from five to 20 hours per week teaching classes; whereas at a research university only 63 percent of the faculty are in the classroom for that much time.

The faculty exercise a good deal of control over the curriculum and are, naturally, the main contact between

the students and the permanent staff of the university itself. Faculty can also influence the senior administration through their participation in the faculty senate. This body concerns itself with salaries and benefits, budget, and institutional policy, and is the most important body to address academic standards. To the faculty senate will go motions to reform curriculum, to raise admission requirements, or to impose graduate requirements. In matters of institutional policy, such as student living arrangements, the faculty senate votes on resolutions intended to advise the president and trustees.

### **Coordinating and Evaluating Higher Education**

For most democratic countries, the task of coordinating and evaluating higher education is a function of a central authority--a ministry of education, or a committee of provincial ministries. In the highly decentralized and independent system existing in the United States, however, this is accomplished by the states themselves and a few private nationwide educational organizations.

State coordinating boards, often called boards of regents or commissions of higher education, are appointed by the governor in most states; in some others they are elected. These boards oversee the distribution of education resources to the public colleges and universities of the state, so that costly programs, such as veterinary medicine or metallurgical engineering, are not duplicated in several institutions. They decide which institutions should award doctoral degrees and which should only award master's and bachelor's degrees. And they see that all geographic areas of the state have reasonable access to general higher education.

The state of Colorado, for example, has a Commission on Higher Education consisting of nine members, appointed by the governor with the consent of the Colorado Senate. The Commission members meet monthly, are paid a modest fee, serve four-year terms, and together reflect a geographic and political balance. The state's General Assembly appropriates the money to fund higher education and allocates it directly to the governing boards of the state's 12 public colleges and universities. The Commission on Higher Education, however, in consultation with the 12 boards of trustees, recommends the level of funding to the General Assembly and establishes a formula for distributing it to the different institutions.

**Other Geographic Coordination.** Regional coordination among private colleges is another matter. Because private institutions are not accountable to the state for their general operation, they are not obligated to coordinate with other schools. However, in order to avoid having to compete unnecessarily with nearby colleges, private colleges often coordinate their curricula and programs by means of alliances with neighboring institutions, both public and private.

In central Massachusetts, for example, Amherst, Mount Holyoke, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Smith, and Hampshire, have established a cooperative arrangement among themselves. All five offer courses for the benefit of any student enrolled in any of the institutions. The responsibility for the courses to earn a degree in Asian studies, for example, including the study of Japanese and Chinese languages, rests mainly with Mount Holyoke College, a private college, while the courses in legal studies are offered at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, a public institution.

**Accrediting Systems.** Institutions of higher education in the United States are evaluated by a private, nationwide accrediting system. Accreditation is thus a prerequisite for the establishment and credibility of any institution. Receiving it signifies that a university or college curriculum is of university-level caliber, has sufficient teachers and the necessary library, laboratories, and student facilities to maintain that level of instruction. Being accredited means that the degrees the institution awards will be recognized across the country.

The loss of accreditation has serious financial implications for any college or university. Not only does it mean the certain loss of student enrollment, but the loss of federal grants and loans as well. Some curriculum grants offered by the federal government and private foundations, moreover, are available only to accredited institutions.

**U.S. Regional Accrediting Agencies.** All U.S. higher education institutions, both public and private, fall within the purview of six regional accrediting bodies. For example, the 550 institutions of higher education in New York, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and the District of Columbia look to the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools for accreditation. After establishing guidelines by consensus among the member institutions, each regional body goes about confirming that members meet agreed-upon standards of quality.

No institution is permanently accredited, but must seek re-accreditation periodically. A candidate for accreditation or re-accreditation submits a report on itself to the accrediting body. Outside committees made up of volunteers from other institutions review the report and comment on how well the institution is meeting its self-described short-term and long-term goals, as well as how closely it is adhering to its statement of mission. Finally a team of outside professors and administrators visits the institution to inspect the physical plant and to conduct interviews with the faculty, staff, students, and administrators. The reaction to the institution's self-study as well as the evaluation made by the visiting team become the accrediting body's report back to the institution. The entire process is designed to encourage continuous self-assessment, and to provide an assessment of the educational effectiveness of the institution. The evaluators who volunteer to provide the peer review of an institution's success generally agree that there are many ways of achieving goals. The accrediting process is not designed to assure uniformity of means; rather, the intent is to assure that standards of quality have been met.

**Accreditation of Disciplines.** In addition to regional accreditation, there is also national, subject-based accreditation. Many individual programs within colleges and universities are accredited by those professional associations to which the department belongs. The American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business, for example, accredits the business administration programs at the University of Virginia; whereas the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools--the regional accrediting body--accredits the University of Virginia itself.

Professional discipline associations review programs by looking at the quality of course offerings and the amount and substance of material that must be mastered by degree candidates. Music departments, for example, seek accreditation from the National Association of Schools of Music. Colleges of education are accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. By clearly defining the separate requirements for a degree in music performance and for a degree in music education, or by explicitly determining how much classroom practice is appropriate for teachers, the professions themselves monitor the quality of preparation given to the men and women who will be joining their ranks.

### **Preserving Academic Freedom**

Higher education is arguably one of democracy's most critical institutions. Just as an independent judiciary and independent news media serve to preserve basic freedoms, higher education, when it sustains academic freedom, serves the free marketplace of ideas and fosters the intellectual climate necessary for a dynamic and responsive society.

Open discussion between teachers and students is one of the defining characteristics of American education. Maintaining a climate where this can be done, however, is one of the continuing challenges facing higher

education. Indeed, free speech has become one of the most divisive issues on American campuses over the past few years, as views on race, ethnicity, politics, and sexuality have often pitted decency and respectful discourse on one hand against the constitutional right of free speech on the other. Often these battles are carried on in student-run newspapers and magazines, where even the university president is not free from attack.

Despite their diversity, American universities are not free from misperception and bias. No human institution is. Hiring, promotion, and tenure decisions are often highly contentious, as ethnic, racial, and gender issues receive a good deal of consideration in addition to academic achievement.

The primary responsibility of the faculty in a democratic society is to follow the academic ethic: that is, to teach with an obligation to the truth and to base this truth on evidence, rational argument, and disinterested investigation. Edward Shils, writing for the International Council on the Future of the University, characterizes the obligations of the college professor: "By developing in his students the capacity to participate in the great traditions of science and scholarship, in however minor a way, by getting them to understand, at the very least, the modes of imagination and the characteristic forms of criticism which they exhibit, a teacher demonstrates his reverence for truth and fulfills the consequential moral obligations, in a manner specific to him as a university teacher. His obligations in relation to truth automatically generate a sense of obligation to his students. If he leaves them with the impression that everything is settled and that there are no longer any but minor problems, or with the belief that when problems were settled in the past it was always either by deduction from dogma or by the application of established methods, then he has failed not only in respect to those students as individuals but in respect to the maintenance of the spirit of inquiry, which is at once rational and reflective."

### **Encouraging Student Participation**

Students often have a voice in university affairs. Student leaders are sometimes appointed to search committees for senior administrators, and on occasion are asked to sit in on departmental meetings. Most public institutions provide for student senates. Historically, these organizations have been primarily concerned with budgeting and planning student activities. But in some instances students can play a more decisive role, through participation in task forces that study issues and make recommendations.

**Student Orientation.** Most U.S. colleges and universities make a strong effort to help incoming students feel at home in their new surroundings. Orientation of first-year students is an important part of this process.

In a typical U.S. college orientation program, beginning students are invited to the campus a week before the returning students arrive. The new students often meet in an informal setting to get acquainted with one another and to learn about the practical aspects of student life, such as course selection, dormitory living, social activities, and tips about managing time. They become acquainted with the credit-hour system and are advised about the amount of outside class work that is expected of them.

### **Building a Curriculum**

The American university curriculum has been under revision for most of the 20th century as ever more complex and conflicting demands have been placed on higher education. Most U.S. institutions continue to struggle with the matter. One of the most recent, although certainly not the last, of these debates has centered around the question of "Eurocentrism" and the extent to which U.S. curriculum should be based on the classics of European literature, history, and culture.

Answers to such questions are often provided by committees comprised of faculty and administrators. Almost

by necessity, each institution arrives at a combination of courses which makes sense for its own student body and the degree of specialization it wishes to maintain.

College curricula can be shaped in many ways. For example, the University of North Texas in Denton has chosen to cluster required courses around the ideas of reason, virtue, and civility. Some curricula are governed by sequential logic, such as the 10 courses at New York's Brooklyn College that set down a solid foundation in art, ideas, science, and the values of Western and other civilizations.

Edwin Delatter, Dean and Olin Scholar in Applied Ethics at Boston University, in his study of the intellectual and moral purpose of American education, describes the difficulty that attends curriculum deliberations. Those involved in the process of defining a university's curriculum, he writes, should: "resolve to exclude the shallow and trivial, and to include only that which requires intellectual rigor, truthfulness, accuracy, and independence of mind. These standards are not entirely sufficient either, though, because disagreement will persist over what they mean. After all, scholarship that some consider trivial is deemed important by others. But if administrators and faculty remember that the time available for undergraduate study is limited and precious, they may at least exclude some nonessentials. And if they truly want students to become adults who can exercise judgment in a condition of liberty, they can avoid propaganda."

## **Conclusion**

As countries reform and restructure their institutions of higher education, they must wrestle with many difficult issues: Who should have access to higher education? What should be taught? How should it be taught and learned? Who should govern, who should evaluate? And, last of all, how will the institution be financed?

In reflecting on these, educators may wish to keep in mind some basic principles:

- Higher education should be highly accessible.
- The curriculum should be regularly renewed and reviewed in a fair and open process.
- An educational mission should be carefully articulated.
- Academic ethics should be stressed so as to assure freedom to teach and freedom to learn.
- Governance should be shared among all who participate in the academic enterprise.
- Finally, the test of the quality of teaching and research is the long-term benefit of higher education to the country.

Successful administration of higher education is based on a commitment to a process rather than on the private ambitions of individuals. Ideally, issues do not get lost in the institution's own bureaucracy. Like democracy itself, people who are affected by the decisions should have a voice in the decision-making. The administrators, faculty, and students in these institutions should all think of the institution as a community built on mutual benefit.

## **MANY CHOICES IN ONE SYSTEM: THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN**

The state of Wisconsin, with a population of over 5 million, consolidated its many public colleges and universities into one centrally administered system in 1971. This consolidation enhanced its efficiency while preserving a wide range of choices.

The University of Wisconsin system includes 13 University of Wisconsin Centers, located throughout the state, which offer the first two years of general education. Students may then transfer to other campuses to complete their degrees.

In addition, the Wisconsin system includes 13 comprehensive universities. Two of these four-year institutions, at Madison and Milwaukee, are research-intensive. Between them they have several postgraduate professional schools and award a variety of doctorate degrees. In its 26 separate locations, the system serves over 160,000 students.

The flagship institution is the University of Wisconsin at Madison. About 43,000 students are enrolled, one-third of whom are pursuing graduate degrees. The campus at Milwaukee has over 25,000 students, and the rest of the campuses have from 3,000 to 10,000 students.

There are many choices for study. Over 300 undergraduate majors (fields of academic concentration) are offered, and each campus specializes to some extent in related majors. The River Falls campus, for example, offers most of its majors in agricultural and natural resources. The university at Stout, on the other hand, is strong in business and technology.

Besides choosing a major at the end of their first or second year, students also choose a "submajor" (often called a minor at other universities) that complements the main area of study--a major in international relations and a submajor in a foreign language, for example, or a major in computer technology with a submajor in business administration.

In a system this large and varied, many combinations are possible, depending on a student's interests and career expectations.

Average class sizes and the makeup of the student body vary from campus to campus. At the Madison campus many classes enroll over 100 students, while on smaller campuses classes average 22 to 27 students. The campuses in large cities, such as Milwaukee, serve a significant number of part-time students who have full-time jobs and are over 24 years of age. At Madison the greatest number of students are of the traditional age (18 to 22 years old) and attend the university full time.

Students may move freely among the campuses within the system, since all credits are recognized by all other locations. Because living at home can save money, some may elect to commute to a University of Wisconsin Center for the first two years. Students also have the flexibility of changing their declared major or moving to a different campus if they choose.

In addition to the University of Wisconsin system, the state offers 16 technical colleges to provide vocational training opportunities. These offer over 300 programs that take from one to three years to complete and include such choices as nursing, food-service management, automotive technology, and computer programming. Many of the credits earned in the Wisconsin Technical College system are accepted by the University of Wisconsin system, so a student can enroll in either system and eventually receive both technical training and an academic degree.

## **LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION: MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE**

Founded in 1837 when higher education for women was still rare in the United States, Mount Holyoke College is a private women's liberal arts institution located in central Massachusetts. About 2,000 undergraduate women are enrolled.

The school is an example of an institution administered by collegium, a self-governing community that makes decisions by consensus. According to its Faculty Study Committee on the Principles of the College, Mount Holyoke is dedicated to "freedom, learning, and community of purpose." It seeks to realize these principles in

its curriculum, in its faculty and students, and in the continuing involvement of alumnae in its activities and governance.

Mount Holyoke offers one undergraduate degree, the bachelor of arts, and 28 majors. To earn a degree, students must complete 128 credits (most semester-long courses are either 3 or 4 credit hours), demonstrating both breadth and depth of learning. One-fourth of the credits are to be taken from seven designated areas: language, third-world culture, physical education, two areas of humanities, laboratory science and mathematics, and social science. Another third of the courses are in the student's declared major and minor.

Although almost a third of the students who attend Mount Holyoke come from the surrounding area, the rest of the students come from all over the United States and from 57 different countries. International students make up 11 percent of the enrollment. Members of American minority groups make up 15 percent of the student body as a result of Mount Holyoke's active recruitment. All students live and eat together in the college's residence halls, each of which houses between 65 and 135 first-year through fourth-year students.

Admission to Mount Holyoke is based on the applicant's high school records, achievement on national tests, recommendations from high school teachers, and, importantly, a personal interview conducted on campus or with an alumna close to where the applicant lives. Getting admitted is highly competitive. Over 1,800 women applied for the 465 first-year slots in 1991-1992.

Entrance into Mount Holyoke does not depend on ability to pay. Tuition, room and board, and other fees at Mount Holyoke were \$23,900 for the 1992-1993 school year. Sixty-five percent of the students, however, receive some form of financial aid.

The faculty-student ratio is 1:9, allowing for a much higher degree of personal interaction. And students participate along with faculty in governance. For example, students sit on the Academic Policy Committee, the Board of Admissions, and the Academic Deans' Advisory Committee.

The Mount Holyoke Alumnae Association launched a \$125-million fundraising campaign in 1986 and achieved its goal in five years. The purpose of the campaign was to increase the support for student financial aid and faculty salaries, to improve campus facilities, and to support academic and technological research. Almost 25,000 alumnae in 92 alumnae clubs throughout the world continue an active association with the college. Of the 21 members of the board of trustees, six are voted in directly by the alumnae.

In a close, focused atmosphere, the women who make up the student body of Mount Holyoke are part of a community of learners and teachers. They are exposed to cultures and perspectives from around the world and across time. And after graduating, they can continue to participate actively as alumnae in supporting this liberal arts college community.

## **FINANCING HIGHER EDUCATION: WHO PAYS?**

Questions about financing higher education continue to cause wide debate within the United States and other democratic societies. Higher education broadly benefits society as a whole. Should its expenses therefore be paid from general government funds? What about the students themselves? They stand to benefit from going to college. Should students and their families pay for what they receive? And what about the commercial and service interests that are served by higher education? Should universities receive substantial, secure funding from the private sector?

Each country answers these questions differently. Japan, for instance, tends to think that students and their

families should bear the major part of the burden of supporting higher education, and the burden is heavy indeed. According to one estimate, education expenditures account for over a third of total family expenditures for the years children are in school. Not surprisingly, higher education in Japan is substantially dependent upon student tuition; it makes up 67 percent of the revenues for the private universities, which enroll about 85 percent of college students.

In contrast, the Scandinavian countries, Germany, and France, charge students either nothing or a small service fee. These nations have decided that the substantial burden for the costs of higher education is the responsibility of the public. Ninety percent of the revenues of French universities, for example, are from general public funds.

Other countries mix public and private funding. The universities in Spain, for example, receive 80 percent of their income from the public, but the balance comes from the students themselves. All mixes are possible. German institutions in the mid-1980s derived about 70 percent of their revenues from the government. The remaining 30 percent came from industry, commerce, and medical services--and none from students.

Australia is an interesting case. With higher education dependent on the government for about 90 percent of its revenues, Australian policy-makers are considering ways to diversify its funding. The government is looking at challenge grants (a grant given on the condition that a matching amount be secured from another source), offsets provided to industry for contributions of funds and equipment, and collective bargaining to include support for higher education in wage negotiations.

The United States has a complex structure for financing education. Everyone who benefits from higher education pays for a portion of it. Tuition accounts for 20 percent of the revenues of public institutions and 55 percent of the revenues of private institutions. Government funds in several forms--outright grants, programmatic grants, or contracts for services--account for 70 percent of public institution revenue and 20 percent of private. The private sector--through unrestricted gifts, grants for projects, and endowment contributions--provides 10 percent of the funds for public institutions and 25 percent for private ones.

## **WHAT IS ACADEMIC TENURE?**

The peculiarly American tradition of connecting academic tenure to academic freedom was codified in 1915 by the newly formed American Association of University Professors (AAUP), an independent professional association. Responding to threats and dismissals of professors whose transgressions were their opinions rather than their classroom or research competence, AAUP issued a public declaration of principles. It insisted that the freedom to teach and research, the freedom to pursue the truth, was necessarily linked with protection from economic coercion.

In subsequent conference reports these guarantees have been restated. For example, AAUP's "1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure" defines academic tenure this way: "After the expiration of a probationary period, teachers or investigators should have permanent or continuous tenure, and their service should be terminated only for adequate cause...."

In exchange for this protection, so it is assumed, professors will engage in the disinterested pursuit of truth. The 1940 document goes on to clarify: "Tenure is a means to certain ends--specifically, (1) freedom of teaching and research and of extramural activities and (2) a sufficient degree of economic security to make the profession attractive to men and women of ability. Freedom and economic security--hence, tenure--are indispensable to the success of an institution in fulfilling its obligations to its students and to society."

Although academic tenure has widespread support among American professors, and qualified support from administrators and Americans in general, it is the focus of considerable debate. On the one hand, tenure is consistent with American principles of fairness and justice. It embodies general Jeffersonian ideas about the importance of knowledge and pursuit of truth to the future of a free society. On the other hand, lifetime guarantee of employment is an anathema to a society that values merit and excellence and that functions in a competitive market economy.

Those who argue that tenure is relevant and necessary say that the tradition bolsters personal courage and relieves teachers from ideological conformity. Academic tenure, it is argued, serves to support professional autonomy whereby senior professors monitor quality within their ranks.

According to AAUP recommendations, a new faculty member must be granted tenure after a seven-year probationary period or move on. It is a system of "up or out." Tenure committees usually comprise a selection of tenured faculty within a department who make recommendations to the entire department's tenured faculty. Once the department agrees to grant tenure, it is customary for a university-wide tenure committee to review the recommendation. If the recommendation is affirmed, the appropriate dean takes that recommendation to the president who confers tenure.

Tenure in and of itself does not mean promotion, nor increase in salary. These matters are handled in a separate process. Tenure is sought for its own end, and as such it becomes a paramount rite of passage, a mark of approval from respected colleagues. It has a certain mystique about it that is a mainstay of American academic culture.

Those who argue that tenure has become irrelevant and unnecessary cite differences between American universities at the beginning of the century and now. Due process has become commonly assured to all professionals. The fact of tenure does not in itself guarantee economic stability, it is argued, so much as the professional's seniority and reputation for academic achievement.

Protection from ideological pressure from the outside, furthermore, has been displaced by pressure from inside the institution to conform to certain ideological tenets. Senior, tenured professors may sift challenges to their political views from among those applying for tenure. Tenure may guard against meddlesome trustees and legislators, but it does not against pressures to conform inside the institution.

The argument against tenure, furthermore, points out that security can not only breed incompetence and sloth, but also encourage insurgency. In other bureaucratic institutions, job security is offered in exchange for the relinquishing of certain freedoms. The difference is instructive. In the civil service and in the military, employees are sensitive to the fact that they are a part of the public face of their institutions. Their private opinions remain private. In the university, by contrast, opinions are freely expressed and made public. The university remains neutral, above the fray, but the individuals who make up the institution freely expound on public policy without peril.

Most historians of American higher education agree that academic tenure has served to encourage the development of an independent, autonomous higher education that is at once a source of support for the betterment of society and a source of commentary on the society. Whether the custom continues to enjoy the general support of the academic community in the future, however, remains to be seen.

## **HUNGARIAN HIGHER EDUCATION REFORM PROPOSAL**

In October 1992, the Hungarian Parliament's Subcommittee on Higher Education requested that the Citizens

Democracy Corps (CDC) review a draft education bill under consideration by the Parliament. Derek Bok, on the executive committee of CDC and president emeritus of Harvard University, traveled to Hungary together with a few colleagues to meet with members of the subcommittee, officials from the Ministry of Education and other ministries, representatives of the Academy of Sciences and the Conference of University Rectors, professors, students, and others.

Bok and his colleagues asked the Hungarian legislation a number of questions which might serve as guides for countries contemplating the reform of their higher education system. Among them were the following:

- How well does the draft law succeed in securing appropriate autonomy or freedom from inappropriate state interference?
- Does the draft law adequately safeguard the legitimate rights and freedoms of teachers and students?
- Does the draft law adequately encourage consolidation to achieve economies of scale and other measures by universities to achieve more efficient use of resources?
- Does the draft legislation adequately encourage a proper reintegration of teaching and research in the nation's universities?
- How well will the draft law serve to meet the manpower needs of the nation?
- How well does the draft law provide for the long-term financing of higher education?
- Does the draft law provide adequate encouragement, incentives, and safeguards to promote education and research of high quality?
- Does the draft law provide adequately for the reintegration of Hungarian higher education with foreign universities and other institutions of higher learning and with the international scholarly community?

## **FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS**

As countries make fundamental decisions regarding support for their institutions of higher education, they must also deal with a separate and equally important financing issue: how to pay for the living expenses of university students. In a democratic society purporting to provide equal opportunity, taking care of deserving students is an important task. To assure that higher education is extended not just to affluent families, even those countries that charge no tuition have a plan of some kind for supporting students.

Most countries have worked out a combination of outright grants on the basis of need and loans that are repaid after graduation.

Great Britain links subsistence grants to its mandatory grants given to all students. The subsistence part of the grant is given only to needy students, awarded by local education authorities and funded by the central government. Full-time students in a degree-level program receive a mandatory grant with an appropriate subsistence portion. This student-grant plan, although modified recently with repayable loans, has a 30-year tradition.

A similar grant program was available to German students until the mid-1970s, when the method of providing subsistence support shifted to loans. To qualify for a loan in Germany, students must show not only need but also satisfactory academic progress. The loans are interest-free and must be paid back within 20 years. Only about 30 percent of German students, however, are eligible for support.

Repayment after graduation does not always work as planned. In the United States high default rates on student loans are being addressed with an integrity plan that, among other measures, links student-loan status to income tax returns. If a student loan has lapsed into default, the person's federal income tax is increased

proportionately. Australia has given consideration to a plan to collect some of the costs of education through a retrospective taxation system. When a former student's taxable income reaches the national average, he or she pays the government a percentage of the costs incurred while studying.

Besides offering grants and loans, countries attempt to support students through a variety of plans. Subsidies and indirect aid provide support in some countries. Greece and Portugal, for example, subsidize meals and housing and provide books and services at minimal cost to students.

Some universities in the United States offer work-study programs. Most schools hire financial-aid students to perform jobs on campus that pay for part of that aid: shelving books in libraries, cleaning laboratories, raking leaves on the grounds.

In the United States student financial aid is administered by the institution itself. Every college and university, private as well as public, has its own financial aid office. After a student has been admitted, he or she can be considered for a combination of grants, loans, and, if appropriate, work-study.

If the applicant is dependent upon his or her family, the amount of aid awarded is the difference between what the institution determines the family can pay and what it costs to attend. For example, a student going to the University of Wisconsin at Eau Claire in 1992-1993 was expected to spend \$7,400 in nine months. If the office of financial aid determined that the family could contribute \$3,000, the student would have been offered a package that totaled \$4,400, perhaps \$2,400 in a loan and \$2,000 in a grant.

In order for the officials to determine the level of family contribution, applicants must submit family financial data, including parents' income and assets, the number of children attending college, and the number of other dependents in the household. The financial aid office uses standardized guidelines to calculate the amount that they judge the family can afford to contribute to the applicant's college expenses.

Naturally students shop for the best financial-aid package, just as the universities offer the most favorable aid packages to attract the most promising students.

## **BUILDING CURRICULUM: A DEMOCRATIC PROCESS**

Curriculum, the collection or body of courses offered at a college or university, is often under pressure from a variety of sources. The interests of faculty, employers, students, administrators, benefactors, and social philosophers seldom coincide completely.

In large public research-intensive universities, curriculum must accommodate the needs of a highly diverse student body. For colleges having a student body of 10,000 or fewer, however, and for private research universities (Stanford, Chicago, Princeton, and Yale, for example) a focused or specialized curriculum becomes a way of defining the character of the institution.

Sometimes institutions are forced to rethink their curriculum in order to survive. New York's Brooklyn College, for example, responded to the threat of severe funding cuts, and the possibility of closing, by restructuring its curriculum and streamlining course requirements. It consolidated seven separate schools into one coordinated general education curriculum that improved its reputation, reduced the numbers of faculty and administrators, and made better use of facilities.

Another institution that restructured its curriculum is Fairleigh Dickinson University in Rutherford, New Jersey. As revised, its undergraduate curriculum is based on a sequence of four courses:

1. "Perspectives on the Individual" focuses on the singular consciousness grappling with forces in the universe--readings include Elie Wiesel, *Night*; Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*; *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*; and Plato, *Apology* and *Crito*.
2. "The American Experience: The Quest for Freedom" stresses the founding documents and later commentary on the identity of the American people--readings include the Declaration of Independence; the Bill of Rights; *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*; Sojourner Truth, *Ain't I a Woman*; and Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*.
3. "Cross-Cultural Perspectives" explores the shape of several countries' traditions--readings include *The Bhagavad-Gita*; Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*; Gregorio Lopez y Fuentes, *El Indio*; and Oscar Lewis, *Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty*.
4. "Global Issues" focuses on social and political issues that cross borders and continents--readings include John Hersey, *Hiroshima*; Martin Buber, *I and Thou*; Albert Camus, *The Plague*; and *Aids and the Third World*.

In its guidebook for curriculum planners, *Core Curriculum and Cultural Pluralism*, the Association of American Colleges stresses that the "process is as important as the product; a good planning and implementation process improves chances for success." Strong programs are constantly being evaluated and refined: "They are vital, alive and ever-changing as a result of constant review and improvement." By cooperative teamwork an institution can be in a state of continuous improvement.

Building curriculum, then, is an activity that draws together the faculty and administrators in a process at the heart of deliberative democracy.

## GLOSSARY

**academic freedom** -- freedom granted to faculty members to teach their subjects as they know them and to pursue areas of research unrestrained by politics or ideology. It is also the freedom of students to learn and to pursue the truth without being pressured to subscribe to political or ideological perspectives.

**accreditation** -- process by which an educational institution is given nationally recognized credentials.

**bachelor's degree** -- baccalaureate degree, usually earned after four years of higher education. It is designated by general area of study: for example, bachelor of arts, bachelor of science.

**campus** -- geographic area of a college or university including its buildings and grounds. A typical American college campus has administration buildings, classroom buildings, dormitories, gymnasiums, a student center with meeting rooms, a sports stadium and other playing fields, and open places with benches and walking paths.

**credit hour** -- a unit of academic work. A typical American full-time student completes 16 or more credit hours each semester in order to earn a bachelor's degree that requires 128 successfully completed credit hours.

**dean** -- administrative official in charge of a school, faculty, or unit of operations; for example, dean of the nursing school, dean of the graduate school, dean of admissions. Deans may also represent special concerns, for example, dean of women, dean of academic affairs.

**liberal arts college** -- an institution that offers a general four-year curriculum, including such subjects as literature, philosophy, language, history, mathematics, and physical science, leading to a bachelor's degree. It is to be distinguished from an institution that offers professional or technical training.

**tenure** -- guarantee of a lifetime position as a faculty member of the granting institution. In conjunction with academic freedom, tenure theoretically ensures that higher education is a free marketplace of ideas.

**tuition** -- money paid for instruction. Sometimes fees are added to tuition as a separate cost, for example, laboratory fees and fees for admission to athletic events.

**university** -- a collection of several undergraduate colleges in combination with graduate and professional schools, granting a variety of degrees. A university may comprise a college of agriculture, college of engineering, college of liberal arts, college of commerce, as well as a medical school and a law school.

## **ORGANIZATIONS**

American Academy for Liberal Education  
1015 18th Street, N.W., Suite 204  
Washington, D.C. 20036

An institutional membership organization dedicated to ensuring high standards for liberal education among its member colleges. One standard, for example, is "Liberty of thought and freedom of speech are supported and enforced, bounded only by such rules of civility and order as to facilitate intellectual inquiry and the search for truth."

Association of American Colleges  
1818 R Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20009

Having a membership of over 600 public colleges and universities, AAC seeks to enhance liberal education and secure its integration with professional programs and courses of study.

Citizens Democracy Corps  
2021 K Street, N.W., Suite 215  
Washington, D.C. 20006

A nonprofit organization that encourages and assists American private corporations and foundations in their efforts to promote free-market economies and democratic institutions in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Council of Colleges of Arts and Sciences  
The Ohio State University  
186 University Hall  
230 North Oval Mall  
Columbus, Ohio 43210-1319

A national association of baccalaureate degree-granting colleges and universities whose purpose is to sustain the arts and sciences as a leading influence in American higher education.

#### The Foundation Center

1) 1001 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 938  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
2) 79 Fifth Avenue  
New York, New York 10003

A nonprofit organization maintaining four libraries in the United States for the public. It serves as a clearinghouse for information on grant-making activities; for example, it houses directories of international foundations and grant-makers.

#### Independent Sector

1828 L Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20036

A coalition of 830 corporations, foundations, and voluntary organizations having national interests in and impact on philanthropy. As part of its research function, it tracks the role and function of nonprofit organizations worldwide.

#### Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

1)2, rue Andre-Pascal  
75775 Paris CEDEX 16  
France  
2)OECD Publications and Information Center  
2001 L Street, N.W., Suite 700  
Washington, D.C. 20036

OECD aims to promote economic and social welfare of its 24-member countries by coordinating policies. It publishes the journal of the Programme on Institutional Management in Higher Education, *Higher Education Management*, three times a year.

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