

## CHAPTER 1

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### Contours of the Future for American Higher Education: Aspects of Mature Development

*I see ahead no third great transformation to match the periods after the War between the States or the two decades from 1960 to 1980.<sup>1</sup> But I do see shifting trends and developments that will induce changes that will write an interesting history in the future.*

*The biggest issues at the time of the first great transformation (1860 to 1890) were the reorientation of higher education to more forms of service to more elements of the population, and the replacement of a religious by a scientific orientation. The two biggest issues of the second transformation (1960 to 1980) were the explosion of student numbers, and the political unrest among students and faculty members. Four big long-term issues I now see ahead are the eternal issue of merit versus equality, the impacts of new orientations of knowledge, the changing mentalities of faculties and students related to social and political identifications, and a scarcity of resources and intensified competition for their allocation.*

#### Near Certainties

There are no certainties.

—H. L. Mencken

Higher education in the United States has some well-established patterns of behavior that are likely to continue:

1. *The secular trend in attendance rates.* Higher education has responded to the ever-advancing proportion of the population wishing to attend institutions of higher education. Enrollment was, as a percentage of the 18–21 age cohort, as follows:

3 percent in 1890  
16 percent in 1940

30 percent in 1950

40 percent in 1990 (50 percent attend at some point in their lives)

This trend will continue for the foreseeable future but almost certainly at a falling rate of progression. This long-run trend, however, was strong enough to help offset the long-heralded “demographic depression” of the 1980s, and its potential influence was mostly grossly underestimated in advance. Enlargement of the demand to fill the growing proportion of jobs in the labor market requiring a college education, rising per-capita wealth, and the growing impact of emulation as college attendance has become more the norm rather than the exception all support this secular trend. Possible future attendance rates might be as follows:

About 50 percent in 2000, to meet the estimated needs of the labor force for new entrants. (See chapter 4.)

60 percent in 2013, if Daniel Bell’s scenario comes true as attendance reflects the expected increasing needs of the labor force.<sup>2</sup>

53 percent in 2030, if the trend from 1950 to 1990 continues, but this period included the transition from mass- to universal-access higher education, and this transformation will never be repeated.

54 percent in some still-distant future, if, as the Carnegie Council once suggested, the high school graduation rate for the nation comes to match the current rate in Minnesota (and also in Japan—90 percent) and if the college attendance rate of high school graduates for the nation comes to match that now in California (60 percent).

Approaching 100 percent ultimately, if Howard Bowen’s dream of a nation of educated people really comes true.<sup>3</sup>

2. *Changing size and age composition of the population.* The future totality of enrollments will also be affected by the total size of the population, which is expected to remain fairly stable. It will additionally be affected by the changing age distribution, which is expected to continue to shift to older age groups. Higher education will probably continue to depend more and more on older students, but thus far this has meant mostly those under the age of thirty-five. Moreover, the age distribution of the population will continue to be affected, in diminishing degree, by the repercussions of the “baby boom” after World War II for at least another fifty years. Faculty recruitment patterns will also continue to reflect the changing size and age compositions of the population, to an exaggerated degree, up and down.

3. *Shifts in racial and ethnic composition of the population.* College attendance will also be affected by the composition of the total population by race and ethnic group. Minority Americans will prospectively be as follows as a percentage of the total population as compared with 1990:<sup>4</sup>

20 percent in 1990  
30 percent in 2000  
45 percent in 2050

In 1990, these minorities, on an overall basis, attended higher education at about two-thirds to three-fourths of the rate of the majority population. Presumably attendance will rise gradually toward majority levels. Higher education, for both of these reasons (minorities as an ascending percentage of the population and rising attendance rates among these minorities), will inevitably be more and more concerned with racial and ethnic issues than ever before, and also with remedial education.

Changing participation by gender will have much less impact than over the past half century, now that women attend at a slightly higher rate than men—except at the graduate level in general<sup>5</sup> and the higher-paid professional fields in particular.

4. *The fluctuating rates of payoff to higher education.* Both total numbers of students and their distribution among vocational fields will continue to respond rapidly and quite precisely to rates of payoff to higher education calculated as the excess of earnings of college graduates over high school graduates. These rates fluctuate quite rapidly. For males they were, overall,<sup>6</sup>

48 percent in 1969  
38 percent in 1979  
64 percent in 1989

The 1979 rate was depressed by the combination of a large supply of college graduates as the “tidal wave” of students entered the labor market and by a series of recessions that lowered demand. The higher rate of 1989 is more likely to indicate prospects for the near future, particularly as the demand to fill jobs requiring college-level education continues to increase, as some noncollege jobs are down-skilled, and as the infusion of new and less-educated immigrants puts downward pressure on rates of pay for non-college-level jobs.<sup>7</sup>

The collection and analysis of data for estimating these rates should be refined and followed closely in total, and field by field.

The above four considerations taken together indicate that, in terms of enrollments, the higher education system is entering a period of maturity with a slower growth rate than over the past century; but that it is not, as far as can now be foreseen, approaching a period of decline—far from it. The big impacts will come from the changing proportions of now-underserved minorities (and from the resultant big conflicts also), the aging of the population, and changing rates of payoff.

These forces affecting educational demographics give a portrait of mature development.<sup>8</sup> So also do the five other developments that follow next in our consideration of prospects for the future.

### Probabilities

I see several areas where it appears that the historically developed situation has stabilized:

5. *Massification.* The greatest growth in the size of campuses is in the past. Average campus enrollment rose from less than one hundred in 1870 to fifteen hundred in 1950 to four thousand in 1990. Size for most types of institutions has risen beyond the level of any further clear gains in declining per-unit costs.<sup>9</sup> The burdens of increased impersonal bureaucratization have intensified. Many departments in large universities have passed the size of maximum effectiveness in relations among faculty colleagues.

6. *Unionization.* The rapid extension of unionization (1965 to 1975) is not likely to occur again. The most favored campuses for unionization have already come under contracts. These contracts have resulted more in advancing the doctrine of seniority than in fulfilling hopes for comparatively higher pay. The union movement, as a whole, is in retreat nationwide. Conditions for faculty members are likely to improve, or at least not deteriorate, in the academic marketplaces of the medium-term future.

7. *The private sector.* The private sector may well have settled out at about 20 percent of total enrollments. Enrollments on an absolute basis have stabilized since the late 1970s at 2.5 million. The loss in percentage of total enrollments (50 percent in 1950) was due to the very rapid growth of the public sector, which is not likely to occur again in the foreseeable future. There have been internal changes within the private sector, however, and particularly a decline in Liberal Arts II colleges.<sup>10</sup> The contributions of the private sector have been very substantial, and public policy has increasingly recognized this.<sup>11</sup>

8. *Electronic technology.* The new electronic technology may continue to advance modestly in its influence in the conduct of administration and research, but very slowly in teaching. In teaching, it will not result, as once prophesied, in a new revolution like that of five hundred years ago with the invention of printing.<sup>12</sup>

9. *Shared governance.* The broad sharing of governance will probably continue, at the formal level, about as it is in its multipolar configurations and perhaps rigidify in its details:

The state will control mostly the assignment of missions and the bulk of the financing in the public sector. State coordination, it is increasingly being recognized, works better when it takes the form of guidance of missions and financing by grants for broad purposes than when it attempts line-item control.

The market will control student choices of campuses and fields of study.

The faculty guild will control most academic decisions but, perhaps, with a change of spirit. If faculty members continue to withdraw from committee work, as they have been doing recently, then more responsibility for academic decisions will come to rest, in fact if not in the rules, with department chairs, deans, provosts, and presidents. Shared governance, however, works best with shared work, including by faculty members.

The president and the trustees will control most institutional house-keeping, provide coordination among all participants, and influence the directions and rates of changes.

But the high tide of the most effective shared governance may now be passing, if faculty participation at the committee and departmental levels continues to decline. If this happens, it will be greatly regrettable.

### **The Changing Map of Learning and Consequences for Higher Education**

The developments thus far discussed generally favor stability, but some additional ones imply more dynamic change.

*10. The advancement of specialized and vocational courses—the supremacy of the labor market.* The distribution of students by fields within higher education will continue to follow the demands of the labor market, as it has increasingly over the past century. Until about 1820, undergraduate enrollments were concentrated nearly 100 percent in courses of general education; today that figure lies somewhere in the range of 30 to 35 percent.<sup>13</sup> This range is not likely to rise, even with demands for more attention to liberal education—which, in my judgment, are both a laudable goal and a likely fantasy in terms of substantial realization. The big changes in internal distribution by fields have been, and may continue to be, within the vocational orbit—the great gainers in recent times have been business administration, electrical engineering, and computer sciences.

*11. The force of knowledge.* New knowledge and new skills are now more important to the advance of civilization worldwide than ever before in

the economy, in the polity, and in cultural areas. Thus, the higher education system, contributing as it does to new knowledge and new skills, becomes a more important system among the several systems that comprise society. This means ever more emphasis on research, on skill training, on service to productive elements of society—with leadership increasingly being shared by the United States with Europe and Japan. New knowledge is now the greatest single driving force around the world.

*12. Shifts in areas of new knowledge.* Within new knowledge, attention keeps shifting—in recent times to electronics (including computers), new sources of energy and energy conservation, new types of materials (including ceramics), biotechnology, and the environmental sciences, among others. And new methodologies, based on mathematics and statistics, are penetrating more and more fields, including the social sciences and even the humanities. Mathematics takes the place of philosophy as the most central department on campus—more central even to philosophy itself. This increasing emphasis on mathematics goes back, however, at least to Pythagoras.

*13. The globalization of learning.* Knowledge increasingly is being distributed worldwide, and not only scholars but also students in their curricula respond to the globalization of learning. Particularly at the curricular level, this process, outside the sciences, is at an early stage of development. I am now more receptive, however, than I once was to the conviction of Robert Maynard Hutchins that at some time in the future all students around the world will be taught the same subject matter, but I think that possibility is in a much more distant time than he thought.<sup>14</sup>

Consequences of these thirteen forces and developments affecting higher education can be dramatic. I shall concentrate on four.

### **Consequences for Higher Education**

*1. Expansion of functions.* Expansion of functions for higher education will continue and will include

- a. more remedial work
- b. more concern for the youth group at large—partly because of the immensity of the problems and partly through the default of other elements of society
- c. more cultural training and more public cultural programs for an older, better educated, and richer population
- d. more efforts at applied research and at transmission of research into applications
- e. more research into the social problems of society<sup>15</sup>
- f. more organized thought about the great problems of the present and the future.

2. *Changing locations for expanded functions.* Changes in institutional configurations will continue. They will include more comparative attention (1) to community colleges, but also (2) to research universities and (3) to polytechnical training at all levels; and (4) to a continued expansion of “corporate classrooms” and of for-profit trade schools.<sup>16</sup>

3. *The intensifying struggle over resources.* The competition for scarce resources will intensify. This will occur, first of all, because higher education will require more resources. Second, there will be more competitors for public resources, including for assistance to the more-numerous elderly and the more-numerous neglected children. Third, resources will be in restricted supply if, as seems likely, the working-age proportion of the total population contracts, and the increase in per-capita productivity of the work force continues to hold at lower than historic levels—perhaps at 1 or 1.5 percent, rather than 2 to 3 percent, per annum.

This all means that both public and private institutions will need to look more actively, as they are already doing, at nonpublic sources of support. These include gifts and tuition. Tuition is a particular problem for public institutions, with their historic policies of low tuition. Additionally, the tuition burden will fall more and more on students and less on parents. Parents have been moving in a more hedonistic direction, spending more on themselves and less on the education of their children. Public support, thus far, has offset the decline of parental support and has grown greatly in the proportion of all expenditures on higher education. As further growth of public contributions becomes more difficult, however, the contest between parental versus student financing will increase. The students will lose. Thus loan programs to students will become increasingly important, with loan programs calling for more-assured repayment. Students are, it should be noted, the great beneficiaries of a college education, and they now, heavily subsidized as they are, are given great advantages over their age-cohort counterparts who do not go to college.

This is not to suggest that the states will not do their best. Their record at the time of the student troubles was remarkable. Looking at their contributions, one would never know that student troubles had alienated the public—but apparently only from the student activists and not from colleges and universities.

Partisan politics has had less impact on higher education in the United States than in some other countries—this has also been true, but to a lesser extent, of the United Kingdom and Canada. In continental Europe, state intervention, from a socialist and social democratic orientation, was massive in response to student revolts, as in France, Italy, Germany, Sweden, and the Netherlands, among others.<sup>17</sup> The emphasis was on equalization: of student access, of distribution of power in internal governance, and of status among institutions.

In the United States, such partisan influence has been only marginal and often nonexistent. Democrats have been somewhat more concerned with student access, and Republicans with research activity and with the welfare of private institutions. But there has been at least as much variation among Democrats and among Republicans as between them. The largely nonpartisan support for higher education in the United States has been a great asset in the past and is likely to continue into the future.

4. *Continuing conflicts.* Conflicts will continue over

- a. comparative emphasis on merit versus equality as both become more important—the first, in economics, the second in politics
- b. differentiation versus the homogenization of functions among institutions of higher education
- c. governance reliance on general direction versus specific controls.

**Clear Uncertainties with Unclear Consequences—  
Palpitations of the Heart**

1. *Citizenship responsibilities—nomads and tribes.* The decline in devotion to and performance of citizenship responsibilities by faculty members on campus may (or may not) continue at a modest (or accelerated) rate, as rewards continue to be given more for other contributions and for seniority,<sup>18</sup> and as the “me generation” of self-gratification and personal cost-benefit analysis increasingly dominates the professoriate. These changes in performance of citizenship responsibilities include greater reluctance to serve on academic committees.<sup>19</sup> They also include more willingness to engage in economic, political, and academic exploitation of institutions of higher education—individual aggrandizement before campus welfare. The “wild card” is that we do not yet know how far these trends will go, whether or not they might be reversed, and what their full repercussions may be.

Henry Rosovsky, in his final report as dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) at Harvard, wrote so very sadly:

This brings me to the crux of the matter. FAS has become a society largely without rules, or to put it slightly differently, the tenured members of the faculty—frequently as *individuals*—make their own rules. Of course, there are a great many rules in any bureaucratic organization, but these largely concern less essential matters. When it concerns our more important obligations—faculty citizenship—neither rule nor custom is any longer compelling.

To put it slightly differently, as a social organism, we operate without a written constitution and with very little common law. That is a



poor combination, especially when there is no strong consensus concerning duties and standards of behavior.<sup>20</sup>

A related uncertainty is a continuing slow decline in the internal life of the campus as one integrated community.<sup>21</sup> Faculty members now live in more worlds than the campus alone, and so do their spouses, as they are more likely to be employed. The campus, particularly in the dominant public sector, is also less likely to be, and to view itself as, a self-governing unit of burghers.

Additionally, the campus, as also the external society, is becoming more a series of enclaves divided by race/ethnic group, by gender, by political orientation, by “old-guard” citizens versus “guest workers” whose basic allegiances lie elsewhere.

The declines in citizenship participation and in sense of community strike me as the most important developments affecting academic life today. In the academic world, as elsewhere, more people are acting like nomads—moving from place to place, living off the land; and like members of tribes contending with each other.<sup>22</sup>

2. *Student (and faculty) political activism.* A second (and partially related) “wild card” is the prospect for student (and faculty) political unrest—a possible repetition of the 1930s or 1960s. In the long run, the tendency has been toward recurrence of periods of such unrest at heightened levels of intensity from one to the next. I have doubts that this history will continue to repeat itself, or, at least, repeat itself in the same way. The new political issues of race and gender are more likely to set student group against student group and faculty group against faculty group than to set students and faculty, together, against the campus administration or the external society. Societal issues are moving from a vertical plane to the horizontal—from the poor against the rich, from the powerless versus the powerful, from the workers against the capitalists, in vertical opposition, to more-horizontal conflicts of black or brown versus white, of male versus female, of pro-choice versus pro-life, of environmentalists versus developers, of cultural conformists versus adherents to the counter culture, of pro- versus anti- this or that “exploited” group or special cause around the world. A single unified “movement” or “revolution” now seems less likely in the future than it seemed in the past. On campus, as within the nation, horizontal tribal warfare at least partially replaces class or antiestablishment vertical warfare in one form or another.<sup>23</sup>

The forms of warfare that may best fit this fractionalization of protest are small scale and guerilla-type actions of an anarcho-syndicalist orientation by special interest groups, more like the IWW of World War I and the early 1920s than the “old Left” of the 1930s or “the movement” of the 1960s. In the 1930s, the “old Left” advanced the idea of “the revolution” to end all

revolutions; in the 1960s, the “new Left” supported “*the movement*” that was to “reconstitute” the university and then, through the university, the society. Now the emphasis is more on spontaneous acts of protest, issue by issue, regarding, for example, policy toward South Africa or toward Iraq, with varying coalitions forming and dissolving.

The experience of the Rutgers conference in February 1988 is informative. It involved seven hundred political activists from 130 campuses. The intent was to establish a new “united front of the left.” The result was “catastrophe.”<sup>24</sup> The conference broke wide open. The basic split was between black and Third World students versus majority students. But this was not just a split based on racial/ethnic status. It also involved goals: more social justice for minorities versus a total reconstruction of society. It also involved means: “how best to mobilize campus and community” for practical results versus a more “hyper-militant late-sixties” approach. And were individuals to be involved for the sake of their ideological interests or for the sake of the “desire to prove commitment” and to experience “heroic militancy”?

Activists are now more divided by goals. They are also more divided by means: negotiation and persuasion, or peaceful civil disobedience, or enticement of police violence, or directly initiated violence? And there exists an overall conflict of whether to try to revive the “mythic character of the sixties,” or to learn from the earlier “limited success” of “a movement that had somehow gone awry,” and then build their own “alternative political models.”

How will it all turn out? We cannot know. My own expectation is that there will be more fractionalization over goals than in the earlier part of the 1960s, and a reemergence of the fractionalization over means that became so controversial in the late 1960s. I anticipate that there will be segmented issues and an occasional overarching current event issue with temporary coalitions but no one “movement” or “revolution”; and more emphasis on the non-violent within the spectrum of means than on the violent, as a result of reflections on the counterproductive emphasis on violence in the late sixties.

3. *Changing mentalities.* In the 1960s, a major theme was dissent and experimentation; in the 1970s and 1980s, it was more self-gratification—each with impacts on higher education. What mentalities may develop in the future is sheer speculation. One possibility is that there will be still more development in the direction of individual nomads and of more tribal groupings, as discussed above.

Mentalities of youth (18–24 years of age) in particular clearly do change, and perhaps keep on changing, as societies become more economically advanced. A *World Youth Survey*, covering eight more-advanced societies (including the United States) and three less-advanced, showed at least

two great differences: In the more-advanced nations there was (1) less contact with the family and (2) more “self-interest” and less “society-minded” orientation.<sup>25</sup>

Changing mentalities, it seems quite likely, affect the conduct of higher education sooner and harder than most other segments of society. But they are elusive to identify when they do occur and difficult to anticipate with accuracy, as the Marxists have discovered, to their regret, with their prophecy of the inevitable rise of “class consciousness” to revolutionary levels. John Maynard Keynes did foresee more emphasis, in the economy, on current gratification (“jam today” instead of always “jam tomorrow”)—more personal debt instead of more savings with “compound interest.”<sup>26</sup> And David Riesman and associates noted the shift from “inner-directed” to “other-directed” mentalities that have so affected social life.<sup>27</sup> Keynes, in effect, saw nomads in the future; and Riesman saw enclaves. What new mentalities may now be being born, like the “adversary culture” was in the 1960s?<sup>28</sup>

Francis Bacon once wrote that “man” tends to begin with certainties and to end with doubts. So it has been in this effort to indicate future possibilities for higher education in the United States in the medium run.

May I conclude, however, that, among the future possibilities, particularly to be considered are these: (1) What is happening in the realm of new knowledge and in the related area of labor markets. (I once asked Ernest Lawrence when I was chancellor at Berkeley and he was director of the Radiation Laboratory: “What are the most important discoveries in the world of science out there waiting to be made?” He replied: “If I really knew, I would go right out there and make them.”) (2) What is happening in the visible racial/ethnic composition and attitudes of student bodies and faculties, and in the less visible underworld of community attachments, of citizenship responsibilities, and of orienting mentalities; and in student and faculty political activism—most highly visible when it arises. Thus we face new knowledge and new attitudes, and a resulting changing climate for higher education.<sup>29</sup> (3) What is the trend in the availability of resources to higher education. (4) Is the heightened battle over merit versus equality, in one form or another, to go on forever?

Each of the above considerations will have differing implications for each of the major segments of higher education and for individual institutions within each segment.

Plato’s “wheel of education” is really moving at an ever faster rate in response to new knowledge and new skills, but the road it traverses is getting steeper (accumulating resources), developing more potholes (new mentalities and new modes of behavior on campus), and swerving in direction between merit and equality.

## Notes

1. See, for 1860–90, the discussion in Lawrence Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965). For 1960–80, see Clark Kerr, *The Great Transformation in Higher Education, 1960–80* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991).

2. Daniel Bell, “The World and the United States in 2013,” *Daedalus* 116, no. 3 (Summer 1987): 27.

3. Howard R. Bowen, *The State of the Nation and the Agenda for Higher Education* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1982), 101–2. It should be noted, however, that Bowen does not define in any specific way what he means by “a nation of educated people.”

4. Minority proportions in the younger age cohorts could be even higher: “Three in ten people under 18 years of age in America are now minority. By 2020 or 2030, about one in two could be minority” (Russell Edgerton, “A Long, Deep View of Minority Achievement: L. Scott Miller on the Data,” *American Association for Higher Education Bulletin* 43, no. 8 [April 1991]: 4).

5. In the year 2001, however, women are expected to receive, for the first time, more doctoral degrees than men (Debra E. Gerald and William J. Hussar, *Projections of Education Statistics to 2001: An Update* [Washington, D.C.: U.S. National Center for Education Statistics, 1990], table 30).

6. Kevin Murphy and Finis Welch, “Industrial Change and the Rising Importance of Skill,” in *Uneven Tides: Rising Inequality in the 1980s*, ed. Sheldon Danziger and Peter Gottschalk (Ann Arbor: School of Social Work, University of Michigan, 1991).

7. For a view that “education may become a more important element in determining the career and earnings paths of individuals” in the future than in the past, see Frank S. Levy and Richard C. Michel, *The Economic Future of American Families* (Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute Press, 1991), 109.

8. The current official estimate of enrollments in 2001 is 15.9 million, as compared with 13.6 million in fall 1991 (William J. Hussar, *Pocket Projections: Projections of Education Statistics to 2002* [Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics, 1992], 3).

9. See the discussion in Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, *New Students and New Places* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971), 67–71.

10. For a discussion of the decline in Liberal Arts II colleges, see David W. Breneman, “Are We Losing Our Liberal Arts Colleges?” *College Board Review*, no. 156 (Summer 1990): 16–21ff.

11. ECS Task Force on State Policy and Independent Higher Education (John Ashcroft and Clark Kerr, CoChairs), *The Preservation of Excellence in American Higher Education: The Essential Role of Private Colleges and Universities* (Denver: Education Commission of the States, 1990).

12. Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, *The Fourth Revolution: Instructional Technology in Higher Education* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972).

13. Elaine El-Khawas, *Campus Trends, 1990*, Higher Education Panel Report, no. 80 (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1990), 7. (This is the best estimate we have, but I note that it seems on the high side to me.)

14. Robert Maynard Hutchins, *The Learning Society* (New York: Praeger, 1968), 70.

15. See the discussion by Donna E. Shalala, *Mandate for a New Century: Reshaping the Research University's Role in Social Policy*, Eleventh David Dodds Henry Lecture, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 31 October 1989 (Urbana-Champaign: Office of the President, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1990).

16. See Nell P. Eurich, *Corporate Classrooms: The Learning Business* (Princeton: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1985); and Nell P. Eurich, *The Learning Industry: Education for Adult Workers* (Princeton: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1990).

17. See the discussion in Paul Seabury, ed., *Universities in the Western World* (New York: Free Press, 1970).

18. See the discussion in Ernest L. Boyer, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* (Princeton: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1990), of how "service," while given "token recognition," is "consistently underrated" (28).

19. Increasing numbers, particularly of younger faculty members, apparently are avoiding committee assignments or performing them in a perfunctory manner—they take time and they increasingly involve unpleasant hassles and even personal enmities. The phenomenon of the free rider is inherent in the "logic of collective action." In any collective endeavor, there are overhead costs to be borne; some members will bear more of these costs than others, and some may bear no costs at all. This is true in trade unions, bar associations, churches, leagues of women voters, and all other organizations of any appreciable size. Consequently, there can be exploitation, by those who do little or nothing, of those who do more or most. Such exploitation can be particularly costly in academic life organized on the basis of collegiality. If it became epidemic, the foundations of shared governance could be weakened. (See the discussion in Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965], 29–35.)

20. Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences, *Dean's Report, 1990–91* (Cambridge: Harvard University), 12.

21. See Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, *The Conditions of the Professoriate: Attitudes and Trends* (Princeton: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1989), which notes that 75 percent of faculty members at research universities rate the sense of community on their campus as "fair" or "poor."

22. For a discussion of "nomadic man," see Jacques Attali, *Millenium* (New York: Random House, 1991).

23. See the discussion in Institute for the Study of Social Change (Troy Duster, Director), *The Diversity Project* (Berkeley: University of California at Berkeley, 1991). The authors also suggest a possible “idealistic” “third experience” of cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity, a stage beyond “zero-sum conflict,” in which “people come together across different cultural experiences, and in that coming together produce an experience that is transcendent, greater than the sum of the individual parts” (53).

24. See the discussion in L. A. Kaufman, “Emerging from the Shadows of the 1960s,” *Socialist Review* 20, no. 4 (October-December 1990): 11–20. The quotations are from this source.

25. *The Youth of the World and Japan: The findings of the Second World Youth Survey, 1978*, Youth Bureau, Prime Minister’s Office of Japan (1978).

26. “Economic Prospects for Our Grandchildren,” in John Maynard Keynes, *Essays in Persuasion* (New York: Harcourt-Brace, 1932), 370.

27. David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950). (In collaboration with Reuel Denney and Nathan Glazer.)

28. Lionel Trilling, *Beyond Culture: Essays on Literature and Learning* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1965), Preface.

29. For the main dangers that Derek Bok sees for the future of universities in the areas of (1) “the politicized university,” (2) “the overextended university,” and (3) “the commercialized university,” see Harvard University, *The President’s Report 1989–1990* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1991).

### Challenges to Be Faced:

#### Advancing the Quality of the Future Performance of American Higher Education

*Higher education in the United States is now entering a period of mature development after a prolonged childhood, youth, and young adulthood (a period of three hundred years). The times of great and assured growth are past. A change of life is hard upon higher education, with a new series of issues—a new list of choices to be made, and some unaccustomed self-doubts. Even institutions, including those within higher education and also within religion, having most nearly eternal life can enter times of uncertainty. This seems to be one such time for colleges and universities. Thus they need to be aware of what problems they may face and to consider what corrective measures they might take.*

*The period ahead (roughly defined as the academic faculty generation of 1990 to 2010) poses some new challenges to higher education decision makers and some old challenges in new forms.*

#### **Management of Stasis in Overall Growth but with Changes in Programs**

For thirty-five decades higher education in the United States has been practicing addition and multiplication. Student enrollment has gone from 9 students—all at Harvard—in 1640 to 14 million in 1991 in thirty-three hundred institutions, and expenditures from a few hundred British pounds to \$100 billion. Within this pattern of growth, American higher education has accommodated many changes and taken on many new functions.

Higher education now faces a long-term situation unprecedented in the past hundred years (1870–1990): It must change and add functions with less growth in enrollments and financial resources to aid adjustment. It must do both new things and old things better but within more static parameters of enrollments and resources. It must manage to be dynamic without so much addition and multiplication, and it must learn to subtract and divide creatively. The new will be accommodated not so much by growth as, of necessity, by invasion of the old, and this is much more controversial in campus

politics. For example, if there is an explosion in enrollments in some field, as there was earlier in business administration, how will it be handled? What will be cut?

Kenneth Boulding once wrote a most interesting article on the “management of decline” of growth when decline seemed likely in the 1980s and 1990s. Much of his advice applies almost equally to the management of stasis. He said that “we are now entering the age of slowdown”—as the railroads did long ago. He noted in particular:

Perhaps the crucial problem of the declining sector is that its administration becomes more difficult and the quality of administrators is apt to decline as the able ones find more attractive opportunities in the expanding sectors.

The skills of managing a declining institution are not only different from but are probably in some sense greater than those required to manage institutional growth. There is in the former greater need for empathy and for an all too rare mixture of compassion and realism, and for the creative widening of agendas. The manager of a declining institution is required to think of more things that haven’t been thought of. In a growing institution mistakes are easily corrected; in a declining institution they are not.<sup>1</sup>

Higher education has managed fast growth spectacularly well. Now it must manage slow growth, but in a society that relies upon its colleges and universities more and more for its future vitality. Slow growth will be harder to manage so spectacularly. Higher education will need to rely more on internal readjustments instead of external extensions. There will be at least two negative consequences: some likely loss of dynamism, and clearly greater strains on the processes of governance.

While the historical expansionist aspects of higher education—growing enrollments and resources—will recede in importance, societal expectations for the performance of higher education will not. A great advantage of American higher education in world competition has been its comparative dynamism. It is essential that it not be lost or, at least, not diminished too greatly, for there is still much to do.

We have done comparatively well versus most other nations in the past in adjusting the levels of access to higher education to meet social demand, in responding to the labor market, in improving research and development, and in depending on merit in the admission and promotion of students and faculty members at the higher academic levels, and in many other ways. We are doing less well now in each of these areas as we encounter new problems:

Student access: We are doing less well with underserved minorities than we do with the majority population.



Contributions to the labor market: Some gaps are showing up—much more in primary and secondary than in higher education—in the acquisition of basic skills and knowledge, and in the development of productive work habits.

Research and development: Some other nations, particularly Germany and Japan, are now catching up with us.

Merit: More and more of our professoriate (two-thirds to three-quarters) operates within a system essentially based on seniority, and more and more of our students are judged mostly on meeting minimum standards of performance.

### **Strengthening Decision-making Processes**

Higher education will need to strengthen its decision-making processes in order to remain dynamic. It is not now well set up to make hard decisions. In terms of governance, it is a series of more or less independent “estates” that are loosely coordinated by the presidents,<sup>2</sup> many of whom, like Louis XVI of France, have lost their heads in the course of attempted coordination. A particularly confusing aspect of the estates model is that authority flows upward and downward and sideways in contorted patterns.

I would stress three current imperatives in particular: reversing the decline in the citizenship roles of faculty members; retaining and even increasing presidential and trustee involvement in an advisory capacity in academic affairs—keeping them more at the center of the entire enterprise;<sup>3</sup> and stressing the importance of the mechanisms of “consultation and accountability”<sup>4</sup>—distributing information, getting feedback, building consensus—and specifying accountability. The estates model can work well only with consultation and consensus building, with the president as the chief communicator and consensus seeker and not just as head of the administrative bureaucracy.

Higher education will need to find ways to subtract as well as to add, to reduce less-useful areas in order to make way for the more useful, as Duke and Stanford, among others, have done so courageously and judiciously in recent times. There will be some net benefits to quality as older and less-beneficial programs are replaced by newer and more-useful programs, resulting in an improvement in the overall level of performance by doing more of what can be done best. This is much harder to accomplish in times of growth, when necessity does not make it so imperative to eliminate weaker programs.

Tough decision making is subject to the dictates of two “laws,” each of which causes difficulties:

Bowen’s Law I: “Institutions raise as much money as they can and spend it all.” (Howard R. Bowen)<sup>5</sup>

Bowen's Law II: Costs per student in higher education rise at the rate of the economy-wide cost index plus 2 percent over the long run. (William G. Bowen)<sup>6</sup>

Law I means that institutions of higher education do not conserve resources for future use—no “rainy day” funds. Law II means that institutions of higher education need more outside resources all the time to stay even, since it seems that they cannot internally easily, if at all, gain resources from increased productivity, as do many other institutions of society—at historical rates averaging 2 percent a year. And, thus, productivity gains offset cost rises more in the economy as a whole than in higher education. The public wonders why. The answer is simple: Productivity has remained constant. This “law” may need to be reexamined in the period ahead.

Even accepting these two laws, there are ways to make better use of resources, and they need to be cultivated.<sup>7</sup>

Overall, the related requirements of commitment to dynamic change and to provision of tough decision making both conduce toward a more coordinated central decision-making process involving trustees, presidents, and faculty leaders.

### Handling Polycentric Conflicts

Internal conflicts have always been endemic in American higher education. In the first two centuries and more (1636–1870), they consisted mostly of student opposition to *in loco parentis* rules—*in loco parentis* mostly won; and of the faculty contest with trustees over who had the ultimate governing authority, as at Harvard and William and Mary—the trustees (Calvinist model) mostly won against the faculty (Anglican model).<sup>8</sup> Then, still later, trustees and presidents became clearly dominant after the War between the States for about forty years (1870–1910), giving rise to the attacks by Thorstein Veblen and Upton Sinclair, among others, and to the organization of the American Association of University Professors. This period was followed by an increasingly accepted truce, as “shared governance” became the standard model (1910–60).<sup>9</sup> The 1960s then saw the student revolts, and the 1970s and 1980s the restoration of faculty authority, including, in some places, via unionization. Now we enter the 1990s.

Now there are more conflicts of students versus students and faculty members versus faculty members, and of some of each with administrators and trustees.<sup>10</sup> These are over both ends and means. Both the issues and the means of their advancement are more subject to debate. Earlier bipolar conflicts are being replaced by polycentric conflicts.

Polycentric conflicts require more knowledge of what is going on—more presidents who walk the campus, more deans of students (once deans of stu-

dent deportment and now deans of student advising) who have sensitive antennae constantly alert, and more provosts who work the faculty clubs and the dinner parties. Polycentric conflicts also require better means of consultation and advice between the administration and the faculty, including through elected faculty councils that meet regularly with the presidents and easy recourse to ballots to ascertain across-the-board faculty opinions rather than those of activist minorities alone.<sup>11</sup> They also require a better flow of information to faculties about new developments and new policies.

The new environment additionally requires better codes governing political conduct on campus and better means of independent judicial enforcement. It must be accepted by now that most faculties will not discipline students and fellow faculty members for actions in the political arena, and that it is both difficult and unwise for the administration to serve in the roles of both prosecutor and judge. Consequently, some independent tribunal needs to be established, probably appointed by the trustees after advice from the faculty council and the president. It is probably also prudent to externalize conflict as much as possible by the use of the external law, external police, and external courts.<sup>12</sup> Academic communities do not handle these matters well—they are too often unwilling to temper mercy with justice, and these matters are very divisive within each campus community. Additionally, highly capable lawyers and public relations experts (including those with expertise on how to handle TV) are more urgently needed.

In the choice of presidents, it is important to select individuals who are willing and able to endure conflict situations that require resiliency and the ability to act under pressure, and who have the patience and the inventiveness to engage constructively in agreement building. Presidents now need to understand passions as well as interests. The older interests were easier to handle (one claim for more resources or preferment versus another), for they responded to cost-benefit analysis and to compromise. The passions are likely to be inflamed, not reduced, by the assessment of costs, and their owners to be contemptuous of compromise. It is now more a world of all-or-none and now-or-never instead of a world of more-or-less and now-or-next-time, and of high-minded convictions versus low-minded calculations.

Hirschman has written, in relation to history, “contrasting the favorable effects that follow when men are guided by their interests with the calamitous state of affairs that prevails when men give free rein to their passions.”<sup>13</sup> “Heroic passions” can lead to “coercion and repression”; the pursuit of “interests” is more likely to involve persuasion and conciliation. They represent the diverse worlds of the fanatic and of the pragmatist, of victory-or-defeat and of compromise, of intolerance and of tolerance. The academic world has known passions (as during the religious wars in Europe) and interests (as in the period of shared governance in the United States). Now it is coming to know both.

What might be called the Hirschman scenario of the rise of passions on campus, as compared with the concentration on interests, is a possible scenario but not a certainty. It did play a significant role in the 1960s, and some of the present and advancing issues of the 1990s create a stage for a potential revival. However, the central theme of higher education has been, and very well may continue to be, an emphasis on cognitive behavior, including careful analysis based on facts. On the other hand, I have observed occasionally how faculty members who are coldly analytical in their areas of specialization can be hotly emotional outside them about political and social issues—how they can verify facts religiously within their specialities and react wildly to unchecked rumors outside them. Also, some students have not been committed to a culture of objectivity. The Hirschman scenario must be accepted as endemic within the groves of academe, and occasionally reaches epidemic proportions. When it does, it affects the choice and conduct of presidents and other academic leaders.

### **Advancing Community Welfare and Citizenship Responsibilities**

As the sense of allegiance to the academic community grows weaker and the attachment to personal advancement (even including exploitative practices) among faculty members grows stronger, the campus needs to take counteractive measures.<sup>14</sup> These measures start with selecting faculty members with some attention to their good citizenship records in prior endeavors—as college students and in earlier employment, as shown by participation in leadership roles on campus and service roles off-campus. Also, “the faculty reward structure system needs to be modified to recognize the importance of committing time to the governing process”<sup>15</sup> in considering promotions and in distributing recognition—for example, an “outstanding citizenship” award to parallel “outstanding teacher” awards. Additionally, faculty members can be drawn into good citizenship the more they are informed about developments on campus, the more they are consulted, and the more they are involved in making decisions.

Facilities can help: The campus can assist with the provision of housing in the vicinity of the campus, attractive cultural programs, active faculty clubs, and coffee lounges for faculty members in each major academic building. Departmental size is very important. Beyond some modest size, there seems to be at work a law of declining involvement with growing numbers as senior faculty members know less well their junior colleagues and are less inclined to help and advise them, and as some senior members withdraw into isolation even from their fellow senior colleagues. My observation is that there is a sharp drop of involvement in departments of more than thirty members and often a collapse where there are sixty or more.