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New universities: finding their fit in a diverse sector. *What is the role of the new university in a mass, and diverse, HE sector? What models should it follow, and how will its progress be judged? How wide-ranging or specialist should they be? Whether responding to national ambitions, designed to address more specific local needs, or exploring collaborative models, there is no single blueprint. Greater diversity may make the sector more responsive, cohesive and effective in the long term. [Page 4]*

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Competing for China – as China articulates its own plans

Increasing interest in – and in some cases dependence on – links with Chinese higher education are evidenced by several recent initiatives. Australia, Canada, the UK, and the US are strengthening their contacts, while regional co-operative projects, notably from Africa and Europe, are being promoted. This reflects competition by countries and groups of countries to benefit from the world's largest single HE system (c. 29 million students). Last summer, however, also saw the release of China's own ambitious strategy – the National Plan for Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020) – with clear

goals to expand and improve HE within an updated, and more inclusive, education system. It incorporates China's goals for greater internationalisation (to 'enhance the nation's global position, influence and competitiveness in the field of education'), but also emphasises a drive for 'world-class' quality, innovative research, and a more 'dynamic regulatory framework'. As a result, the value and sustainability of links with Chinese HE will not simply stem from seeing China as a source of international students, or conversely student mobility to China. Instead, universities will need to be more alert to China's own interests, especially how it – the world's second largest economy – responds to global HE issues: an expanding mass system, interdisciplinary research, the balance of state/private funding, and the role of education in serving both national interests and regional needs.

US

The most recent analysis of international student mobility by the IIE ('Open Doors') records a dramatic 30% rise in Chinese student enrolment in the US for the 2009/10 academic year, giving a figure of some 128,000 (nearly 18% of the US's international student population). A more recent snapshot (October 2010) confirms that enrolments from China have continued to increase 'significantly', while the numbers of US students going to study in China, although low in comparison, also shows a slight rise. The IIE International Academic Partnership Program (IAPP; US Department of Education-funded) has also chosen China as its focus in 2011. Increased Sino-US student mobility reflects, apart from changed geopolitics (not least China's more assertive global role), better co-ordinated US marketing (through EducationUSA for example), and downturns in international student markets elsewhere. Also playing its part is the US's profile in the curricula, particularly valued by many international students and those seeking global careers (i.e. business/management, and engineering). HE links are also being developed at other levels. Anianet – a research profile service – is just one example of an independent scheme to help strengthen communities and share interests; its focus is on 'a very definable and discrete issue... that Chinese scholars struggle to make their accomplishments and research known in the West'.

Australia

In contrast, Australia is experiencing a decline in international student numbers, with a significant the drop in those coming from China (Australia's leading source of international students). *The Australian* quotes education agents in China predicting a 20% drop in enrolments for some institutions, a figure exacerbated by the high proportion of English language and diploma-level students. Changes in immigration regulations, concerns over visa processing, tougher residency entitlements, and a strong Australian dollar, are among the factors cited, with their effect compounding an earlier decline in incoming international students, particularly from India. (Nevertheless, a recent Australian Education International survey indicates that educational or institutional motives, rather than the practicalities of applying, remain the major influence on international student choice: quality (teaching), reputation, and safety.) A university delegation, headed by the Australian tertiary education minister, visited China in November (to help 'explore new opportunities for collaboration between universities in both countries'), while the Australian education marketing agency (Austrade) also sought last month to reassure education agents in China. Reduced income from lower student enrolments is immediate, but with China as Australia's most important trading partner, it is feared that falls in student exchange could also have a long-term impact on sustained business links.

Canada

Although the AUCC has been reasserting the value of a university education – including international education – to different audiences, the Council of Ministers of Education (CMEC) has also recently taken a role in promoting such links. It hosted, for example, the 'first high-level consultation on education collaboration' between Canada's provincial education ministries and China (September 2010), is planning a follow-up meeting (in China this year), and organised a visit by education administrators/teachers to China last October. Collaboration at this level has the opportunity to recognise parallels in education planning across sectors (rural/urban provision, regional training needs), rather than focusing purely on student recruitment.

UK

Among recent initiatives has been the UK-China Higher Education Forum – addressing HE management, governance, and finance issues (October 2010) – and a UK government delegation to China (November 2010) – promoting education, research, and business links. Both research collaboration (currently 'increasing in number more quickly than with any other international partner') and the flow of students from China (an estimated 85,000), were presented as ways of addressing shared global issues and building partnerships for common interests.

Elsewhere

The Netherlands Education Support Office (Neso) has opened an office in Beijing (October 2010), and designs have been released for an innovative university in Singapore linked to a Chinese research institution. Regional initiatives include the World Bank's Higher Education in East Asia project, the Pan-African Forum for Research and Dialogue on Africa-China Relations (March 2011), the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), AUF events, and EU-funded schemes (eg Academic Cooperation Europe-South-East Asia Support [ACCESS]).

Ambitious plans, clear interests

Although this activity reflects a recognition of China's increasing economic and political influence, much of it is also driven by the need to maintain student numbers – and international fees – from Asia. Yet China's National Plan sets out its own vision for the country's educational system; if implemented this will at least change the profile and purpose of international student exchange for China. It seeks to revise the 'world's largest education system to one of the world's best', advocating substantial enrolment increases (a doubling of the working age population to have completed HE by 2020), a better developed 'framework for lifelong education', as well as funding and examination reform. The promotion of international exchanges and co-operation at all levels, including incoming students to China, is recommended, but supplemented with the development of joint laboratories and research centres, as well as further overseas Confucius Institutes. Its plans to improve the quality of its HEIs and support local HE development (particularly in its less well served Central and Western regions), while also revamping postgraduate provision and focusing on its research strengths, show the country's ambition to establish not only a more competitive system internationally but one that better serves its own interests. More structured research links and increased participation also change the goals of internationalisation, both for China and those dependent on its students. It implies a trend to better exploit its increases in R&D spending (it is the world's second highest investor after the US) and to benefit from its expanded graduate education sector.

The scale and speed of China's economic and industrial development have perhaps made its ambition for similar change in its education sector less visible. (The assumption that English is a 'global' language, especially of business, and the proportionally low levels of those speaking or learning Mandarin elsewhere, have also meant that China's expansion has been seen particularly in terms of economics and trade.) Nevertheless the Plan's outline of an integrated and larger system, emphasis on improved quality, and stronger R&D, raise opportunities for internationalisation – in collaborative research and in HE policy/strategy. The Plan, the recent UGC (HK) study ('Aspirations for the Higher Education System in Hong Kong'), and the prominence of the SJTU/Academic Ranking of World Universities project, also draw attention to the differences that exist in the current system and so the value in a more selective and realistic approach in engaging with China. In addition the country's rapid social change (urbanisation, demography, labour trends) suggests the need to be alert to regional developments. In the short-term, exploring what underpins changing Chinese student recruitment trends, and the backgrounds future students from which may come could be valuable. This may include the impact of overseas education on learning approaches as well as on student expectations. Longer term, it will be important to understand how research interests (for universities in China and abroad) are best served, and how these might be pursued where markets, and in some areas, economies, are protected.

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New universities – finding their fit in a diverse sector

What is the role of the new university in a mass, and diverse, HE sector? What models should it follow, and how will its progress be judged – against established institutions or its own ambitions? In an expanding and widely privatised sector, with the professionalisation of many careers, and the effect of competitive labour markets, new HEIs continue to emerge. With the continuing economic crisis, education is facing either increased investment or restricted budgets, both serving to redefine priorities and possibilities. Whether the creation of new universities is a response to long-standing issues of skills or training needs, greater access, or to serve more ambitious national development plans, how wide-ranging or specialist should they be? What effect will the current, and perhaps unprecedented, pressures and expectations in higher education globally have on the development of a new institution, either in its ideals or its initial plans?

National ambitions in small island states

Where a new university is the country's first, its status and potential influence is often emphasised, symbolising national ambitions as much as educational targets. Last November saw the official inauguration of the University of the Seychelles, with degrees in banking, economics, the environment, geography, and law, among the programmes offered in partnership with several overseas universities; principally London, but also Paris 1 (Pantheon-Sorbonne), and Edith Cowan. Some 300 students are now enrolled, with undergraduate and master's programmes for part-time students being developed. The university has been represented as sharing the country's vision 'to create a modern and forward-looking Seychelles'; this is reflected both in how it has been supported (its building refurbishment was entirely funded by the government), and in its aims (in technology, for example, it is to be 'the first institution in Seychelles to become fibre-optic ready'). Its website refers to programmes covering 'subjects that are in demand locally, meet the needs of the various sectors of the Seychelles economy and are of relevance in the global market', implying a balance between serving domestic audiences and anticipating international ones.

In the Maldives there are similar ambitions to establish a university with a focus on a 'limited number of high level academic programmes in areas that were relevant to the Maldives and had comparative advantage'. Coverage of last month's Consultation Workshop on Future Higher Education in the Maldives (organised in conjunction with the World Bank), refers moreover to HE's role in the consolidation of a liberal democracy and 'a stimulating intellectual democratic environment'. The National University Bill was passed in late December.

Elsewhere, when a new nation state emerges, an existing institution can assume a role in exploring and explaining a country's history, and perhaps restoring trust as part of its educational mission. The VC of Juba University – one of several 'repatriated' institutions in Southern Sudan – has argued for education's role in generating tolerance and understanding: 'and through peace, development will come'.

New institutions within established systems

Where new universities are being integrated into larger well-established systems, meeting specifically local education needs tends to be emphasised. The development of new institutions in India in part reflects legislative structures (new institutions being dependent on central/state legislation) and funding patterns. Nevertheless, one of the rationales given for the new Central Universities was that some would be located in states currently without this form of HE provision, while the 14 new 'world class standard universities', dedicated to innovation, were to be 'in or near selected large cities which would automatically have the kind of connectivity and infrastructure which such universities would need' (see [VC-Net 81](#)).

Likewise in Nigeria the six additional federal universities, approved last November, are being sited in states currently without federal tertiary institutions, the aim being to address the 'twin challenges of inadequate access to tertiary education and inequitable geographic spread'. The Committee addressing their development also has a remit to consider the future of polytechnics and single-discipline institutions. At the same time proposals are already underway for the conversion of some polytechnics into city universities of technology, access and quality again being the motives. Quite apart from raising how local interests and needs are best met (can only a local or regionally-based institution best serve that area, particularly given mobility trends and the reach which IT enables?) there are also issues of split funding, varying institutional cultures, and concentrated research strength. Creating new institutions rather than developing or expanding existing ones could in practice foster a system which was uniform but not equitable – one that was evenly allocated, and with standards in common but not, in practice, available to all.

Building on the branch campus model

An alternative approach has been taken with the proposed Singapore University of Technology and Design, which is to open in 2014, and is deliberately avoiding a 'comprehensive university' model. As well as being a collaborative international project (MIT are supporting it and research links with China's Zhejiang University are being developed), it has a commitment to a 20-30% international student intake, and is interdisciplinary and vocational in emphasis. A government budget of at least one billion Singapore dollars has been committed for the campus and initial faculty. It builds on the branch institution approach, bringing together established research expertise and locally relevant training (a recent example being UCL's Qatar 'Education City' campus). Given the long-term and strategic planning involved it cannot be based solely on current demand, instead needing to allow for change in future labour markets and the types of skills required.

No single blueprint

The trend for more specialist institutions and more clearly defined missions, and at the same time the potential for more interdisciplinary and flexible curricula, has been brought into sharper focus by stronger competition for research funding, the emphasis on student choice, and graduate employability. Studies in Canada ('The Benefits of Greater Differentiation of Ontario's University Sector') and the US ('The Multidisciplinary Imperative in Higher Education', 'Communicating across the Academic Divide') are just recent examples which make the argument that a diverse sector is more 'purposeful and cohesive', and can more effectively address complex and multi-dimensional issues. Some reactions in Australia to the newly required 'mission-based compacts' imply a similar understanding – that identifying the idea of the university too rigidly and uniformly, particularly with research, makes the sector less effective.

The continuity of the university as an institution confirms that its success depends not on a single blueprint but on less tangible characteristics such as values and reputation, and more vaguely, how it relates to its immediate environment. The way it directly serves or helps shape its community is an aspect of this, as is its independence.

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Questioning quality

A universalizing trend

As participation rates have soared, as state funding has been withdrawn, and as competition has increased, there has been a new emphasis on quality. Students and parents want guarantees of what they will receive, and research funders want to know what they can expect in return for their investments. The language is of outcomes and benefits. Frameworks, policies and procedures have grown apace in response: research assessment; concern for the 'student experience'; performance indicators and contracts; the application of ISO standards; rankings; internal and external evaluations. At institutional level there are plans, strategy units and guidelines. At national level there are agencies and frameworks. And there are regional HE areas concerned with shared standards and the inter-operability of qualifications. Quality is invoked within all of these – as a driver or justification for activity – and the existence of these mechanisms is in turn used to claim evidence of quality.

The OECD's latest 'Education Today' argues that 'quality assurance in HE is becoming universalised', as the need for quality mechanisms grows, as approaches converge, and as the number of external quality agencies rises (membership of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education [INQAAHE] grew from 11 countries in 1991 to 78 in 2008, encompassing some 154 agencies). Among the most recent is the African Quality Assurance Network (AfriQAN). To some extent this trend makes sense – putting quality and not quantity at the heart of what universities do can surely only be a positive shift. But referring to quality too uncritically, without asking what it really means, risks doing little to achieve actual improvements in student learning or in the value of research.

Confusion and uncertainty

In fact, quality has become a confusing concept, over-used and under-defined. What would better quality – rather than the frameworks designed to manage it – look like? The proliferation of measures of and approaches to quality is influenced in part by varied starting points, nationally and internationally. But it also reflects this underlying uncertainty. The debate has been running for decades. Understandings and definitions have broadened, and means of articulating and measuring it have expanded. Quality is now easily invoked to justify any number of interventions, or selectively engaged to explain any range of results.

In today's era of competitiveness an appeal to quality is common. Improving teaching and ensuring that universities are responsive – or 'accountable' – to students, to employers, and to national development should be the primary concern of quality assurance, the OECD argues. In pursuit of this, the OECD continues, external and internal assessment mechanisms should be combined, and universities' stakeholders – students, employers and funders – should be visible and active participants in the process. The market logic in turn holds that growing demand and increased choice will raise quality (see [VC Net 98](#) on the Browne Review), as student decisions determine university incomes. But while we seem sure of how to judge and measure institutions and 'outputs', we hear much less of how improvements are to actually be achieved – beyond the simple gathering and publication of data somehow stirring some greater effort.

Southeast Asian approaches

A recent meeting convened by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development, explored the differing approaches of 10 southeast Asian countries. Papers do not examine quality as a concept, but do illustrate how varied traditions have influenced the later emergence of quality debates and subsequent approaches to it. In Brunei Darussalam, for example, quality assurance is concerned to give 'confidence to employers and other stakeholders', and its framework places a particular emphasis on student learning. Teaching quality is defined by its tracking of international standards, industry links, and undergraduate entry requirements; research quality guidelines emphasise links to development goals.

Quality assurance can also enable universities to guarantee something for themselves. In Malaysia it is at the heart of moves to grant universities greater autonomy, and the flexibility to respond more effectively to societal needs. Eight have so far been granted self-accreditation status; by 2015 the country's five research universities should be fully autonomous. Accordingly, the Malaysian Qualifications Agency's ambition is to move from external control and assurance, to working with HEIs to enhance their own internal quality management.

From indicators to ethics

But if processes and policies are the primary ways in which quality is understood and regulated, what of quality higher education as an approach and as an attitude? It is at its most effective when least obvious, internalized at the core of the institution, something that all staff instinctively pursue, rather than being imposed via regular appraisals; culturally embedded rather than contained in a set of indicators and processes.

Something of this approach has taken root in the form of the US' new "Presidents' Alliance for Excellence in Student Learning and Accountability", a commitment by the leadership of 71 colleges. It differs from more typical approaches in that there are no core policies or procedures; instead the commitment is to 'build on... previous work to assess, report on, and improve student learning'. Its aim is to cultivate an 'ethic of professional stewardship and self-regulation among college leaders'. It is also entirely voluntary. By collecting and communicating 'model programme' approaches and progress on institutional commitments it hopes to induce 'positive change', through 'data-driven decisions' and the stimulation of a 'culture of inquiry and evidence'. Quality, then, is to be improved not by a series of checklists, but by sharing ideas about how to do things better. Critics argue that it overlooks the tools and the incentives needed to enable it to really effect change, others that data collection alone will be of limited value unless there are mechanisms to ensure that this information is used reflectively and responsively to achieve measurable improvements.

Experiencing quality

The concern with quality reflects ever greater pressure within HE for guarantees and evidence of results and outcomes. Reputations and rankings are becoming increasingly influential – and perhaps distorting. The trouble with quality is not only that it cannot be neatly defined, but the best of evidence of its existence also can't be neatly delivered. Quality is fundamentally about an experience of HE, a by-product of good teaching and good research, and achieving it requires much more than policies and procedures.

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Lessons from a ten year funder partnership: a frank assessment from the US foundations

While it is common to see reviews of projects and programmes, it is unusual to see the funders offering a frank assessment of their own successes and failures. A collaborative project of seven US foundations, working with universities in nine African countries, has done just that, publishing 'Lessons from a ten-year funder collaborative: A case study of the Partnership for Higher Education in Africa'. The figures alone are remarkable. Grants totalling \$440 million were made. Of 65 universities supported through direct institutional grants, 27 received \$1 million or more and seven in excess of \$10 million; 13 regional postgraduate networks received over \$1 million each.

Going against the grain

At the time of its founding in 2000, the Partnership went against the grain of much external assistance to African education. UN and World Bank reports had begun to recognise the value of HE in developing countries again, but this was still a relatively recent shift. The Partnership's collective funding was an important statement: higher education was vital to the continent's future prosperity, and was a legitimate area for support. In addition to direct investment, it also appreciated the need to renew scholarship on Africa's tertiary system. Through a series of case studies, and the establishment of a new *Journal of Higher Education in Africa*, the foundations encouraged a re-analysis of the HE system. Assumptions about the state of the system, and what was needed, were not enough; the trajectories of specific countries and institutions had to be appreciated. Following the Partnership's end in 2010 was again innovative in turning the case study method on itself. Its independent, external review draws on candid interviews with a range of

foundation staff – at programme and presidential levels – to offer an openly critical appraisal of its successes, limitations and disappointments. There is little instinct towards defensiveness and it concludes with a set of advice to funders considering similar collaborative arrangements.

Safety in numbers

The overarching aims of the Partnership (although the review suggests that its goals were ‘somewhat vague’ at the outset) included the following: to tackle areas that were beyond the scope or expertise of individual foundations; to give African HE greater visibility and profile; to affirm its importance through substantial financial commitments; and to develop a more systematic approach to addressing the range of overlapping problems which universities faced. Nevertheless, the anticipated pooling of funding and joint project activity actually accounted for a relatively small amount of the Partnership’s grant-making. Yet its public, substantial commitment to African HE did, it feels, create ‘peer pressure’ amongst individual foundations to increase their spending, and encouraged other donors to see universities in Africa as worthy of investment.

The potential of the collaborative project to tackle problems beyond the scope and resources of a single donor is evident in the success of the bandwidth consortium. This supported universities to negotiate collectively to purchase vital internet connectivity at reduced costs, and to manage this better. \$19.7 million was reportedly saved in the first three years, on the back of an initial Partnership investment of less than a third of this (\$5.5 million). As one staff member comments, it was the ‘safety in numbers’ of the Partnership that enabled such ambitious projects to be pursued. Other joint successes cited include a \$6.7 million Education Technology Initiative, the strengthening of ‘indigenous technical assistance organizations’, the establishment of the Higher Education Research and Advocacy Network (HERANA) at the Centre for Higher Education Transformation in South Africa, and the emergence of a strand of activity to support the next generation of academics.

Shared thinking but cultural differences

While these have all been important, the report suggests that many of the Partnerships most tangible successes have been activities supported by the foundations directly, rather than through the collaborative structure. Yet the value of sharing ideas and greater contact between foundation staff is repeatedly emphasized. Collective expertise could be pooled, creating a ‘safe space for developing ideas’ and each staff member was also subjected to ‘intense intellectual questioning’, helping them to ‘think more deeply about their grantmaking strategies’. The Partnership’s success may in part be measured by the extent to which shared thinking has been continued into the future, although the Partnership came to an end without a clear exit strategy or a plan for the continuation of work by individual foundations. Despite strong commitments the difficulties of sustaining the shared working approach without a formal coordinating body are clear.

Differing mandates, financial schedules, reporting requirements, cultures, and cumbersome decision-making processes did create problems for the Partnership and for its grant recipients. Cultural differences and approaches to decision-making caused tensions, while a ‘lack of clear goals and measurable outcomes from the start’ and insufficient top-level guidance are seen to have been significant weaknesses. Changing agendas amongst presidents also resulted in a lessening of interest from the top.

Advice for the future

A particularly valuable feature of the case study is an attempt to offer advice to other donors considering a joint approach. There are no surprises in the 15 suggestions – not least because they echo points already made – but they do emphasize the danger of overlooking the need for a central coordinating body, and time for trust to be built between the constituent organisations. In highlighting some of the practical challenges facing funders who seek to execute such ambitious projects, there are echoes of the internal difficulties that universities face themselves as they try to effect large scale transformation: securing the engagement of senior leadership; allowing staff to build new relationships across organizational structures; proper initial scoping and clear exit planning.

Of course it is considerably easier for a private foundation to be more open about its successes and failures. There is no tax-paying public to upset and less risk that future funding will be withdrawn. But perhaps the Partnership’s review will encourage greater openness elsewhere, and greater recognition of complexities and difficulties which transformation and capacity building entail. While the end of the collaborative meant the review could be franker, the continued work of the foundations in this area means that lessons emerging may still have a direct impact, and there remains the potential for future, if more targeted, collaboration.

‘Funders and African universities: enhancing the relationship’: A recent report from the ACU, arising from a one-day seminar held in Cape Town in April 2010, offers suggestions on how donors might make

their funding more accessible to African institutions, as universities themselves work to strengthen their own management and accountability systems.

www.acu.ac.uk/member_services/professional_networks/research_management/FundersandAfricanRM

'Collaborating with the Commonwealth': A one-day briefing on funding for partnership opportunities, sponsored by the Association of Commonwealth Universities and the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK will take place in London, on Friday 11 February.

(www.acu.ac.uk/conferences/collaborating_with_the_commonwealth/collaborating_with_the_commonwealth_2011)

Sources:

- *Lessons from a ten-year funder collaborative: A case study of the Partnership for Higher Education in Africa.* Clear Thinking Communications. New York: Partnership for Higher Education in Africa, 2010. www.foundation-partnership.org/index.php?id=3
- *Accomplishments of the Partnership for Higher Education in Africa, 2000-2010. Report on a decade of collaborative investment.* Suzanne Grant-Lewis, Jonathan Friedman, John Schoneboom. New York: Partnership for Higher Education in Africa, 2010. www.foundation-partnership.org/index.php?id=3

Other news

- **Academic Impact** is a United Nations initiative which sees universities 'advancing the purposes of the United Nations, including specifically the Millennium Development Goals'. Its focus is on support for 10 principles (in human rights, literacy, sustainability, and conflict resolution, among others). The Initiative was formally launched at a New York conference (18-19/11/10) (www.academicimpact.org)
- **Economic crisis.** EUA (the European University Association), celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2011, has continued its analysis of the effect of the economic crisis on HE in Europe. Next month it will issue its related project report 'Financially Sustainable Universities: European Universities Diversifying Income Streams (EUDIS)' (www.eua.be/Libraries/Newsletter/Economic_monitoringJanuary2011final.sflb.ashx)
- **International Conference on the Changing Academic Profession** ('The Changing Academic Profession in Asia: Contexts, Realities and Trends'), Hiroshima (Research Institute for Higher Education (RIHE)), 5-6/2/11. Research on the international changing academic profession (CAP) project continues. Next month the latest in the regular series of RIHE-hosted meetings focuses on trends in Asia (http://en.rihe.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/news_topic.php?id=348)
- **International Summit on the Teaching Profession**, an event co-organised by Education International (EI) with the US Education Dept is being held in New York (16-17/3/11). The summit, which will bring together education ministers and leaders, represents the start of an 'on-going international dialogue on the importance of teachers worldwide' (www.oecd.org/document/56/0,3746,en_21571361_44315115_46747768_1_1_1_1,00.html)
- **Mwalimu Nyerere African Scholarship Scheme.** This African Union (AU) scheme to promote postgraduate student exchange within Africa, launched in 2006, has received further European Union funding. The additional EUR 35 million over a 4 year period will enable it to expand the scheme, so providing scholarships for 250 masters/doctoral students. (<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/10/604&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>) (www.nuffic.nl/international-organizations/international-education-monitor/nuffic-blog/launch-of-the-expanded-nyerere-programme/)
- **PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment).** PISA 2009 Results: What Students Know and Can Do (Student Performance in Reading, Mathematics and Science (Volume I)). The latest PISA indicators and analysis have been published, reviewing the educational performance of 15 year old students in some 65 countries. It also outlines the potential impact in terms of policy, such as 'strengths and weaknesses in different kinds of reading' (for the first time the current PISA project assessed the ability to manage digital information') (7/12/10). (www.oecd.org/document/61/0,3746,en_32252351_46584327_46567613_1_1_1_1,00.html)

Conferences (recent/forthcoming)

- **WISE** (World Innovation Summit for Innovation), Doha, Qatar, 7-9/12/10. The second Qatar Foundation-sponsored Summit took place last December, its broad themes being the improvement of education systems, innovative trends, and funding (including aid/development funding). (Qatar's Education City, also supported by the Qatar Foundation, now hosts several branch campuses of foreign universities.) (www.wise-qatar.org).

- **Going Global** (British Council), Hong Kong, 10-12/3/11). The first Going Global conference outside the UK, will have the following as its principal themes: investment returns, regional/global education, partnerships, and universities/colleges (www.britishcouncil.org/goingglobal-gg5-themes.htm).
- **Carnegie Corporation/Time Summit on Higher Education, 2011**. The Carnegie Corporation of New York, with Time magazine, is planning to 'host a national summit of thought leaders on higher education' in 2011. The aim is to 'to look at what's working and what's not, at a moment of great challenge and change in higher education' (9/9/10) (<http://carnegie.org/news/press-releases/story/news-action/single/view/carnegie-corporation-time-magazine-to-host-2011-summit-on-higher-education>)

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- **Academic Staff Salary 2009/10**. The ACU's latest salary survey, which reviews salaries and associated benefits in 46 institutions across 7 countries, shows a reduction in the differences of average salaries, implying increased international competition for academic staff. Of those surveyed Australia and South Africa were the highest ranked in terms of purchasing power. The provision of discretionary bonuses, or market adjustments, has increased significantly since the previous survey. Executive summary released December 2010; full report due March 2011 (www.acu.ac.uk/publication/download?id=294)
- **'Successful Universities in a Changing World: HR Drives the Future'** (ACU Human Resources Management network conference) and **'Changing Times, Changing Markets and Changing Priorities'** (ACU Public Relations, Marketing and Communication Network conference) Melbourne, 22-26/11/2010. Successive ACU network conferences, with a joint day on internal communications. A summary of the two events is included in the current ACU Bulletin (172) (Dec 2010); an additional independent report was included in a recent 'Campus Review'.
(www.acu.ac.uk/view_news?id=63)
(www.campusreview.com.au/pages/section/article.php?s=News&idArticle=19509)
- **'Making the Most of Africa's Graduates and the Role of International Partnerships'** (ACU/British Council conference) Accra, 16-18/1/2011. To explore the opportunities for promoting graduate employability in Africa. (<http://accra2011.acu.ac.uk/>)
- **'Foundations for the Future: Supporting Early Career Research in Africa'**, University of the Witwatersrand, 16/02/2011. Workshop on strengthening the humanities and social sciences in African universities, jointly organised by the British Academy, Higher Education South Africa and the ACU.
- **'Risk, Reputation and Reform: Developing New Business in a Changing Environment'**, ACU Conference of Executive Heads, in association with the University of Hong Kong, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and the Open University of Hong Kong, 6-8/4/2011 (www.acu.ac.uk/hongkong2011)

Key publications

A selection of recent publications on higher education:

Gender Issues in Higher Education (Advocacy Brief) [Ramachandran, V.; Unesco (Asia & Pacific Regional Bureau (Bangkok)); 2010]. Short paper on the main gender issues affecting HE in the Asia-Pacific region, with good practice recommendations and a useful bibliography. (<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001898/189825e.pdf>)

OECD Science, Technology and Industry Outlook 2010 [OECD; 2010] Review of S&T policy trends, in 6 emerging economies (including India and South Africa) as well as OECD states. An additional retrospective study is also included, marking OECD's 50th anniversary year (2011).
(www.oecdbookshop.org/oecd/display.asp?K=5KMJW4MKLQVG&CID=&LANG=EN)

Tendencias Universidad 2020. Estudio de prospectiva [Office of University Cooperation (OCU); 2010] The development of higher education in Latin America. It notes, briefly, internationalisation. (Available through the Unesco-IESALC site.) (www.iesalc.unesco.org/ve/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2552%3Aya-esta-disponible-el-libro-tendencias-universidad-2020-estudio-de-prospectiva&catid=11%3Aiesalc&Itemid=466&lang=en)

The Real Academic Revolution (why we need to reconceptualise Australia's future academic workforce, and eight possible strategies for how to go about this) (Research Briefing (Nov. 2010) [Coates, H.; Goedegebuure, L.; LH Martin Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Management; 2010] Analysis of the academic work/workforce in Australia: current (and possible future) trends, with ways to better support academic careers. (www.lhmartininstitute.edu.au/news-and-media/latest-news-and-media/84-new-study-the-real-academic-revolution)

Unesco Science Report: the Current Status of Science around the World [Unesco. Division for Science Policy and Sustainable Development; Unesco Publishing; 2010] Detailed regionally-based analysis indicating trends for developing science policy. Updates the last such wide-ranging study published in 2005, and complements the 'World Social Science

Report' issued in June 2010. (www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/science-technology/prospective-studies/unesco-science-report/unesco-science-report-2010)

World Data on Education (2010/11) [International Bureau on Education (IBE); 2010/11 (7th ed.); IBE] Updated profiles of national education systems, with related statistics, continue to be added to the Unesco/IBE site (the previous (6th) edition was that for 2006/07). (www.ibe.unesco.org/en/services/online-materials/world-data-on-education/seventh-edition-2010-11.html)

The authors Nick Mulhern and Jonathan Harle are always pleased to receive comments on the usefulness and content of this briefing. News from other Commonwealth countries, which might be of wider interest, is also most welcome. They can be contacted by e-mail on vcnet@acu.ac.uk or by fax on +44 (0)20 7387 2655. This and previous issues can also be accessed online at: www.acu.ac.uk/member_services/research_and_policy_analysis/vc_net
