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Observatory for Fundamental University Values and Rights

Contemporary Threats and Opportunities

Academic Freedom and Institutional Autonomy within the Context of Accreditation, Quality Assurance and Rankings

Proceedings of the Conference of the Magna Charta Observatory 15-16 September 2011

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www.magna-charta.org

Foreword

Ivano Dionigi, Rector
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I am very grateful to the Observatory that decided to devote this year's seminar to Accreditation, Quality Assurance and Ranking. These methodologies have become main topics in our agenda as they allow us to give the right value to excellence and merit; however they have to be applied in our context very carefully not to lead to a wrong attitude in data use and interpretation (counting what is measurable or measuring what counts?). It is more than necessary to discuss how academic independence and teaching freedom can remain distinguishing marks of higher education institutions but we also have to consider that sound confrontation, monitoring and evaluation of research and teaching activities are more and more strategic factors in the development of the European and global higher education system, which is one of the main goals of the Magna Charta Observatory.

The Magna Charta is the moral foundation of European convergence. It was conceived as a synthesis of the main values shared by the most ancient European Universities but since the very beginning it has been part of a wider, global perspective focused on cultural exchange and sensibility for different backgrounds and traditions. This foresight, together with the simplicity and substance of the values, is the strength of this text that, every year, arouses the interest of new signing institutions. It is very precious for us because it is a living book, that is written again and again by the new signatures of those who are here today and those who will be here in the years to come. Honourable colleagues, with your act you are going to make evolve and enrich the nature of this document, as well as the boundaries of our university and town, thanks to your presence and to the patrimony of new relations you represent for us.

The yearly celebration of the anniversary can be considered as a reminder for the universities that signed in the past, so that we keep reflecting on the meaning of this document in our days. Institutional autonomy, academic freedom, intercultural dialogue, linking of teaching and research, international cooperation can sound as abstract words, elements that are given for granted in our daily work. For this reason it is necessary to agree on how to guarantee mutual engagement, open dialogue and specific investments in order to communicate within our institutions and to the society the real meaning of the mentioned values, so that they can become actual, operational and enable the change and the evolution of our universities.

Opening Address

Üstün Ergüder, President of the Council
Magna Charta Observatory, Bologna

This conference will be a historical occasion because among us we have two of the drafters of the Magna Charta Universitatum.

One is Fabio Roversi-Monaco who is also the honorary president of the Observatory.

We have Hans van Ginkel whom, as a rector back in 1992, I had the pleasure of listening to his lecture at a CRE annual meeting.

This conference is very timely because Magna Charta Universitatum was signed almost a quarter of a century ago, 24 years ago to be exact, in 1988. It is a meaningful document that was drafted by prominent rectors in Europe and I think it has served as a very important symbol and as a very important guide for European Universities. But over time Magna Charta Universitatum has also started to appeal to universities outside the boundaries of Europe. In 1988, 388 universities signed the 1988 Declaration. Right now we

have 766 signatories and every year this number keeps increasing.

We, at the Council, think that it is probably time to sit back, take a deep breath and look at what has happened in this quarter of a century after the signing of the Universitatum. During our day things change fast and higher education gets its fair share of this dynamism.

In this process new concepts and models of governing our universities have come to life. Perhaps the most important development is the emergence of accountability to the society. To be more precise the autonomy of our institutions makes sense if universities are accountable to the society. Within that framework quality assurance as a process of securing accountability to the society has become a very important part of our institutional life in higher education.

I am aware that quality assurance and all the associated processes are an anathema to many academics in the universities. We decided that it is very timely to put the relation of quality assurance with institutional autonomy on the table this year.

The question is whether quality assurance is a friend or a foe. Is it the demise of universities as we know them? Are we creating new bureaucracies? Are we threatening the institutional autonomy and academic freedom? The best way to answer these questions is to open them to debate.

This is what we are doing today and I hope all of us will benefit from this learning process. It is difficult to give gut reactions to new challenges. It's important to understand new challenges, to manage them, and to adapt to them. This is extremely important for our

efforts to defend our values and institutions that have a unique place in our societies as true universities.

I would like to remind those of you who will sign the Magna Charta Universitatum that we take it very seriously. We believe in your commitment to the values that are enunciated in that marvelous document.

Highlights of the Observatory Activities

Öktem Vardar, Secretary General
Magna Charta Observatory, Bologna

Annual conferences of the Magna Charta Observatory have themes covered by distinguished speakers; but it also serves as an occasion to give an account of the immediate past. Over the last 10 years, Secretary Generals have reported in the annual conferences the major accomplishments of the previous year: number of signatories, donations, breadth of the organization (i.e. how far it reaches), consulting trips, etc. I don't want to make a similar summary of the past; I would like to look to the future. At the 10th anniversary of the Observatory I find it timely to reconsider the functions of the Observatory. How can Magna Charta Observatory be useful to the HE sector in general, the signatories in particular? I would like to look at this assembly as the group of stakeholders, in a sense, the general assembly of the Observatory to help the Observatory to shape its long term policies.

Magna Charta Observatory announces and strives to offer/ to provide the following services:

I – The Observatory is a ***think-tank*** that takes stock of the debates on the obligations of institutional autonomy.

Annual September conferences in Bologna, publications posted on the Observatory website, workshops dealing with different aspects of autonomy and freedom are typical examples. It acts as a repository of the idea; networks with other international organizations; participates in conferences and acts as convenor….

II – The Observatory is an ***advisory body*** intervening in national debates on the future of higher education.

Upon the invitation of the signatory or non-signatory institutions national, regional or institutional workshops, conferences, meetings can be arranged such that Observatory representative(s) (any one of the president, council members, former council members or the secretary general) share their views on the issue(s) on the table. It can serve as mediator in cases of conflict or dispute.

III – The Observatory is a *centre* ***monitoring*** the balance of links between the universities and their stakeholders.

The developments surrounding the signatories are of concern to the Observatory especially in areas of political and civil reconstruction.

IV – The Observatory is an ***advocate*** of university values and identity in society. Observatory gives support to drafting legislation or recommendations, developing policies, preparing viewpoints to a wide spectrum of bodies/communities ranging from Council of Europe to national student unions promoting institutional autonomy and academic freedom. … Council of Europe, EUA, IAU.

Thus, Magna Charta Observatory promotes, defends and enhances the core values of institutional autonomy and academic freedom through these four services; but the most important mission is forming a community of shared purpose. This community is the community of signatories. I would like to give you a brief review of this community. The first slide shows the success of the Observatory so far. The number of signatories, starting at 388 at the time Universitatum was introduced, increased at a rate of 3 signatories per year until 2001. After the Observatory was established in 2001 this rate jumped to 31 signatories per year. The second slide shows that we have annually 30 to 40 new comers to our community, approximately from 15 different countries per year. Occasional peaks were due to unproportionate participations from one or two specific countries. Examination of this figure reveals also the popularity of the Observatory in different countries at different points in time.

We hope to make a difference in the organisational actions or the daily lifestyle of signatories. It is a pity if the immense capacity of the Observatory does not help signatories to improve their environment, both internal and external. We expect the Signatories:

– to put the Magna Charta Observatory logo on their websites.

– to post an announcement as to their position related to academic freedom and institutional autonomy – i.e. declare their policy!

– to adopt structures (committees, boards, ombudsmen, etc.) to oversee academic freedom issues within the institution and announce such structures on their websites to strengthen institutional commitment -- i.e. give implementation clues!

We will continue to be careful to accept new signatories in the future not to dilute the mission of the Observatory and to keep the respect of the academic community.

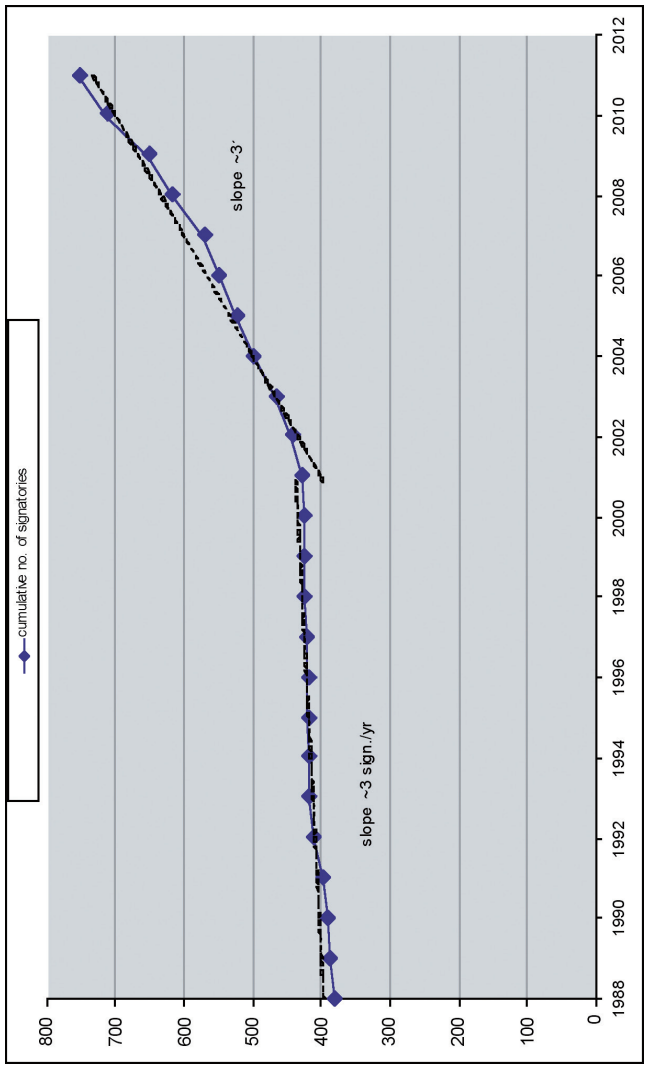
We care about the sustainability of these academic values. Signatories will need to demonstrate that as the leadership changes the ownership of universal academic values and commitment to the Observatory causes should continue without loosing on intensity. This is not easy and it takes time to develop the appropriate culture within and outside of the institution. Nevertheless, signatories should work towards that goal, devise ways and mechanisms to internalise these values, keep on their agenda alive and with a high priority.

"What we do" and "How we do" was covered in the 1st slide. I do invite all speakers and participants to comment on these on relevant occasions if they feel they can contribute to the cause of the Observatory. Whether they find one more important than the others; or if they feel that one should be dropped in favour of the others; or new services to add ?

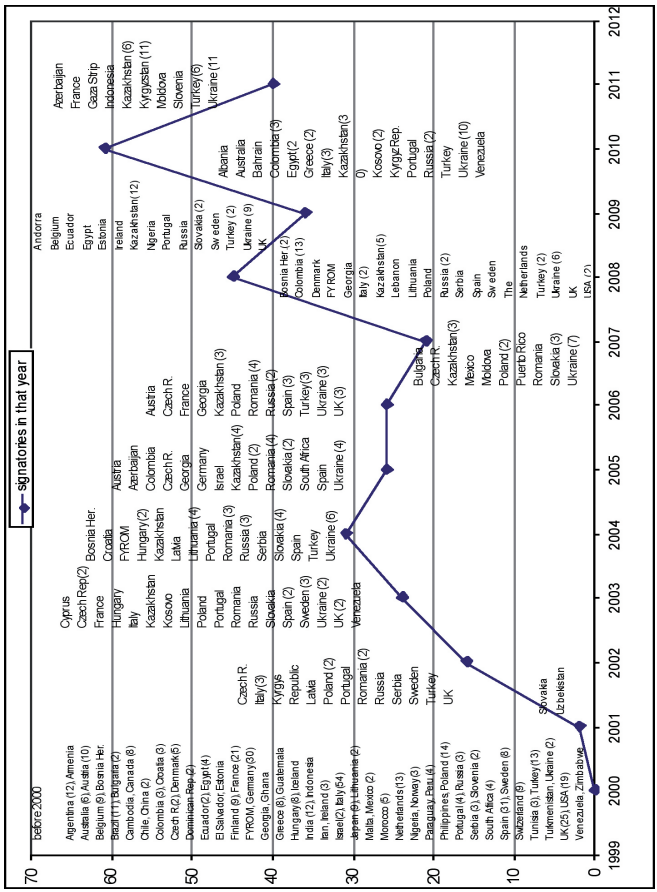
It is more crucial, however, to address the questions "How do we know, it works" and "How do we change, to improve" ? I have to admit that we have not tackled these questions in any length so far;

I hope this conference on 'quality assurance and enhancement' will also trigger us to reflect upon our functions and operations through the lenses of quality. Any comment / critique on this issue in the discussions during the whole day will be invaluable to us.

Slide 1: The effect of the Observatory on the number of signatories.



Slide 2: Countries of the signatories after 2001, the establishment of the Observatory.



Keynote Address of the Conference

Hans van Ginkel, Honorary Professor
Utrecht University, Netherlands

Introduction

Universities are living through paradoxical times. Never before were the expectations of their contributions so high; never before were the doubts on their quality and performance so severe and widespread. As a consequence of increasing pressures on the state budgets, the allocations to universities are under strict scrutiny and budget cuts have become a fact of life. Even more so in countries where ageing, economic crisis and bank failures have had a major impact on available state finances.

'*More for Less'*, is today's omnipresent reality. At the same time the demands on the universities are increasing and becoming ever more diverse, in line with the development of society itself: getting more and more complex. Just like, in particular the *'land grant universities'* in the USA and the *'national'* universities in countries

that have become independent over the last sixty years or so, all the public universities are increasingly becoming instruments for the state to achieve specific policy goals. In the first place to contribute to '*innovation*' and to strengthen the *competitive capacity* of the economy of the country. The '*ethos'* of the university is under increasing pressures.

In this conference the focus will be on '*quality assurance'* (what quality? for what purpose?), and the related issues of *accreditation* and *ranking*. In these issues the core question is what actually will be measured and how? why? and maybe most important of all: *'by whom'*? on the basis of *'which criteria'?* The *true* universities have been given institutional autonomy and academic freedom in order to be in a better condition to develop knowledge beyond the research frontier, to *address issues that are not yet known*. In true universities should therefore, always one key question be kept in mind: '*what is new in this?* how will this help us, our society, forward?' To comply to standards, *being 'average', is not very helpful, when the aim is excellence, world-class, to foster 'breakthrough thinking'*.

There is a great diversity of external pressures on the functioning of universities. Some of these come more *stepwise*, often in a rather *'hidden'* form, for instance in the rules applied in the financing systems of universities, or in laws regulating their governance systems. In this keynote address, I will discuss also such threats beyond the context of accreditation, quality assurance and rankings. It seems that today there is only one opportunity to protect the true university: to *loosen the ties with the state* and *to diversify the university's activities and finances*. To protect its autonomy (and excellence)

the university must become more entrepreneurial, must learn *to 'walk-the-talk'* and learn to *behave more autonomous*.

A Paradoxical Time for Universities

Universities are, indeed, going through a very paradoxical time. The expectations of their potential contributions are extremely high. The financial means and the human resources available, however, are in general very modest, even less than modest, and under great pressure. To complicate matters further: these expectations are really not the same for all people. Parents do hope that their children through higher education will qualify for higher level jobs, with a higher prestige and income, ensuring a brighter future and better quality of life. Students do hope to find new challenges, new ideas, to enjoy a lively and creative environment, which will enable them to enter an interesting future. Governments do hope that the universities will do an effective and efficient job in preparing new generations for the needs of the present and future society, in particular the labour markets.

The money spent on universities should guarantee, at least that is what governments want to believe, adequate availability of the highest quality study opportunities and teaching programs, as well as the access for all capable young citizens to those facilities and programs. In addition, states expect that their universities will perform in research at the highest levels of excellence, internationally, worldwide, and contribute applications of their results to the regional and national companies and economy, early and effectively. Quite interestingly,

the *expectations of the contributions of universities are expressed in different countries in surprisingly comparable ways, even though the levels of funding and therefore the quality of the available infrastructure maybe strikingly different*. It is even more interesting that universities around the world seem to do the same. A wide gap often exists between theory and practice.

In my own country the Netherlands, for instance, politicians time and again express their ambition that we should be one of the five leading knowledge societies of the world, whereas the expenditures on universities as a percentage of the GNP is among the lowest in the OECD. It is an ambition at the same level as being among the ten countries collecting most Olympic medals next year in London. How realistic such ambitions are, can be estimated from some concrete data: according to the size of its population the Netherlands is number 60 in the world and according to the size of its GNP number 16.

The crucial importance of universities for all countries was strongly expressed at UNESCO's World Conference on Higher Education (WCHE, Paris, 1998). For instance: *"Owing to the Scope and Pace of Change, society has become increasingly knowledge-based, so that higher learning and research now act as essential components of cultural, socio-economic and environmentally sustainable development of individuals, communities and nations."*

This importance of universities has, in fact, been understood from their early beginnings. To be able to serve their continuously changing societies better and *focus their research on the yet un-known*, based on *truly breakthrough thinking*, the universities have been

granted *'academic freedom'* and *'institutional autonomy'*. The importance of these principles of the *'true'* university has been demonstrated many times and was, for instance, acknowledged in the *'Magna Charta of the (European) University'*, which was formulated at the occasion of the 900th Anniversary of Bologna University and signed by 388 universities present during the main celebration event (Bologna, 1988, see annex) and since then by hundreds more.

The roles of universities, however, are diverse and not all of these are always well-understood by *'outsiders'*, the public at large. In general terms the universities are presented as being responsible for the *'development, transfer and preservation of knowledge'*. However, this remains quite vague for many and much *more pragmatic, functionalistic, views are often advocated*, in which the universities are primarily seen as responsible for the training of teachers and the development of (school) curricula, as well as the training of medical doctors and the provision of top level healthcare, or also the training of all kinds of professionals and the knowledge support for the legal and administrative systems, industry, business and so on. All of this is true, of course, but at the same time obscures a clear view on the most *crucial* tasks of universities as *centers of knowledge and culture*. These crucial roles include:

1) sustaining and developing the *intellectual base of society* itself, the basis for all future development and growth;

2) promoting *human development and security*, while helping to preserve the cultural identity of society in the age of globalization;

3) giving *inspiration and justified pride* to citizens in the achievements over time of their own society;

4) as well as *promoting dialogue and understanding* to appreciate and respect cultural diversity.

A Copernican Change

Globalization, localization and the rise of the knowledge-society do present universities with a number of challenges and opportunities. We must try to see what these are and what strategies universities might deploy in order to cope with these issues. What can be said immediately is that these processes are occurring concomitantly with the gradual decline in the relevance of borders and with the emergence of the "*network society*" as analyzed by – in particular – Manuel Castells (1996). This has led to a *Copernican change* in the positioning of individual universities (Van Ginkel 2003). No longer can universities see themselves as only part of a national system, protected by the State which had set rules – often in the framework of their higher education laws – on the programs of studies to be provided and research to be done. In Europe (ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/bologna/bologna.pdf), the *Bologna process* illustrates very much this new reality.

Increasingly, universities must rely on *their own performance* in order to secure sufficient funding for high-quality programs of teaching and research. Increasingly, they will find themselves *unprotected* and *in a highly competitive world*. Even within largely state-run university-systems the individual universities must ever more *compete for students*, *research* and *adequate funding*. They do have to strengthen and diversify their external

relations with stakeholders, as well as their sources of financing. Consequently, *universities must rethink* their modes of *governance*, their *financing*, their *internal structures* and *external relations*, as well as their *modes of operation*. Their internal organization must change in order to allow universities to operate in more *entrepreneurial* ways (Van Ginkel 1999 and 2001). In fact, *governments have become dependent* on the goodwill and performance of their universities in order to establish *a 'name'* for the country and its higher education system, as it is the prestige and the ranking position of these universities, individually, that gives the quality mark to the system. All countries are ever more interested in the relative positions of their universities in the global context, as this is a major indicator in the global assessment of the level of competitiveness of their economy.

Clearly, this statement is especially true for countries possessing *predominantly public university systems*, where governments set the framework within which universities *must* operate. The statement also holds true, however, *for private universities*. Even though these have been left more or less alone to look after their own affairs, they operate still within *national frameworks* and these will not continue to exist in the same way in the future. It is indicative that the Japanese *state* universities, traditionally the more prestigious part of the Japanese higher education system, are being placed at greater distance from the national government and are becoming state sponsored, but largely independent institutions. At first sight all this seems to be quite positive for the autonomy of the universities and for academic freedom. The reality, however, is very different. To be strong enough in a period of increased autonomy and

responsibility, but with decreasing funding, universities have started to merge.

Continued Interest of State and Society

Society, however, *cannot afford* itself losing control completely over the activities and development of higher education. The performance of the higher education sector is *too important* for the future of state and society to let that happen. Society does not only need well-educated specialists in the labour force to strengthen the economy. It also needs to generate *an adequate intellectual elite to reflect on and give guidance to the future of their nation and of all humankind*. Society will, therefore, continue to have a keen interest and a direct stake in providing an *adequate supply* of, and *access* to, *quality teaching and research programmes* in universities. Thus, whatever modality is chosen for the organization of higher education, *adequate supply, access and quality* will always constitute the imperatives for which some kind of solution will have to be found (Van Ginkel 2005). Internationalization, networking and mobility should broaden available opportunities and contribute additional quality, not chaos.

With regard to the opportunities and the challenges globalization creates, it is important to also look at how these affect universities in their *actual functioning*. Internationalization, for instance, was seen for a long time after the Second World War as crucial for *peace and progress* and many people thought that *studying abroad* was the key. In the meantime, however, it has become clear that *studying abroad is in itself far from being enough*. This is not to say that it is not important, but

it does not in itself constitute *internationalization*. It is simply just a part of it. It is, however, at least as important for *teachers* to travel and work abroad, and it would be well to ask to what point the *host institutions*, not only the visiting teachers, *benefit* from this experience. It is rare that this issue is considered from both points of view. *Each party must benefit* from the experience to ensure its sustainability on the longer term. Furthermore, one might also ask to which extent this experience abroad really impacts on *the teaching and research programs* of an institution. Or to what extent does it truly lead to *joint* research and/or learning *projects*? Any discussion about internationalization must take into consideration these different aspects of the question. After all the result should be a *'win-win'* for all involved. Politicians are looking carefully at what is happening in the universities and to which extent foreign students are participating in the regular programs. Australia, for instance, demands full payment of all the costs by foreign students. In the Netherlands, a discussion is coming up, to which extent Dutch tax payers are paying for foreign students. Suggestions are being made that the incoming and outgoing student streams should be balanced. This issue, however, is just one of the many that come up time and again, because the internationalization of higher education has wide-ranging effects on the development of the economy, the labour market, knowledge transfer, etc. The '*ethos'* of the university, as expressed in the *'Magna Charta Universitatum'* seems to be completely forgotten in this discussion.

A*ccess*, too, is a topic of major concern for governments, both positively and negatively. For continued economic growth there is a need for a properly edu-

cated labour force. Increasingly, however, questions are raised about what would be the most desirable and useful education? Do we really need so many students in the true research universities? Would other, cheaper, types of education, not be much more useful for the economy and society? Of course, as I have indicated before: the crucial roles of universities really go well beyond the labour market, but it is often an up-hill battle to convince non-believers of this point of view. Internationally, this topic is not the same in every country, and it is often very difficult to properly assess the different situations. In terms of access, for instance, it is very important that everyone with the talent to study, regardless his or her socio-economic background, does have the possibility of entering a university, preferably the institution of their choice, as long as their capabilities match their ambitions. This has been achieved, over time, in a number of countries, but is by no means guaranteed everywhere. However, the discussion around access to higher education changes character the moment entrance levels are entered into the equation. Few realize that there are *one to two years difference in age* – and development or maturing – between students at the entrance level in different countries around the world. The *quality leap* between secondary and higher education is not the same everywhere around the world. What happens during these one or two years? They either form part of secondary education, or part of tertiary education, and this is decisive.

To illustrate this point, it is useful to compare, for instance, Japan with the Netherlands and Germany. In Japan secondary education leading up to the university is normally five years, in the Netherlands six and in Ger-

many also six or even more. As a consequence freshmen in Japanese universities normally enter when they are 17 years old; in the Netherlands and Germany rather when they are 18 or even 19. A bachelor's program in the Netherlands is quite specialized from the beginning and takes 3 years or even less. In Japan bachelor's degree programs last 4 years, of which the first half (often even 2 years) characteristically has a broad program to prepare for the specialized program that follows. Thus, when a country indicates that it wishes 80% of its young people of an age cohort to become student and enter "*higher*" education, two questions must be asked. The first is whether or not the system will have *sufficient capacity*. But, the second and the most important question is whether or not 80% of the population is, indeed, *talented enough* and is capable of undertaking *higher* education; and what quality levels should be attained in *higher* education? Or do we in fact deal with another level of education in which 80% of an age cohort can successfully participate? It may be clear that the situation really becomes complex, when open border policies lead to a situation in which foreign institutions start to create branches in other countries with quite different regulations, conditions and opportunities in comparison to the country of origin. Governments can only move in very prudent ways under such circumstances.

What is becoming increasingly clear is that with the rapid increase in the participation rates in higher education and therefore, also in the numbers of higher education institutions, the *diversity* of these institutions has also increased strikingly. In line with this development, ever more questions are raised what consequences this should have for the higher education policies and in

particular the financial strategies of governments with regard to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

Relevance and accreditation

A further area of discussion revolves around the *relevance* of university programmes. UNESCO, in its World Conference on Higher Education (Paris, 1998) focussed on four major aspects to prepare universities and higher education in general better for this age of globalization:

1) relevance of the programmes (*pertinence*);
2) access for all those having the capabilities to finish successfully the study programme chosen;
3) internationalization and
4) finance.

Other issues discussed included the role of modern information and communications technology, the role of higher education for sustainable human development, the preparation for the world of work and the relations with other levels and types of education. All of these, however, can easily be subsumed under this heading of *pertinence* (relevance).

In a globalized world characterized by an ever-greater competition for funding – in particular public, but certainly also private – the question arises as to what universities are really contributing (Van Ginkel and Dias 2007). As soon as quality is taken into consideration, and accreditation is at stake, there is a whole new series of questions**:** *Accreditation* for what? For which qualities? What kind of qualities do we really want? Who will be the *gatekeepers* of the system? What will

be *their criteria*? This type of questions must be specified and answered before any serious decision can be made. From one side it is important in an increasingly interconnected world, that *studies anywhere lead to diplomas understood, and appreciated everywhere*. At the other side it is important to acknowledge the relevance of diversity, cultural and otherwise. Diplomas should stand for assessed quality at defined levels, *not for uniformity, homogeneity and standardisation*. The WCHE has said about this topic the following: "*Higher education institutions in all regions should be committed to transparent internal and external evaluation, conducted openly by independent specialists. However, due attention should be paid to specific institutional, national and regional contexts in order to take into account diversity and to avoid uniformity. There is a perceived need for a new vision and paradigm of higher education, which should be student-oriented. To achieve this goal, curricula need to be recast so as to go beyond simple cognitive mastery of disciplines and include the acquisition of skills, competencies and abilities for communication, creative and critical analysis, independent thinking and team work in multicultural contexts"* (van Ginkel and Dias 2007, p. 53).

The ultimate aim of quality assessments and accreditation should not be to establish conformity to some standard, but rather to *promote excellence, creativity and innovation*. For this reason the Bologna Declaration pays so much attention to the so-called *'Diploma Supplement'*. It is in this type of questions that international university organizations, like the European University Association (CRE/EUA) and the International Association of Universities (IAU, Paris), can play and have al-

ready played an important and supportive role, in the preparation of credible *systems of accreditation* and the preparation of individual universities for being accredited (Van Ginkel 2002). In particular the *'Institutional Evaluation Program'* of the CRE/EUA has done a great job, in this respect.

The Institutional Evaluation Program

A creative, timely initiative in this vein, was the *'Institutional Evaluation Program'* of the European University Association (CRE/EUA). This IEP started in 1994 (!) with a pilot at Göteborg, Oporto and Utrecht Universities. Its aim was to help the universities of Europe *to prepare for the performance assessments and accreditation schemes that were expected* to come at EU and national levels. The IEP was developed to take into account the great diversity in legal, financial and other conditions in the different countries of Europe. Now, seventeen years later, 260 evaluations have been conducted in 45 countries in Europe and worldwide, making the IEP methodology one of the best and most widely tested among international evaluation programs currently available to universities in Europe.The model has also been *'exported'* to, for instance, Brazil and South-Africa. Even there, it proved to be flexible enough, so that it could usefully be applied (www.eua.be/iep/Home.aspx).

It is the stated mission of the IEP *to re-enforce the autonomy and strategic steering capacity of universities*; and to strengthen higher education systems through *institutional, regional and national* evaluations. In order to achieve these goals the Program tries to emphasize and strengthen an inclusive self-evaluation process and

self-knowledge for improved internal governance and management, as well as for external accountability purposes. The IEP also seeks *to re-enforce internal quality processes* and contributes to building *the capacity of institutions to change*.

Important characteristics of the Program are:

1) interested (member) institutions must *apply* for inclusion in the program;
2) they are, themselves, responsible for *all the costs* to be made for their assessment;
3) the core of the program is the *self-assessment* of the individual participating institutions, which has to be prepared according to the *'guidelines'*, which have been carefully designed;
4) there are *two 'site-visits'* : *one* to assess the specific conditions of the institution and the appropriateness of the self-assessment; *the second* for the preparation of the report;
5) all the *'peers'* are specifically prepared and experienced (former) rectors/presidents/vice-chancellors themselves.

Core questions in the assessment processes of the IEP are:

– What is the institution trying to do?
– How is the institution trying to do this?
– How does the institution know it works (well)?
– How does the institution change in order to improve?

The whole program also provided *a learning experience for the CRE/EUA* itself and its member institutions, even those that did not yet participate themselves. This learning opportunity was embodied in the design of the program, the development of the guidelines for the

self-assessments, the format of the two site-visits and the reporting. From the beginning all these steps and activities have been carefully documented. In addition the secretariat prepared every year a so-called *'issue-report'*, in which an effort was made to draw lessons on *the state* of the European universities on the basis of the assessments made during that (and sometimes also previous) year(s). In this way a thorough overview and *analysis of common issues* of all institutions evaluated was made, as well as of the *good practices* developed in addressing these issues. The IEP, stepwise developed from 1994 onwards, has shown to fit perfectly well within the vision of the WCHE on transparent internal and external evaluation, conducted openly by independent specialists.

Institutional Integrity and Governance

Another important issue – and directly related to the previous one – is that of *institutional integrity*, which can be discussed from two perspectives. The *first* is the degree of *objectivity* and *neutrality* of the science carried out by an institution, which claims its autonomy and academic freedom. The *second*, however, is equally important: Given the changes in communication and information technology, there is a great tendency for specialists to create *worldwide networks*. Does this call into question the integrity of the institution? In terms of the kind of *integral approaches* to major program areas, which are multidisciplinary in character, that it proposes? In an article on '*University 2050: the Organization of Creativity and Innovation'* (Higher Education Policy 1994), I have further elaborated this

issue of '*Universities: Networks or Barracks?'*. Will it still be possible, given the state of tension between this type of *horizontal* and *vertical* organisation (*over space and in place*); to bring people together in multi-disciplinary, issue-oriented university programmes? And this under conditions which make participation in prestigious worldwide – in general disciplinary and highly specialized *'networks'* – much more attractive, because of the related impact scores and their influence on rankings? This is a major question increasingly confronting many universities. What balance can they strike between the global and the local from this point of view?

When trying to cope with all these challenges and opportunities, it will be highly important to consider *which changes* in the fields of governance, internal structure and organization and modes of operation *might be possible and adequate*. For example, when demanding state-run systems of largely public universities during budget preparations to provide complete staffing tables for the following year, and/or to apply for new buildings five years in advance to secure funding, you are not really *challenging the leadership* of a university to be very entrepreneurial. In other terms: *each government gets the university leadership it deserves*, more traditional risk-avoiding and bureaucratic or more innovative and entrepreneurial. The more governments *limit university autonomy* and take over managerial and administrative tasks the lesser the entrepreneurial and innovative capabilities of the university leadership will be (Van Ginkel 2001).

The reality in the universities has become far *too complex* for detailed government involvement in the

regular management and administration of universities. Indeed, over the last ten years, even in state universities, the tendency to become both *more independent* and *more entrepreneurial* has become more marked. Recent experience in Japan, where public universities have been taken out of the state system and will in the future be financed on something approaching a subsidy basis, indicates already that the traditional, internal structures come under pressure, and an intention to adapt, including merging of activities and even institutions, develops. In many European countries this has already happened. When an individual university must look at the world around it and learn how to survive, a complete change in thinking takes place, which leads to changes in finances, structure and modes of operation.

Under such circumstances, when attempting to *address real-world problems*, a structure with faculties defined along disciplinary lines does not represent the optimal solution, and simply using a multidisciplinary field as an extra pillar in the edifice is no solution either. The challenge is therefore how to create a *matrix organisation*, which reunites disciplines and problem orientations. In this situation, *a time limit* must be provided in the internal organization which brings these elements together for limited periods only, in order to prevent the cells of the matrix from developing into new pillars. Such *adaptability* in organization will help universities to interact more efficiently – in an age of globalization – with other institutions, the world of work, major stakeholders; in fact with the society they aim to serve.

Threats and Opportunities Beyond AQR

The foregoing illustrates clearly that in the modern complex reality of society and the university itself *institutional autonomy* is the best way to guarantee the flexibility needed to properly address the need for diversity in institutions, countries, macro-regions and worldwide. In practice, however we can see develop all kinds of *threats and opportunities, both* within and *beyond* the context of AQR: accreditation, quality assurance and rankings. AQR, after all, is only one aspect of the paradox, I started with. It is part of the overall re-thinking of the role of the state and the general re-assessment of what should be public and what rather private expenditures. What should the state really pay for? For what reasons? And in which forms? I will here, by way of conclusion and different from the previous paragraphs, focus on the threats and opportunities that are not directly related to the context of accreditation, quality assurance and rankings. These *'creeping'* threats and opportunities beyond AQR characteristically come with changes in the governance and/or financial systems of higher education.

Starting points of my observations are the *'Copernican Change'* that has taken place with regard to the positioning of the university nationally and internationally; as well as the *'continuing interest'* of state and society in universities. Globalization and the development of the knowledge society have led to growing numbers of students, staff and institutions, increasing competition, rising expectations with regard to the quality of teaching, learning and research in universities, as well as regarding their many contributions to society; and a

rapid diversification of HEIs. Even though many using the word *'university'* will think of a *research* university, most institutions called *'university'* around the world, are really not, do not have a major research function. They do not have the infrastructure nor the funding for significantly pursuing meaningful, fundamental research. To illustrate this point: it was only in 2007, that almost simultaneously, both the governments of Malaysia and Indonesia did designate *five* universities to become research universities. In this way they indicated that until then none of the universities in these two countries had the formal task, nor the funding to do research.

Increasingly questions are raised as to what the adequate levels of funding should be for all these different institutions. In the Netherlands, for instance, the (research) universities do have a sizable component for research in their budgets, maybe 40% or even more. The '*Universities for Applied Science'* (Hogescholen), however, are not expected to do fundamental research and do not have a research component in their state sponsored budgets. They are supposed to focus on applied research for which they should get funding from contracts with enterprises or maybe with municipalities or provinces. This is also true for, for instance, eighteen new universities that were founded in France in the late nineties of the 20th Century, which should actually receive most of their budgets directly from the regions where they are located. In Germany comparable differences exist and of the about 600 universities in Japan, less than 100 are paid for by the state. Private universities in Japan, can also not compete for part of the research funds that are available on the national level. In the USA, there

is quite some difference in the opportunities to be *true* research universities between *'Ivy League'* universities, '*land grant universities'* and *state* universities in the 50 states of the USA, of which some are the size of a big country, but most much smaller.

Over the last decades five major trends in the development of universities, can be observed:

1) the Copernican change: increasing focus on the specific performance of institutions

2) the rapid growth in number and diversity of universities

3) a strong move towards *integrated* management of universities at all their levels

4) a strong tendency to make universities more responsible for themselves, to increase the *'distance'* between the state /ministry and the institution

5) a strong tendency to reduce the role of the state as the major or even sole funder of the university, without, however, losing overall control over the functioning of the institution

6) the development of a *'managerial class'* in the university, continuously reducing the influence of the true 'professionals', the professors and top researchers, on university affairs.

Of course these six trends do not occur in isolation, but rather in combination. Globalization and the development of the knowledge society have placed knowledge, the people having knowledge, the institutions *'par excellence'*, where people work, teach, learn to develop, transfer and apply knowledge, at the core of the future development of the economy and society itself. The strong interest of states in their universities, therefore, cannot come as a surprise. In fact we are all hap-

py with this. It creates a lot of opportunities! But also threats! When too much say over the research, teaching and learning in the universities is given to politicians, inspired by the *'whim-of-the-day'*, universities will really be in trouble! And with them society itself! Characteristic of the heightened interest in the universities is the succession of new laws and changes in the laws as well as in the funding rules and levels with regard to higher education and research in almost every country.

The Netherlands as an Example

In the Netherlands, for instance, there was just one law on Higher Education (*'Wet op het Hooger Onderwijs'*) from 1876 to 1960. Since 1960 almost every ten years (or even less!), a new law or important changes in the existing law and most certainly in the funding levels and rules, were adopted. In summary one can say that all were meant to make the universities more effective and efficient institutions. Stepwise the traditional '*duplex ordo'* was changed into *'integrated management'*. In the beginning the management mode was rather modeled after the way municipalities, for instance, were governed. At the moment the model of governance is much more comparable to the one in use in big enterprises. This development started in 1960 with the decision to grant all the universities the status of being independent legal entities. This did allow universities, for instance, the right to enter into legal agreements, without the specific approval of the ministry and the signature of the minister. Another important step in this direction was taken in 1995 when the ownership of all the university buildings (and land!) was handed over by the ministry

to the individual universities. Since then the university is entitled to both sell and buy buildings and land as needed within their strategic plans. A last step here was taken in 1997 when the MUB was adopted: the *Law on the Modernization of the University Governance system*. This law did introduce a *'Board of Supervisors'* for each of the universities. This Board, only, is appointed by the minister. All other appointments are done since 1997 by the Supervisory Board or the Board of Directors (CvB). The rector magnificus is one of the members of this Board of Directors. The Supervisory Board has important responsibilities, as it has to approve the budget, the annual accounts, as well as the development plan and to make the major appointments. All this did, indeed, enable the university to really become an autonomous institution in its actual functioning. It allows for a great diversity between the individual institutions and it is in line with the general tendencies to make universities more responsible for themselves and to be put at a *'greater distance'* from the ministry.

At the time of the *'cultural revolution'* in 1968 in Europe, it became clear that with the increasing numbers of students and staff, both academic and technical-administrative, representation in some way of these major stakeholders in the university governance system was desirable and in fact necessary. In 1970 the WUB (the Law on University Governance Reform) was adopted. The WUB established a *'university council'* which consisted for one third of academic staff, one third of technical-administrative staff and one third of students. Until the MUB was adopted in 1997, this University Council had the responsibility to decide on the university budget, the annual accounts and the strategic plan,

which in those days after all needed the approval of the ministry. Over the years the importance of the university council was diminished and the role of the Board of Directors, which included the rector magnificus and between four and six other members, strengthened. In this process gradually the number of board members was reduced to three. A strong advisory role was given in 1970 to the Board of Deans, the full professors, chairs of the faculties (the major *'divisions'* of the institution!). An important task of the Board of Deans was also to nominate the candidate or candidates for the position of rector magnificus. In particular by the Chairs of the Boards of Directors, who in general came from outside the university and started to call themselves the 'presidents' of the universities, the Board of Deans was seen as an undue remnant of the *'duplex ordo'*, which from their point of view was conflicting with the aim to establish *'integrated management'* throughout the university, at all levels of organization. The MUB of 1997 does not mention, anymore, a Board of Deans, even though universities can decide to have such a board. However, there is no official legal role for a board of Deans, anymore. The minimum provision that is included in the MUB is that a university must have a *'Board for the Promotions'* (the PhD's). At the same time the role of the university council has been diminished to be both a *'work council' and a 'student council'*, even though universities are free to have separately from each other a *'work council'* and a '*student council'*.

In this way, since 1970, the university governance system has changed from a joint responsibility of the University Council and the Board of Directors, into a very hierarchical system in which the Board of Supervi-

sors is appointed by the minister, the Board of Directors, including the rector magnificus, is appointed by the board of Supervisors and the Deans by the Board of Directors, etc. To make the organization of the university more efficient and transparent most of the universities have gone over the last decade into a phase of mergers, with less and bigger faculties emerging. Efficiency, however, does not always lead to a greater usefulness. In particular trans-, multi-, interdisciplinary programs have become much more difficult to implement. The old wisdom that bigger units lead to *higher walls* between them has been forgotten. In particular cooperation between the medical and the natural science faculties, or between law and the social sciences, or social sciences and natural sciences has become really difficult. This is a problem, indeed, as in particular much of the innovative developments in the future will have to take place at these *'interfaces'* of different scientific traditions. '*Integrated Management'* has become known increasingly as '*rigid management'*. The university is less functioning as a *'Universitas'*, as it was meant to do. The *integrity* of the university is at stake. This development comes on top of the disciplinary conservatism of AQR and continuously decreasing funding for fundamental, unfettered, *'breakthrough'* research.

The development towards more institutional autonomy has given many opportunities. We must make sure, however, that we seize these opportunities in the right way and make sure that the autonomy does not go at the detrimental of academic freedom and really creative, innovative approaches, that can help humankind forward into yet unknown directions and futures. In my view that means that we must really start *to behave self-*

consciously in truly autonomous ways. We must diversify our activities and funding. We must also make sure that where decisions must be taken on the core activities of the university, teaching, learning, research and service to society the voice of the academic professionals is loud, clear and convincing.

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Report from the US: Impacts on Academic Freedom and Autonomy of Accreditation, State Quality Assurance Processes, and the Rating Game

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I. Introduction

In 1972 Martin Trow of the University of California, Berkeley, presented a paper to an OECD Conference in Paris laying out his concepts of elite, mass and universal access higher education (1974). Discussion of these concepts and their impacts on higher education as it passes through these stages became standard fare in many higher education meetings in Europe and, indeed, around the world. By now many of the world's diverse systems of higher education have moved from elite to mass higher education. It is the premise of this paper that the U.S., having made that transition (not always successfully) earlier than most other countries, can serve as a source of information on how to confront some of the many problems which emerge during and after the transition.

In the American context, among the numerous issues raised by the changeover, two major ones have

predominated: 1) increased costs both to governments and to consumers, and 2) an accompanying increase in demands for accountability. As noted in a paper I prepared for the Magna Charta Observatory Seminar last year in Turkey (2010), accountability can be judged by three criteria: legality, efficiency, and effectiveness. I suggested in that paper that the push for effectiveness was by far the most threatening to the values of Academe, as it inevitably involved external stakeholders using their subjective values to determine whether the costs incurred resulted in an acceptable (to them) quantity and quality of outcomes.

This early pressure for increased accountability in the U.S. has led to developments in several areas pointing to possible impacts on academic freedom and autonomy. This Conference has chosen to examine in depth three such developments: accreditation requirements, quality assurance processes and the ratings game. The remainder of this paper will present a relatively brief overview of these dimensions in the U.S. with papers to follow offering a more detailed treatment of each set of issues. For example, Judith Eaton, President of the U.S. Council for Higher Education Accreditation, will provide detailed comments on accreditation's possible impacts on academic freedom and autonomy, and Ellen Hazelkorn, Vice President of Research and Enterprise, Dublin Institute of Technology, will undoubtedly provide much more sophistication on the Ratings Game, based on her 2011 book on that subject.

II. Accreditation in the United States

A. Evolution: Context, Standards, Self-Study, Site Visit, Evaluation

Historically, Americans have believed that the formal evaluation of educational quality should neither be the province of the government, with its accompanying political agendas, nor the domain of the institutions themselves, with their problems of objectivity. The accreditation movement, therefore, emerged in the so-called third, or non-profit, sector during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Harcleroad and Eaton (2011) list the following five factors as causes of its appearance:

1) the final breakdown of the fixed classical curriculum and the broad expansion of the elective system;

2) the development and legitimization of new academic fields (e.g. psychology; education; sociology, American literature);

3) the organization of new, diverse types of institutions to meet developing social needs (teachers colleges, junior colleges, land-grant colleges, research universities, specialized professional schools);

4) the expansion of both secondary and postsecondary education and their resultant overlapping, leading to the question: What is a college?;

5) a lack of commonly accepted standards for admission to college and for completing a college degree.

Between 1885 and 1923 six different regional associations appeared on the scene, ultimately covering the entire country. Membership, consisting of the institutions, public and private, in each region, was voluntary, but usually all institutions aspired to attain the prestige

of approved accreditation. And later, when the federal government made accreditation a requirement for eligibility to receive federal aid, the voluntary aspect became only a façade.

In each case – some sooner, some later – the associations developed standards relevant to admissions, degree standards, faculty qualifications, financial probity, and other elements in the administration of academic institutions. The process followed by each regional was roughly the same: after the standards were published, an institution scheduled for evaluation (once every ten years) would conduct a detailed Self-Study on the extent to which that institution was in compliance with the standards. The better Self-Studies involved wide participation on a variety of committees by administrators, faculty, a few students and often some trustees.

The regional association appointed a Site Visit Committee, normally including a college president from a nearby region as Chair, with a variety of experienced persons covering most of the issues raised by the standards. The size of the committee and the duration of the visit would depend on the size and nature of the institution being evaluated. The entire Site Visit team would receive input from the senior local administrators and then split up for individual interviews along the lines of the standards' agenda. The Site Team would hold an exit meeting to hear institutional reactions to team concerns, after which it would submit its report to the accrediting association.

The association could decide to 1) renew the institutional accreditation for another ten years, 2) put the institution on probation, requiring demonstrated change in identified areas of weakness, with a short time line

for execution; or 3) in a worst case scenario, take away accreditation (a rare occurrence). All actions but the last provide confidential guidance to the institution, although there has been recent pressure from federal and state governments for this process to become more transparent. In fact, at both the federal and state levels of government, there are currently strong efforts to develop governmental measures of quality assurance (see next section below) which, if created, would dramatically impact the historic accreditation emphasis on academic self-regulation through voluntary collective actions.

One further note on process: The series of actions described above concern the six regional accrediting associations and their efforts to evaluate entire institutions. Starting in the 19th century with the field of medicine, and operating alongside these regional groups, a widening set of professional accrediting associations operating without regard to the six regions, has evaluated specific professional programs anywhere in the U.S. These professional agencies (sometimes also called specialized accreditation) give the particular program under study a detailed analysis and often set out requirements for continued accreditation that can be highly intrusive on institutional autonomy. This issue will be explored further in Section D below.

B. IMPACT ON QUALITY

The set of accreditation standards always include explicit references to attaining institutional and program quality. Taking the institution's self-described aspirations for quality, the accrediting team tries to make con-

structive (and confidential) suggestions on how to do things better. The Southern Association, for example, has in place a requirement for its institutions seeking approval to submit a formal report called a Quality Enhancement Plan. The Site Visit team then explores that plan with institutional personnel.

Sometimes the standards themselves are criticized not only by the institution being evaluated, but also by some elements of the public or the government. The Middle States regional accrediting association, for example, was subject to attack for its earlier standards' emphasis on the need for greater diversity (i.e. more concern for minorities) in institutional student bodies, faculty and even trustees. Conservative groups in society and in Congress vigorously disapproved of such standards as reeking of "political correctness." Middle States responded that the standards had been drawn up with the participation of its member institutions and reflected at least a majority view of appropriate policies. Nevertheless, one senses that the regionals retreated on issues such as this. One searches in vain for explicit treatment of such controversial issues in the various regional standards.

By and large, however, regional accreditation has been credited with significantly helping to improve institutional quality in its several dimensions. In the jargon of the trade, it has been termed to be "formative evaluation" rather than "summative." The former quietly and confidentially aids the institution to achieve its self-described goals, while the latter publicly holds the institution's quality appraisals to open scrutiny and possible condemnation. It is just this private/public dichotomy that is currently under stress in the U.S. as both

federal and state governments strive to find ways to make the institutions more accountable for the achievement of quality (more below).

C. Impact on Academic Freedom

Threats to academic freedom emanate both from outside the institution and from inside. The regional accrediting associations have done a moderately good job of policing the external threats, with the Southern Association some years ago having withdrawn its accreditation of an institution whose president had been fired by the Governor of the state and replaced by a person hand-picked by the Governor. In the face of such a withdrawal, the Governor backed down and the institution regained some of its freedoms. Anything as blatant as this example would presumably be noted by the regional association which would then bring maximum pressure to bear to protect the institution. Whether that maximum pressure will always be adequate to accomplish its goal remains to be seen, particularly with the declining support of the accreditation process at both the federal and state levels of government. The Southern Association standard on this issue is very brief:

Standard 3.7.4 "the institution ensures adequate procedures for safeguarding and protecting academic freedom" (2009).

Threats to academic freedom from the inside present a more complex picture. Issues relate both to the need for a strong faculty role in campus governance as a means to protect academic freedom, to campus policies dealing with the free speech of campus visitors, and to campus " hate speech" policies which restrict the speech rights of students, faculty and staff.

Although I have not researched the standards of all the regionals, I suspect that most would duplicate the cautious statement of the Southern Association when it comes to the faculty role in governance. The association briefly offers Standard 3.7.5 in the Best Practices section of its website publications: "The institution publishes policies on the responsibility and authority of faculty in academic and governance matters" (2009).

Obviously, the Southern Association is deferring to the institution being evaluated to determine the exact details of the faculty role in governance. Similarly, a search of standards relating to campus climate and free speech reveals only general bromides about a "positive learning climate" and does not address either the issue of campus groups barring the speech of visitors invited to campus, or the existence of "hate speech" codes which seek to prohibit student/ faculty speech deemed hurtful to others (principally minorities, the gay community and disabled). Thus, the report card on regional accrediting agencies and the internal threats to academic freedom is not too impressive.

D. IMPACT ON AUTONOMY

The institutions and the federal and state governments all view the accrediting associations as favoring the institutions in the institution/government dichotomy. But this does not mean that the institutions always welcome the regionals' various pressures to change this or that practice or policy. Autonomy can be lost to friends as well as to adversaries. Sometimes the regionals' pressure can come in the form of a mild suggestion informally given during the exit interview. Other times, how-

ever, it might reach the threshold of a formal request for change, with or without a time frame established for its achievement. Finally, in extremis, and again rarely, it could come as an ultimatum, with the threat of loss of accreditation. Along this sliding scale, autonomy obviously can be lost more and more, even if to a so-called "benign" external party.

On the other hand, the regional Site Visit and subsequent evaluation report can also sometimes serve to enhance campus autonomy. As an example, a good regional Site Team might follow up on a Self-Study observation of a campus which is part of a multi-campus system (very common in the U.S.) and conclude that the system headquarters and governing council are centralizing too much power, at the expense of legitimate campus autonomy. I myself was on a University of Maryland College Park Self-Study committee in the l990s and helped draft the wording, civil but explicit, about possible over-centralization in the University of Maryland nine-campus system. To its credit, the Middle States regional Site Team investigated the issue, including talking to senior administrators in the system headquarters, and did include statements in the final evaluation report that urged more decentralization. Thus, external parties such as accreditation associations can sometimes be a friend to enhanced campus autonomy.

Institutions more strongly complain about lost autonomy when it comes to the role and impact of professional accrediting. Here it is not unknown for a Site Team looking at law, medicine, dentistry, et al. to demand that the institution devote more resources to the profession in question, regardless of the impact on the rest of the campus and normal campus priorities. Obvi-

ously, some demands could lead to higher professional outcomes, but not always. At the University of Baltimore, for example, some years ago the business accrediting team imposed a standard saying that a given percentage of the student credit hours had to be taught by faculty with the highest professional qualifications. This resulted in relevant faculty being assigned to teach the large early classes, and not being available to offer their advanced specialized courses; surely, not the end result that the law accrediting group had in mind. The professional associations have proliferated across so many fields of study that some campuses have begun to rebel. This issue of campus autonomy vs. specialized accreditation has yet to be resolved.

III. State Systems in the United States

A. The Context: Role of the Federal Government

With respect to governmental roles in quality assurance, the U.S. scene presents a complex picture. In the American federal system of government, the 10th Amendment to the Constitution specifies that all powers not granted to the federal government nor prohibited to the state governments are reserved to the state governments and the people. Education in general, and higher education in particular, were nowhere mentioned in the Constitution and therefore, by definition, are primarily under state jurisdiction. I say "primarily", because since World War II, the federal government has come to play an increasingly important role in higher education. First, it supported critical research during the war, often using university personnel and resources; this program was continued and expanded in later years. Then stu-

dent access to higher education was supported through the GI Bill, offering war veterans aid to attend accredited institutions. This program, too, was continued and expanded to other populations in later years. Note that these two initiatives did not require direct federal power to mandate institutional behavior, but relied instead on the power to spend to promote the general welfare. A third leg of the federal presence in higher education did come from a constitutional power: the 14th Amendment, stemming from post- Civil War efforts forbidding the states to deny any person life, liberty or property without due process of law, or to deny any person the equal protection of the laws. Based on these powers, the federal government through its court system, and backed up by executive branch enforcement of court orders, has intervened aggressively to try to end discrimination in higher education. This issue has still not been satisfactorily resolved.

Although all three program areas developed accountability measures to obtain desired results, these have not directly affected academic freedom and have had only marginal impact on autonomy (e.g. federal troops used to enforce desegregation of higher education in the South) and on quality assurance. Some later efforts, however, have been made by the federal government to push both the accreditation agencies and the state governments to require institutions of higher education to furnish accurate information on student learning outcomes and student attrition. The federal government has developed some interests in quality assurance at both the K-12 and higher education levels, but thus far has not found the means to impose them on higher education. The pressures to do so, however, continue.

B. THE CONTEXT: ROLE OF THE STATE GOVERNMENTS

In the early decades of the nation's history, private institutions played an exclusive role (e.g. Harvard, Yale, Princeton). After independence from Britain, some states (e.g. North Carolina and Georgia in the 1780s) established a public university, with other states following more slowly. But after the Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1862, miraculously enacted in the middle of the Civil War, new public land-grant institutions were created in most states with both broadened curriculums (e.g. agriculture and engineering) and broadened student bodies, such as the sons and daughters of farmers and urban working class. In addition, accompanying the Industrial Revolution, which swept the U.S. as elsewhere during the 19th century, demands to extend secondary education to older children led to a huge expansion of so-called normal schools. These later became state teachers colleges and, later still, state colleges and, rarely, universities. Another layer of higher education emerged at the end of the 19th century when the largely neglected city populations created a demand for community colleges, which appeared on the scene at the end of the 19th century and rapidly proliferated. Finally, more recently, both distance education and the "for profit" proprietary sectors have seen substantial growth.

In the face of this huge expansion of higher education from elite to mass, with its broadened access and increased costs, state after state (some sooner and some later), began to create state higher education agencies. By the 1960s, all states but two had some form of state agency with responsibilities to plan and coordinate higher education in the state. These agencies, by and

large, engaged in budget review, developing state higher education plans, conducting policy research, reviewing academic programs, developing higher education information systems and, sometimes, engaging in capital planning and administering student aid programs. Members of these agencies were normally appointed by the Governor, with staggered terms to lessen the likelihood that a given Governor would appoint a majority of the agency and bid it to do his/her political bidding. The members then normally chose their chief executive officer and he/she would recruit a staff, again normally drawn from institutions in and out of the state.

C. The State Boards and Academic Freedom

In terms of this Conference's agenda, the state agencies have played a significant role in both quality assurance and autonomy, but a minimal role linked to academic freedom. If, for example, the Governor of New Jersey wanted to get rid of a so-called radical leftist professor at Rutgers, the state university, that issue would play out in the political realm rather than as an issue before the state board. It would be rare for a state board to be deeply involved in an academic freedom issue, although that form of state board which directly governs the institutions under its jurisdiction, faced with a threat to academic freedom, would necessarily act to try to defend the campus or persons involved.

This does not mean that vigilance is not necessary against threats to academic freedom from state governments. It just means that normally the state agencies for higher education are not directly involved and that the problem plays out on the political scene.

D. THE STATE AGENCIES AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

By way of contrast, the state agency plays a central role in state efforts to achieve quality assurance in its institutions of higher education. Some state systems have engaged in planning which includes a concept called "differentiation of function." This specifies the roles and missions of the institutions, each assigned to one of the normally three sectors: the universities, the state colleges, and the community colleges. According to this concept, quality is achieved by, for example, a state college striving to become an outstanding state college rather than a mediocre university. Similarly, community colleges are expected to excel in their mission of providing two – year post – secondary school programs rather aspiring to become four – year institutions. Over time, more recent emphases on market place decision making and government steering rather than regulation have rendered this earlier effort to differentiate missions somewhat less influential.

Similarly, the process of program review has undergone change. In its earlier versions, the state agency examined an institutional request for a new academic program not only from the point of view of state need and ability to pay, but also from that of institutional readiness to produce a high quality program. Today, again with the emphasis on markets and de-regulation, state agency reviews have also become less demanding.

The evolution of state budgeting for higher education, on the other hand has become somewhat more intrusive, allegedly in pursuit of state quality assurance goals. A process known as state performance budgeting, with a lesser variation known as performance report-

ing, began for a while to spread. In the year 2000, 18 states reported using the former and 28 reported using the latter. Usually a variety of "quality goals" (e.g. better access, less attrition, more accreditation, more external research funds) were spelled out and, in the funding variation, explicitly linked to state funding of that institution. Sometimes, as in South Carolina, the list of "desirables" became so long (with some contradicting others) that ultimately the system collapsed because of its excessive ambitions. With many states later suffering from acute state budget crises, the performance funding movement now seems to have receded.

The decline in performance budgeting, however, has not been true of other quality assurance initiatives. State accountability patterns now often require the institutions to report academic outcomes. Recognizing early that a "one size fits all" pattern is not appropriate for a widely diverse public sector, state boards have introduced two processes to accomplish their quality goals. In some states, a system of "peer review" has been established, according to which the institution and the state board ultimately agree on a set of peer institutions from out of state, with the institution's performance rated against that of its outside peers. The results are presumably published and enter the public domain.

A variation of this, such as one adopted in Maryland, asks each institution to propose a set of benchmarks of quality, based on its own unique role and mission. The state agency then negotiates a final set of benchmarks, and the institution is assessed on its progress toward those agreed-upon benchmarks, over time (e.g. five years) rather than judged against its fellow in-state institutions in a state league table, with winners and los-

ers. Again, the results are published and enter the public domain. In the jargon of the trade, this is termed "longitudinal accountability," according to which an institution is judged against itself rather than "horizontally, wherein all institutions are judged against each other.

While not an activity of a state board as such, a series of reports by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education has provided information to state agencies in their quest for quality assurance. For example, *MeasuringUp 2008* offers report cards, with grades from A to F, on the performance of the 50 states across five measures: preparation, participation, affordability, completion, and benefits. Some state agencies have used the reports as a means of improving the areas deemed weak in that state.

E. STATE BOARDS AND AUTONOMY

There is wide variation across the 50 states regarding the powers of the state boards. But a safe generalization would be that, over time, most state agencies have acted to lessen the autonomy of their member institutions, albeit more in earlier times than recently. The defenders of such actions argue that they have been taken in the name of the public interest. Tough-minded observers point out that universities, like other social institutions, find it difficult to be objective when it affects their own self interest and, therefore, are not impartial judges about which state actions are inappropriate intrusions on campus autonomy and which might be justified by broader social, economic or political concerns.

Another factor in understanding U.S. higher education is the fact that it embraces a huge number of mul-

ti-campus systems. Here, one public governing board, with members normally appointed by the Governor, literally governs the institutions under its jurisdiction and obviously lessens the autonomy of those institutions. Some such boards delegate more powers to their constituent campuses, and others less. In 23 states the multi-campus governing board governs all senior public institutions and sometimes the community colleges as well. In the other states these multi-campus boards operate under the umbrella of a state coordinating agency and thus need to be taken into consideration in any appraisal of campus autonomy.

IV. The Ratings Games

A. Processes and Evolution

The magazine *U.S. News and World Report* began publishing ratings of universities in the United States in 1983, repeated it in 1985 and in 1987 turned it into an annual event, with an accompanying Guidebook. Today this external rating system appears to be the most influential of those attempted in the United States. The editor in charge of the process in its early years noted:

The methodology used in the first annual rankings issue and guidebook was very simple. At the undergraduate level, presidents were asked to pick the 10 schools in their academic category that did the best job of providing an undergraduate education. To reflect the diversity of American higher education, institutions were placed in one of nine categories: National Universities; National Liberal Arts Colleges; Smaller Comprehensive Institutions; Southern Comprehensive Institutions; Eastern

Comprehensive Institutions; Western Comprehensive Institutions; Western Liberal Arts Colleges; Southern Liberal Arts Colleges; and Eastern Liberal Arts Colleges. The academic categories were based loosely on classifications established by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, whose categorization of higher education institutions is a staple of academic research (Sarnoff, 2007).

The top 25 institutions in the National University and National Liberal Arts College categories were published, as well as the top ten in the other categories.

In response to criticisms levelled from many sources over many years, numerous changes were brought to the process. Opinions evaluating the institutions were sought from chief academic officers and deans of admissions, and so-called objective data were garnered from existing data bases and from self-reporting by the institutions themselves. This information came in four broad categories: student selectivity, faculty quality, institutional resources and student retention. These broad categories had multiple sub-fields. For example, student selectivity included acceptance rates, standardized test scores of the entering college class, and high school class-rank data.

After the information was compiled, it was necessary to give weightings to the various categories. By 2007 a study (Usher and Savino) reported on the following relative weightings of the several *U.S. News* categories then in use:

- Beginning Characteristics 15%
- Learning Inputs-Staff 20%
- Learning Inputs-Resources 15%
- Learning Outputs 25%
- Reputation 25%

Sarnoff, the early editor of this process, later reported that frequent, very candid discussions with a variety of critics had led to most changes, as the process became more transparent and more complex.

The process has since spread far beyond the United States. Usher and Savino (2007) list 17 university league tables, with 14 of these "national systems" from nine countries (Australia, Canada, China, Hong Kong, Italy, Poland, Spain, the United Kingdom and the U.S.), three that are cross-national (China, Hong Kong and the U.K.), and one from Germany which does not present league tables but data which the consumer can use to build his/her own notions of quality and fit.

After their broad survey of ratings systems around the world, Usher and Savino found that "there is little agreement among the authors of these indicators as to what indicates quality. The world's main ranking systems bear little if any relationship to one another; they use very different indicators and weightings to arrive at a measure of quality" (2007).

Let us turn now to an analysis of the possible impacts of the ratings systems on quality, academic freedom and autonomy in U.S. higher education.

B. IMPACT ON QUALITY

The definition of quality employed by surveys can be determined by examining the types of information obtained by the surveys and from the relative weightings given to each data element. In the United States there has been on the market only one serious alternative to the *U.S. News'* pioneering effort – that by another magazine, *Newsweek*, which relies heavily on Research Pro-

ductivity in its rankings (not a category for *U.S. News*). Thus, U.S. institutions find themselves driven by what these two magazines consider to be the most important indicators of quality. Since to some extent both consumers and governments are influenced by the quality ratings published, the institutions believe it to be nearly compulsory to attempt to score well in the most important quality categories. It seems safe to conclude, then, that the ratings games have a significant impact on the public's views of institutions' quality as determined by those creating the ratings systems.

According to current published ratings, the ideal "quality university" would seem to be one which attracts the best students, (those with high class rank, high scores in the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), high completion rates), all faculty with terminal degrees, heavy funding of research from outside sources, all professional programs fully accredited, good physical plant including impressive student dorms and student athletic facilities, successful athletic teams, much leadership from the administrative team, backed by powerful trustees and a working and cooperative faculty senate. Such an institution would score well on the ratings reports for research universities. A somewhat different composite would appear for non-research institutions, liberal arts colleges and, obviously, for two-year colleges which are not part of the ratings game coverage. In Europe, there might be even different composite models for its institutions.

C. Impact on Academic Freedom

There is little evidence that the ratings systems have a direct impact on academic freedom, but it is possible that they might have a very modest indirect effect. For

example, an institution with limited funds (and which ones do not have this problem?) may divert funds to activities that faculty deem inappropriate in order to score higher in the student selectivity ratings category. Faculty may not be able to pursue their research interests or may be required to teach introductory classes, resulting in fewer advanced, specialized courses. While neither potential effect intrudes directly on a faculty member's traditional academic freedom, one can understand faculty complaining loudly about distorted campus priorities. Jens Jungblut has helped me with this complex issue by offering the following comment:

The impact can depend on the measurements used by rankings, if for example a ranking uses citations as a measurement there would be an advantage towards writing small articles instead of larger books because you can gain more output (numerical) that can be quoted again; it also would create an advantage for certain disciplines where a certain type of publication is more common (i.e. science uses more articles in peer-review journals then full books) In the end it depends on the indicators used to define quality and on the public pressure to be good in ratings and rankings on universities. If ratings use "wrong" or biased indicators and universities are pushed to score well in those rankings it can have an impact on autonomy as well as on academic freedom (2011).

D. Impact on Autonomy

The pull on institutions to score well on the ratings game is so strong that

U.S. News has found a few institutions cheating on their self-reported data (e.g. omitting remedial and in-

ternational students in reporting on student graduation rates). The intensity of the pull can result in some or all of the following examples of institutional change resulting from these pressures:

1. Some states and institutions have moved student aid funds from low income and minority students, based on need, to merit-based support, designed to attract high- scoring applicants, often from middle – to high – income families.

2. Some institutions have responded to the faculty quality criterion by neglecting undergraduate teaching in order to recruit faculty with known records for receiving large amounts of outside research funding, with the result that needed curriculum areas are not covered.

3. As mentioned above under impact on academic freedom, institutions may be motivated to move limited funds to improve student facilities, such as dormitories, recreation centers, and athletic buildings.

While some of the examples offered above may result in desirable changes, even in the absence of a ratings game, it seems obvious that an institution's natural priorities may be pulled in the particular direction indicated by the rating's scoring procedures. Thus, the verdict here is that there is some evidence that campus autonomy has been affected by rating schemes.

V. Conclusions

The following conclusions will offer final thoughts on all three processes reviewed. Accreditation and state quality assurance processes can be dealt with relatively briefly, as earlier pages have pointed out that both processes have mixed consequences. For what it is worth,

my personal, subjective judgment is that both processes are necessary and both more benign than ominous, albeit each raises serious concerns. State quality assurance practices can go, and occasionally in the past (e.g. the South Carolina Performance budgeting requirements) have gone too far. But in the present climate of deregulation and market steering, many institutions in the United States are enjoying at least a temporary respite. However, one's sense of history and of governmental efforts to increase accountability speak to the need for continued vigilance against excessive state intrusions.

The issues raised by the ratings game, however, require more elaborate analysis, as the problems seem to me both more pervasive and more complex. The verdict rendered above is that the ratings processes have affected institutional quality, have not seemed to directly affect academic freedom, but have also affected campus autonomy. The process has now spread to many parts of the world, with wide disparity in the types of information gathered, the relative weightings given to the various categories involved, and no apparent agreement on a specific definition of quality. Yet even the most critical observers acknowledge that rating systems are here to stay. They are part of a trend to increase consumer information and to move toward greater transparency in governmental accountability. But, as many analysts have pointed out, they have mixed consequences, both intended and unintended. As an example, Ellen Hazelkorn has called our attention (2011) to the distinct danger that, in focusing so strongly on the elite research university world, the various ratings processes may be doing real damage to the other sectors, particularly the predominantly teaching institutions.

The constructive thing to do, then, is to keep working on refining methodologies (plural) and to continue analyzing and criticizing the results.

Two items are worth noting. First, *U.S. News* has just (June 2011) announced that it will enter the domain of rating the so-called "on-line colleges". Brian Kelly, Editor of U.S. News, has contacted 1,000 officials at on-line colleges and university-based on-line programs notifying them that the publication would soon be soliciting data from their institutions with an eye to ranking programs that are delivered at least 80 percent on-line. The target for release of the inaugural *U.S. News* on-line program rankings is mid-October. So not only do the ratings games appear to be here to stay, they also may be expanding their interest and influence.

In addition, it is relevant to note an effort by the European Commission to go beyond the Carnegie Classification System to create a distinctive European Classification System and to note its relevance to the process of ranking institutions of higher education. The book outlining this effort, *Mapping the Higher Education Landscape* (2009), edited by Frans van Vught, deserves careful reading.

A second more noteworthy item is that there has been a series of meetings of concerned and qualified persons to discuss the need to improve the ratings processes. So important do I consider this to be that I will quote at length from a document published by the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP) on these developments.

In 2002 IHEP President Jamie P. Merisotis served as reporter at a ground-breaking international meeting convened to examine the "functioning" of higher education

ranking system and league tables. The meeting held in Warsaw, Poland, and sponsored by the UNESCO European Centre for Higher Education (UNESCO-CEPES, headquartered in Bucharest, Romania), featured papers and presentations from, among other countries, Japan, Germany, Nigeria, Poland, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Some 40 participants from 12 countries, representing journals that regularly publish rankings of higher education institutions and including top-level experts from national bodies and international governmental and nongovernmental organizations, discussed various issues related to rankings. One key outcome of the meeting was that further work is needed to improve the conceptual frameworks, methodologies, and organizational aspects of college rankings. A follow-up meeting, held in December 2004 in Washington, D.C., was hosted jointly by UNESCO-CEPES and IHEP. That meeting included more than 20 leading experts from around the world who either conduct rankings or analyze those ranking systems. One outcome of that meeting was the establishment of an International Rankings Expert Group (IREG), composed largely of the participants in the Washington meeting.

IREG held a third international meeting on rankings, in Berlin, Germany, in May 2006. That meeting was organized by the Centre for Higher Education Development (*Centrum für Hochschulentwicklung*) in Germany, UNESCO-CEPES, and IHEP. At the Berlin meeting, IREG participants – including representatives who work on the rankings published by *U.S. News & World Report*, the *Times Higher Education Supplement* in London, *Die Zeit* in Germany, *Asahi Shim bun* in Japan, and leading thinkers from Russia, China, the

Netherlands, and other nations – met to discuss how ranking system methodologies might be enhanced in order to provide better and more detailed information to consumers. This meeting produced the so-called Berlin Principles, quoted below (IHEP, 2007).

I can think of no better way to end this treatment of institutional rating practices than to quote at length from the document "The Berlin Principles on Ranking of Higher Education Institutions". The italicized recommendations are cited below. The whole document, including explanations of the recommendations, can be found in the Appendix.

A. Purposes and Goals of Rankings

1. *Be one of a number of diverse approaches to the assessment of higher education inputs, processes, and outputs.*

2. *Be clear about their purpose and their target groups.*

3. *Recognize the diversity of institutions and take the different missions and goals of institutions into account.*

4. *Provide clarity about the range of information sources for rankings and the messages each source generates.*

5. *Specify the linguistic, cultural, economic, and historical contexts of the educational systems being ranked.*

B. Design and Weighting of Indicators

6. *Be transparent regarding the methodology used for creating the rankings.*

7. *Choose indicators according to their relevance and validity.*

8. *Measure outcomes in preference to inputs whenever possible*.

9. *Make the weights assigned to different indicators (if used) prominent and limit changes to them*.

C. COLLECTION AND PROCESSING OF DATA

10. *Pay due attention to ethical standards and the good practice recommendations articulated in these Principles*.

11. *Use audited and verifiable data whenever possible*.

12. *Include data that are collected with proper procedures for scientific data collection*.

13. *Apply measures of quality assurance to ranking processes themselves*.

14. *Apply organizational measures that enhance the credibility of rankings*.

D. PRESENTATION OF RANKING RESULTS

15. *Provide consumers with a clear understanding of all of the factors used to develop a ranking, and offer them a choice in how rankings are displayed*.

16. *Be compiled in a way that eliminates or reduces errors in original data, and be organized and published in a way that errors and faults can be corrected* (Berlin, 2007).

Let us hope that these serious steps to improve the ratings processes achieve their goals and that the Magna Charta Observatory will not have to

put the issue on the agenda of future conferences. A note of caution, however, is appropriate. Among those who sent me feedback on an early draft of this paper, Frank Schmidtlein, an astute colleague at the University of Maryland for many years, politely dissented from my hopes for the future of ratings practices.

I am not sure their methodologies will ever be able to incorporate the large number of variables that make up each of the many conflicting definitions of quality. What constitutes quality depends a great deal on one's ideology and individual set of values. They also frequently do not accommodate the different missions of institutions. Also, they typically don't accommodate the internal quality differences of an institution's various academic programs and departments. I am also not certain they serve a market place function very well as students pick institutions on a variety of criteria including; a boy friend or girl friend is going there, their parents went there, the campus "looks nice", or, as my daughter noted, the students there don't look like the kind of people I like (perhaps a reaction to their clothes). The Berlin principles are a good listing of the challenges but I have not seen any effort beyond the van Vught effort that even comes anywhere near addressing them (2011).

Appendix: The Berlin Principles (2011)

A. Purposes and Goals of Rankings

1. *Be one of a number of diverse approaches to the assessment of higher education inputs, processes, and outputs*. Rankings can provide comparative information and improved understanding of higher education, but should not be the main method for assessing what higher education is and does. Rankings provide a market-based perspective that can complement the work of government, accrediting authorities, and independent review agencies.

2. *Be clear about their purpose and their target groups*. Rankings have to be designed with due regard to their purpose. Indicators designed to meet a particular objective or to inform one target group may not be adequate for different purposes or target groups.

3. *Recognize the diversity of institutions and take the different missions and goals of institutions into account*. Quality measures for research-oriented institutions, for example, are quite different from those that are appropriate for institutions that provide broad access to underserved communities. Institutions that are being ranked and the experts that inform the ranking process should be consulted often.

4. *Provide clarity about the range of information sources for rankings and the messages each source generates*. The relevance of ranking results depends on the audiences receiving the information and the sources of that information (such as databases, students, professors, employers). Good practice would be to combine the different perspectives provided by those sources in

order to get a more complete view of each higher education institution included in the ranking.

5. *Specify the linguistic, cultural, economic, and historical contexts of the educational systems being ranked*. International rankings in particular should be aware of possible biases and be precise about their objective. Not all nations or systems share the same values and beliefs about what constitutes "quality" in tertiary institutions, and ranking systems should not be devised to force such comparisons.

B. Design and Weighting of Indicators

6. *Be transparent regarding the methodology used for creating the rankings*. The choice of methods used to prepare rankings should be clear and unambiguous. This transparency should include the calculation of indicators as well as the origin of data.

7. *Choose indicators according to their relevance and validity*. The choice of data should be grounded in recognition of the ability of each measure to represent quality and academic and institutional strengths, and not availability of data. Be clear about why measures were included and what they are meant to represent.

8. *Measure outcomes in preference to inputs whenever possible*. Data on inputs are relevant as they reflect the general condition of a given establishment and are more frequently available. Measures of outcomes provide a more accurate assessment of the standing and/or quality of a given institution or program, and compilers of rankings should ensure that an appropriate balance is achieved.

9. *Make the weights assigned to different indicators*

(if used) prominent and limit changes to them. Changes in weights make it difficult for consumers to discern whether an institution's or program's status changed in the rankings due to an inherent difference or due to a methodological change.

C. Collection and Processing of Data

10. *Pay due attention to ethical standards and the good practice recommendations articulated in these Principles*. In order to assure the credibility of each ranking, those responsible for collecting and using data and undertaking onsite visits should be as objective and impartial as possible.

11. *Use audited and verifiable data whenever possible*. Such data have several advantages, including the fact that they have been accepted by institutions and that they are comparable and compatible across institutions.

12. *Include data that are collected with proper procedures for scientific data collection*. Data collected from an unrepresentative or skewed subset of students, faculty, or other parties may not accurately represent an institution or program and should be excluded.

13. *Apply measures of quality assurance to ranking processes themselves*. These processes should take note of the expertise that is being applied to evaluate institutions and use this knowledge to evaluate the ranking itself. Rankings should be learning systems continuously utilizing this expertise to develop methodology.

14. *Apply organizational measures that enhance the credibility of rankings*. These measures could include advisory or even supervisory bodies, preferably with some international participation.

D. PRESENTATION OF RANKING RESULTS

15. *Provide consumers with a clear understanding of all of the factors used to develop a ranking, and offer them a choice in how rankings are displayed*. This way, the users of rankings would have a better understanding of the indicators that are used to rank institutions or programs. In addition, they should have some opportunity to make their own decisions about how these indicators should be weighted.

16. *Be compiled in a way that eliminates or reduces errors in original data, and be organized and published in a way that errors and faults can be corrected* (Berlin, 2007).

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Quality Assurance: Friend or Foe?

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An adversarial title such as 'Quality assurance – Friend or Foe?' suggests an irreconcilable polarity. And of course one person's foe is another person's friend. So the answer to the question – 'friend or foe?' is likely to depend on where one is standing. I don't know where most of this audience is standing. For the majority of the academic community, however, I think it is fair to say that there is at best an equivocal attitude towards quality assurance. Certainly in my own country, the United Kingdom, it is a guaranteed conversational killer to announce at a party that you work in quality assurance. And if the party is an academic one, it's not only a conversation killer, but is accompanied by a tendency for those around you to shuffle off in a different direction rather quickly.

So whether or not quality assurance has many friends here today, I hope at any rate that you are not all implacable foes of what is, or should be, a critically important and valuable part of life in higher education.

I said just now that the answer is likely to depend on where you are standing and you may want to know where I am standing. Well, for nearly 20 years, from 1990 until 2009, I spent my life setting up, running and revising quality assurance activities in the UK. I managed two quality assurance agencies and was also very active in ENQA, where I was one of the authors responsible for the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. It was a roller-coaster ride and I only kept with it because I believed – and still believe – that quality assurance is an indispensable part of higher education and one which the academic community should welcome.

But now I am retired and can afford to take a broader view of the whole field – the battlefield if you like. I will do my best to be dispassionate and objective and my final answer to our starting question may surprise you.

At the beginning of my talk I said that 'friend or foe' suggested an irreconcilable polarity; and polarities are rife throughout the world of quality assurance. One of the earliest pairs of opposites that I encountered continues to this day to exemplify the confusion of aims and objectives that typifies the rhetoric we find ourselves using: accountability and enhancement. At its crudest, this asks: is quality assurance an agent of control of the academic enterprise by external bodies, or is it a useful organisational and improvement tool in the armoury of professional educators? In the early days we earnestly discussed whether or not a single quality assurance procedure could provide both accountability and enhancement, or whether these were incompatible objectives. One of the earliest books on the subject by Ton *Vroeijenstijn, then working for the Dutch quality assurance*

agency VSNU, was called 'Improvement and Accountability: Navigating Between Scylla and Charybdis', and Ton argued for skilful seamanship to ensure that both objectives were achievable in a single voyage. I'm increasingly of the view that this feat of navigation is probably not possible.

The other pair of opposites frequently met are self-regulation and external accreditation. This is the political face of quality assurance, which is increasingly dominant in the discourse. Is the object of the exercise to provide the basis for public reassurance that autonomous universities can look after their own academic quality and standards, or is it the means by which the state will maintain its grip on higher education and continue to decide for the institutions what they will provide for their students?

These polarities are possible because of one overriding problem – there is no single common definition of the phrase 'quality assurance'. As a result we have the confusion that allows quality assurance to be a tag which is used to cover everything from information for students to state control of universities; from the allocation of money to the improvement of pedagogical practice; from the creation of rankings to internal departmental self analysis and student feedback. Quality assurance has become a catch-all phrase; it is asked to do too many different things and as a result it can do few of them to anyone's satisfaction.

Many years ago I tried to give a talk about quality assurance without using those words. I wanted to explain the activities and possibilities of the organisation I had then just set up (which was undoubtedly concerned with quality and its assurance), using only words and terms

that would be familiar to my audience of academics. It was impossible – I gave up after about 20 minutes. I was forced back to using the technical terms (jargon if you like) which are disliked by so many (myself included). So although there's nothing I'd like more than to see the words 'quality assurance' banned from throughout higher education institutions and ministries across Europe, I fear that isn't going to happen. We are stuck with the phrase and we are stuck with the likelihood that we all mean different things when we use it.

Equally we are stuck with another problem, probably even more serious: those involved in quality assurance, at all levels, from government ministries (especially government ministries) through quality assurance agencies, to university administrations, academic practitioners and students, have no very clear, and certainly no agreed, idea about its purpose. What is it for? Why do we need it? What is it going to produce that's worth producing? In what way will the world be a better place in five or 10 years' time as a result of comprehensive programmes of accreditations, audits, assessment, call them what you will? These are questions that are rarely asked and even more rarely answered. They seem to me to be fundamental. Nevertheless there is a near universal agreement that quality assurance or accreditation must, *ipso facto,* be a good thing, because everyone says so. Now, the great Danish author Hans Andersen wrote a famous story about the emperor's new clothes: everyone said they were magnificent though they didn't actually exist. I believe there is a danger that quality assurance could become an emperor without any clothes. This doesn't need to happen – it can and often does wear a serviceable set of everyday clothes and does a use-

ful job. But the clothes need to be cleaned and mended from time to time to make sure they continue to fit their wearer.

At present, I believe, the confusion over the words and their meanings and the lack of clarity about the purposes of quality assurance, have created a sterile argument which can all too easily give rise to the adversarial or even confrontational – friend or foe?

I began my work in quality assurance 22 years ago, when the UK's rectors' conference, then called the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (the CVCP) decided to set up what it called an academic audit unit. The purpose of this very small organisation (we never had more than three staff and 20 or so reviewers) was to provide our universities with an opportunity to demonstrate to the government, and the wider public, that they were managing their quality and standards in a way that could command the confidence of all those with an interest in what universities were offering to their students. This exercise was couched in terms of how courses were designed and approved, how students were taught and how institutions went about finding out whether their department and teachers were doing an effective job in educating their students. It was, to be sure, a defensive measure to prevent the government imposing something much worse (which they ultimately did anyway), but its underpinning culture was the promotion of self-knowledge and self criticism, a desire for improvement and a recognition that universities had a duty to both their students and the wider society.

This task, which involved teams of knowledgeable academics visiting and reviewing how institutions managed their standards and quality, was simple in concept,

relatively light in touch and provided an opportunity for universities to assess their own work and receive ideas for improvement from the expert panel, which they might or might not wish to adopt. There was no 'judgement', no 'passing' or 'failing', no 'accreditation'. It was in essence a way of both helping universities to improve what they did and, at the same time, to provide information, through the publicly-available audit reports, for anyone who needed or wanted to know.

The audit process we designed was therefore based on a number of principles: that universities and their staffs are serious professionals who want to do a good job; that honest self-knowledge is the starting point for good quality; that everyone benefits from having a mirror of truth held up to their face from time to time; that universities, although autonomous, are part of the social fabric of society and, as such, owe it to those who use their services – or provide their finances – to explain their activities; and that, given the particular nature of universities and their staffs, voluntary engagement is more likely to be effective than heavy-handed external imposition.

I still believe that is the right basis for establishing quality assurance systems, internal and external, and if those principles are adopted willingly, and honestly, by all participants, then the benefits will far outweigh the costs.

That first audit process was, I think, probably the best we ever designed and used. But it was nevertheless greeted, not surprisingly, with deep suspicion by everyone who had an interest in it. The academics were suspicious that we were inspecting them and interfering with their personal autonomy as teachers; the university

leaders were suspicious that any criticism would do the institution harm; the press thought the language of the reports was too 'coded' and of no value to an ordinary member of the public; and the government officials considered the whole exercise as far too weak since it didn't have any 'teeth' and we had no powers to punish the universities that we criticised.

From this exercise I learnt a number of things: that many academics believed they should be accountable only on their own terms and that nobody had a right to enquire about their capabilities and effectiveness; that universities were often more interested in publicity than truth and would be unscrupulous in their pursuit of institutional advantage; that the press was interested in nothing but superficial and negative 'shock' stories; and that government officials derived pleasure from the pain of others, especially if those others were often their most virulent critics. I also learnt that people hate having quality assurance 'done to them', but are willing to work with something they believe allows room for dialogue.

Political involvement in our modest quality assurance arrangements unfortunately led to the introduction of new, more elaborate and invasive external quality assessment exercises during the 1990s. These gave rise to what became known as 'the Quality Wars', so ludicrous and tangled that they could make a good series of television comedy programmes.

Missing from those Quality Wars was any attempt by any of the key players to seek or develop a beneficial rationale for the complex QA structures and processes imposed on British universities, or to define the questions to which these structures and procedures

were supposed to provide answers. I have sometimes described these as rococo confections of bureaucratic procedures – forms to be filled, procedures to be followed, reports to be written – with no obvious useful purpose and huge cost in time and money. The warring communities never considered the purpose of the audits and assessments they were squabbling over. Form was much more important than function. This is, I think, an indictment of the HE system as a whole, certainly in the UK and, I suspect in many other countries too. Since the academic practitioners refused to participate willingly or take the lead in the development of quality assurance approaches, preferring to act like Achilles sulking in his tent, it is perhaps not surprising that others with a clearer but much less benign intent, who did not understand, or wish to understand what teaching and learning in higher education were about, should seize the opportunity to impose a much more draconian, burdensome and narrowly utilitarian régime of inspection and compliance. In the UK we managed to dilute this element, and because of the legal structure on which our higher education system is built, the government was not willing or able to introduce a full-blown accreditation system such as is common elsewhere in Europe. But that was not through its lack of trying.

I've focused rather a lot on the experience of my early years of quality assurance in the UK. My initial hopes that this would be a welcome chance for higher education to do its job better, to serve its students more effectively and to take the initiative in balancing the costs and benefits of the inevitable extra work involved, were badly dented by a combination of apathy, aggression and subterfuge on the part of the universities and

an equally dangerous desire, on the part of the government, to find a way of controlling the institutions and forcing them to do its bidding. The opportunities to see quality assurance as a friend were brushed aside in favour of power struggles and personality conflicts which frequently used QA as a proxy for the pursuit of other agendas. In the following 10 years we managed to put most of that behind us and steer the ship into calmer waters, but I am not at all sure that there are not storm clouds ahead.

On the wider European scene, quality assurance has been dominated since 2000 by the work of the Bologna Process and its successor European Higher Education Area. The sudden and surprising commissioning in 2003 of the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) – again with no explicit purposes – provided an opportunity to create a new dynamic for European higher education institutions facing the challenge of providing high quality education for increasing numbers of students in a world which expects strong consumer protection, public accountability and clear outcomes. The line we took in drafting the ESG – trying to find common ground across the continent and building on that, was largely subverted by the 'adoption' of the ESG by ministers in a way which has led to them becoming 'tablets of stone', immutable, context-free, and incomprehensible for some of those countries that were just beginning the long journey into modern mass higher education. I am pleased that steps are now being taken to review the ESG to see if they are fit for their purpose (whatever that is thought to be) or in need of revision.

I have so far offered a rather skeptical, even negative, account of how quality assurance has not been allowed

to flourish in a way that would enable it to be a generally accepted and valued key part of higher education practice. But I would also wish to emphasise that I have no doubt at all that as a specific tool to achieve specific and realistically limited aims, it remains an important and potentially very effective weapon in the academic armoury.

So is quality assurance a friend or a foe? You may be expecting me to say it is both, but I'm not going to follow that clichéd line. I'd rather suggest that it is neither. Quality assurance is no more or less than a means to an end, a way of achieving stated objectives. If my main criticism is that the ends, the objectives, are all too rarely thought about and stated, then I believe equally that the means used to achieve them are all too often inappropriate and, to use that hackneyed but vital phrase, 'not fit for purpose'.

So what are the key features of good quality assurance in higher education? How can we make sure that what is done in its name is useful; leads to good practice and effective teaching and learning; helps staff, students, parents and employers and governments; reassures taxpayers; raises standards and expectations; and is generally recognised to be a benefit rather than a burden.

Here is my list of do's and don'ts for anyone who has to set up, run or oversee a quality assurance system; if any of you are in that position then please do think about these points:

– be explicit about what the system is trying to achieve
– ensure that the system demands no more than is necessary to achieve its objectives

– ensure that the system does not overburden teachers
– ensure that the system does not damage teaching and learning
– ensure that the system is committed to improving quality and quality management
– ensure that the system is not misused by anyone as a lever for managerial control
– ensure that the system does not claim more than it can deliver.

And to help you meet these desiderata, I offer the following questions, which I developed all those years ago when quality assurance was a mystery and I was wondering what I had done to deserve the punishment of setting up an audit procedure for universities:

– what am I trying to do?
– why am I doing it?
– how am I going to do it?
– why will that be the best way to do it?
– how shall I know it works?
– how shall I be able to improve it?

In conclusion, we now need to take the heat and confrontation out of quality assurance and see it as neither friend nor foe, but simply as a vital tool to help us all do a better job for our students, our society and ourselves. If we design that tool to make sure it does its job properly, then I firmly believe that higher education will be stronger, more confident and better able to argue the importance of its autonomy. Universities will also be closer to realising their mission as independent guardians of the values of democracy and as beacons of inspiration in an increasingly darkening world.

Do Rankings Do What They Claim to Do? Is it Time to Move Beyond Rankings?

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Abstract

More than two decades after *US News and World Report* first published its special issue on "America's Best Colleges" and almost a decade since Shanghai Jiao Tong University published the *Academic Ranking of World Universities* (ARWU), university rankings continue to dominate headlines. Politicians regularly refer to them as a measure of their nation's economic strengths and aspirations, universities use them to help set or define targets mapping their performance against the various metrics, academics use rankings to bolster their own professional reputation and status, and students use them to help them make choices about where to study. Today there are ten global rankings, with national rankings being developed by many governments. What started out as a consumer-oriented product has become a tool to measure educational quality and institutional perform-

ance. But do rankings provide appropriate information about higher education or measure what's important? Do rankings enhance strategic decision-making by governments and institutions, or are there better methods? Is it time to move beyond rankings?

Policy Drivers

The obsession with global rankings has reached almost fever pitch in recent years. Politicians, university leaders, students, business leaders, and media headline writers alike monitor rankings; conferences on rankings are held around the world attracting delegates from many countries; hundreds of academic and newspaper articles and opinion pieces, blogs, and commentary have been published; and many governments and higher education institutions (HEIs) have redrafted their strategies to conform to the indicators identified by rankings. The language of rankings has entered public discourse and impregnated policy documents and statements drafted by a wide array of international, national, regional, and local stakeholders. What began as a consumer-oriented guide for students and parents has been transformed into a rapidly-expanding global intelligence information business. By 2011, there will be ten different global rankings, and over fifty national rankings. Few corners of the globe appear immune from the frenzy that university rankings have created.

There are four main reasons for the growing popularity and obsession with rankings.

– First, knowledge – new knowledge creation and its application – is widely regarded as the foundation for economic, social and political power. Successful econ-

omies rely on the ability to develop and exploit new knowledge for competitive advantage and performance, and conversely, those societies which are best able to develop and exploit new knowledge are the most successful. Because higher education institutions (HEIs) are the principal site for new knowledge creation and propagation, investment and performance matters. Accordingly, this has placed higher education at the centre of policymaking.

– Second, capacity to participate in "world science" depends upon the ability of countries to develop, attract and retain talent. But many countries face demographic pressures. While the world population is increasing, the population of more developed regions is dependent on net migration. This presents a major challenge for national strategies based on growing knowledge-intensive industries. Accordingly, governments around the world are introducing policies to attract the most talented migrants and students, especially in science and technology.

– Third, because higher education is considered an essential component of the productive economy, how higher education is governed and managed has become a major policy issue. The quality of individual higher education institutions (HEIs) and the system-as-a-whole, e.g. teaching and learning excellence, graduate employability and academic productivity, provide a good indication of a country's ability to compete successfully in the global economy. Accordingly, the trend for greater transparency and accountability has been supplemented by an increasing emphasis on value-for-money, international benchmarking, and (public) investor confidence.

– Fourth, students (and their parents) have become very savvy consumers, especially as evidence continues

to show that graduate outcomes and lifestyle are strongly correlated with educational qualifications and career opportunities. Students assess their choice of an institution and educational programmes as an opportunity-cost. As the traditional student market declines, there is heightened competition for high-achieving and internationally mobile students. Accordingly, the balance of consumer power is shifting in favour of students.

In this environment, higher education rankings have emerged as a means of satisfying a "public demand for transparency and information that institutions and government have not been able to meet on their own" (Usher and Savino, 2006, 38). They provide a clue, for a wide range of stakeholders, about the quality of the product. For students, they give an indication as to the potential monetary or private benefits that university attainment might provide vis-à-vis future occupation and salary premium; for employers, they give a clue as to what can be expected from the graduates of a particular HEI; for government and policymakers they give an indication as to quality and international standards, and their impact on national economic capacity and capability; and for HEIs they provide a means to benchmark their own performance. Critically, for the public as taxpayer, rankings are perceived as an independent of assessment of the sector or individual institutions.

Rankings *appear* to be a simple and easy way to measure and compare performance and productivity. They reflect the preoccupations of a policy environment which is utilizing "transparency instruments" to drive performance and ensure better value-for-money and return-on-investment.

Do rankings measure what's important?

While rankings have been a phenomenon since the early 20th century, they have become the focus of national and international attention since the publication in 2003 of the Shanghai *Academic Ranking of World Universities*. This was quickly followed by, inter alia, *Webometrics* (produced by the Spanish National Research Council), *THE-QS World University Ranking* (*THE QS*) 2004-2009, Taiwan *Performance Ranking of Scientific Papers for Research Universities* (HEEACT) in 2007, *The Leiden Ranking* (2008) by the Centre for Science and Technology Studies (CWTS) and *SCImago* (2009) by a team of Spanish researchers. More recently, *QS World University Rankings* (2010), and *THE*-Thomson Reuters World University Ranking (*THE*-TR) (2010) have emerged, the latter representing a significant market intervention by the producer of a major bibliometric database. The EU is sponsoring U-Multirank (see Table 1).

Table 1. Examples of Rankings by Unit of Analysis and Scope.

	Institutional	**Discipline/ Sub-Categories**	**Specialist**
International	• Leiden Ranking – Centre for Science and Technology Studies (CWTS) (Netherlands) • Performance Ranking of Scientific Papers for Research Universities [HEEACT] (Taiwan) • Professional Ranking of World Universities (France) • SCImago Institutional Rankings • Academic Ranking of World Universities [ARWU] (China)	• *Business Week* MBA • *Economist* Intelligence World MBA Rankings • *Financial Times* MBA • *Wall Street Journal* MBA	• University Systems Ranking. Citizens and Society in the Age of Knowledge (Lisbon Council) • National System Strength Rankings (QS) • Green Metric World University Ranking (Universitas Indonesia)

	Institutional	Discipline/ Sub-Categories	Specialist
International	• *QS* Top University (UK) • *THE Thomson Reuters World University Rankings* (UK) • U-Multirank (European Commission) •Webometrics (Spain)		
National	• Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Sweden) • CHE-HochschulRanking (Germany) • *Forbes* College Rankings (US) • *Good University Guide* (Australia) • Google College Rankings (Various) • Guangdong Institute of Management Science (China) • *Guardian* University Guide (UK) • *La Republica* (Italy) • *Macleans* On Campus (Canada)	• *Asiaweek* MBA School Rankings (2000) • Brian Leiter's Law School Rankings (US) • Dataquest (India) • *India Today* (India) • *Le Nouvel Observateur* (France) • Mint (India) • Outlook (India) • *Sharif Magazine* (Iran) • Toplawschools.com (US)	• Saviors of Our Cities (US) • *Washington Monthly* College Guide (US) • *Washington Monthly* Ranking of Community Colleges (US)

	Institutional	Discipline/ Sub-Categories	Specialist
	• National Accreditation Centre Rankings (Kazakhstan) • Netbig (China) • OHEC (Thailand) • *Perspektywy* (Poland) • Petersons College Rankings (US & Canada) • *Princeton Review* (US) • *Sunday Times* (Ireland) • Times Higher Education University Guide (UK) • University Rankings (Ukraine) • U-rank (Sweden) • *USNWR* College Rankings (US) • Washington Monthly (US) • Wuhan University Research Centre for Science Evaluation (China)	• Undergraduate American universities rankings for international students (US) • *USNWR* Top Med Schools (US) • WPROST MBA (Poland)	

	Institutional	Discipline/ Sub-Categories	Specialist
Regional	• AsiaWeek – Asia's Best Universities (HongKong) • CHE Excellence Ranking Graduate Programmes • Ranking Iberoamericano (Pan Hispanic)		

Source: Adapted from Hazelkorn, 2011a.

Rankings' popularity is largely related to their simplicity – but this is also the main source of criticism. They compare HEIs using a range of different indicators, which are weighted differently according to the priorities or value judgments of the producers. There is no such thing as an objective ranking. Due to their popularity, few countries and institutions are unaffected by them. The users of rankings exceed the original target audience of students and their parents, and embrace government and government agencies, industry and the civil society, businesses and employers, other HEIs, philanthropists, public opinion and the media. There are over 16,000 HEIs worldwide, yet rankings have encouraged a fascination with the standing and trajectory of the top 100 universities – less than 1%.

There are some significant differences between national and global rankings; the former usually capture data according a wide range of dimensions while the latter are inevitably more narrowly proscribed because of the absence of internationally meaningful and available

comparative data. Most global rankings prioritise research using data from the Thomson Reuters/ISI *World of Science* or Scopus bibliometric databases. This data is most accurate for bio- and medical sciences research. Uniquely, *ARWU* collects information for publications in *Nature* or *Science*, albeit it's not clear why these two journals have been singled out for such attention. Research data is used as a measure of academic quality, while student entry levels or student selectivity is used to gauge institutional selectivity; the faculty/student ratio is a proxy for educational quality; and an institution's budget is used to represent the quality of the infrastructure, e.g. the buildings and laboratories. Some rankings, notably *THE-TR* and *QS*, use questionnaires to gauge institutional reputation assigning weightings of 34.5% and 50%, respectively (Hazelkorn, 2009, 2011).

On the other hand, rankings *do not* measure educational quality, e.g. the quality of teaching and learning or the quality of the student experience. Bibliometric data is less reliable for the arts, humanities and social science disciplines, and there is no focus on the impact or benefit of research. Rather the focus is on quantity rather than quality except in an indirect way. No attention is given to regional or civic engagement – a major policy objective for many governments and mission focus for many HEIs (see Table 2).

Table 2: What Rankings Measure.

Rankings Measure	Rankings Do Not Measure
• Bio- and medical sciences Research • Publications in *Nature* and *Science* • Student and Faculty Characteristics (e.g. productivity, entry criteria, faculty/student ratio) • Internationalization • Reputation – amongst peers, employers, students	• Teaching and Learning, incl. "added value", impact of research on teaching • Arts, Humanities and Social Science Research • Technology/Knowledge Transfer or Impact and Benefit of Research • Regional or Civic Engagement • Student Experience

Source: Hazelkorn, 2011b.

In this way, rankings attach greatest importance to HEIs which are roughly 200 years old with approximately 25,000 students and 2,500 faculty, and an annual budget of around €2bn plus considerable endowment earnings. These HEIs operate highly selective entry criteria for students and faculty. Accordingly, they have been able to amass significant competitive advantage. This has had the effect of creating a 'norm' or ideal type often referred to as 'the world class university' – against which all HEIs are now compared. As a result, as Altbach says, 'Everyone wants a world-class university. No country feels it can do without one' (Altbach, 2003).

Is it time to move beyond rankings?

As mentioned above, many factors are driving increased interest and scrutiny in the performance of higher education. In a globalised world, international or cross-jurisdictional comparisons are inevitable and such questioning and analysis will only increase. The common theme is value-for-money and efficiency, greater/better

accountability and transparency, and ensuring investor confidence.

Global rankings should be seen alongside other formats and methodologies providing enhanced information and comparability about higher education, including, inter alia, college guides, accreditation, quality assurance, benchmarking and classification (see Table 3). Operating in tandem but differing considerably with respect to purpose, policy orientation, stakeholder and customer, and methodology, the different formats form part of a movement for greater transparency and accountability. They also illustrate that rankings are not the only way to provide information or compare HEIs, assess quality or drive performance. There are alternatives.

Table 3: Typology of Transparency and Accountability Instruments.

– *College Guide*: fulfill public service role, helping and informing domestic undergraduate students and their parents; – *Accreditation*: used to certify the legitimacy of a particular HEI including the authority to award qualifications, either directly or via another agency; – *Quality Assurance, Evaluation and Assessment:* used to assess quality of research, teaching & learning, institutional processes and/or governance structures in order to compare and improve performance; – *Benchmarking*: used to more strategically, effectively and efficiently manage and make decisions through systematic comparison of practice and performance with peer institutions; – *Classification Systems*: provides a typology or framework of higher education institutions to denote diversity usually according to mission and type; – *National Rankings*: national comparison of performance to underpin accreditation, aid resource allocation, improve quality, etc.; – *Global Rankings:* international comparison of institutional performance and reputation.

Source: Hazelkorn, 2011, 41.

– COLLEGE GUIDES can be divided into three broad categories, depending upon whether they provide basic statistical information, a narrative account of 'what it's really like' to be a student at a particular college or university or an audience-focused guide to help students find 'good matches' (Hunter, 1995, 5-9). This market has grown in response to the rising costs of higher education, student mobility, and the importance attached to a qualification for future career opportunities and quality of life. Many of these are published under a generic *Good University Guide* title and are widely used by domestic undergraduate students. The type of information varies from one publication to the next, but broadly they provide information about the overall student experience, e.g. student housing, social life, costs to resources and education/teaching quality. They are developed and promoted by commercial organisations, which is a clear driver for the annual updates and supplements.

– ACCREDITATION is usually done by governments directly or through specialized agencies to recognise legitimacy or authority of particular HEIs to offer programmes of instruction and award qualifications. It focuses on the capacity of an institution to achieve the appropriate standard, in addition to improving and expanding provision in accordance with national qualifications framework and institutional missions. Accreditation uses similar criteria as rankings, e.g. faculty reputation and research productivity, number of research students and ratio to total student population, etc. – but there is increasing attention to output factors.

Accreditation may also be undertaken at the programme level, e.g. business, medicine, architecture, en-

gineering or law, by their respective professional organisation to ensure an overall quality standard to reassure the public, students and the profession, e.g. the Association to Advance the Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), Accreditation Council for Business Schools Programs (sic) (ACBSP) or European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS) run by the European Foundation for Management Development.

– QUALITY ASSURANCE 'refers to national and institutional systems designed to assess and improve the quality of teaching and research, and provide relevant information to key stakeholders on the academic standards and employment of graduates' (Harman, 2011, 36). Their purpose is to assess, monitor and audit academic standards, on a regular basis, so that all stakeholders can be confident of the quality of student outcomes. In response the 2003 Berlin communiqué, ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) developed 'an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance' and explored 'ways of ensuring an adequate peer review system for quality assurance and/or accreditation agencies or bodies'.

Research assessment is a multifaceted review of performance using peer-review and quantitative indicators; conducted by public agencies, it has become a major policy driver. As public funding of scientific-scholarly activity has risen, questions have been asked about value-for-money, impact and benefit. Research assessment is not without controversy because in addition to monitoring performance, it is often used to allocate resources and drive differentiation between academics and HEIs (AUBR, 2010, 53-55). The practice of publishing the results in a hierarchical format called a 'league table'

has led to a growing convergence between assessment and rankings.

– BENCHMARKING is usually a process whereby higher education institutions/study programmes are compared against a standard using peer-review, mentoring and data-sharing. It has become a useful strategic tool, helping higher education leaders, governing authorities and governments to systematically compare practice and performance with peer institutions or countries. OECD PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) is another type of benchmarking tool; by making comparative data available, it encourages governments to assess what policy initiatives work best.

– CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS provide a typology or framework to 'describe, characterize, and categorize colleges and universities' usually according to mission. The most well-known is the US Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education; first established in 1973 and redesigned in 2005, it provides an all-purpose basis to 'represent [the]…diversity [of HEIs] by grouping roughly comparable institutions into meaningful, analytically manageable categories' (McCormick and Zhao, 2005, 52-53). While the audience for classification systems is primarily policy makers, HEIs or researchers, they have had a considerable influence on how different institutions are described. The European Commission has sponsored the development of *U-Map* as a profiling instrument for policymakers and HEIs.

– University rankings have already been discussed above. But even rankings do not have to be done as a hierarchical list of institutions, which suggests that some institutions or disciplines are more highly valued than

others. Banding is used in the CHE University Ranking (Germany); this groups institutions according to level of performance without displaying any statistical data. Ratings are used in hotel or restaurant business; in this system, a threshold is set, and HEIs are required to meet it. There is no limit on the number of institutions which can be awarded the optimum number of stars. The EU's U-Multirank uses the principles of a multi-dimensional user-driven which empowers individual or stakeholder groups to rank according to his/her own preferences.

Finally, there are rankings which look at the system-as-a-whole or at alternative characteristics. The importance of these examples is that they demonstrate that which university or higher education system is best depends upon the indicators chosen. This also highlight the fact that governments and HEIs have too easily and quickly been influenced by existing rankings – which in turn are now having a profound impact on higher education and our societies.

Three examples:

– *The Washington Monthly College Guide* says universities should be measured according to the extent they are engines of social mobility, produce the academic minds and scientific research that advance knowledge and drive economic growth, and inculcate and encourage an ethic of service.

– The *Green Metric World University Ranking*, managed by Universitas Indonesia (2010), aims to provide a 'profile for and way of comparing the commitment of universities towards going green and promoting sustainable operation'.

– The *University Systems Ranking. Citizens and Society in the Age of Knowledge*, developed by the Lis-

bon Council, an independent think-tank based in Brussels, measures the performance of 17 OECD countries against six criteria: inclusiveness, access, effectiveness, attractiveness, age-range, and responsiveness. It says higher education should not simply be a 'mechanism for churning out a handful of elites and perpetuating' 'social inequality […] to the contrary, the system must be capable […] of empowering and equipping the largest possible number of individuals with the fullest set of tools she or he will need to become well rounded participants in our social democracy and fully-functioning economic units in that society. It must also stand out […] as a centre of world-leading, independent research […] (Ederer *et al*., 2008)'.

Conclusion

To preserve its autonomy, higher education must respond constructively to the range of questions now being asked of, lest it finds that it relinquish control of the quality agenda. Comparable information on teaching and research makes it easier for students and faculty to make informed choices on where and what to study or work. Improved data collection provides the basis for autonomous strategic leadership and evidence-based decision-making, and underpins quality assurance and discussions about what constitutes success. Benchmarking enables HEIs to identify peer institutions and programmes, and share good practice. Ultimately, political and societal support for higher education, for systems dependent upon public funding and on tuition fees, can only be maintained by quality profiling, perform-

ance enhancement and value-for-money which provides (public) investor confidence.

Global rankings were developed for particular purposes, and should not unthinkingly be used for other purposes. Indeed, there are too many examples for around the world illustrating how governments and HEIs have uncritically begun to structure and reshape their higher education systems and institutions to conform to indicators chosen by others. To do so, poses a serious threat to institutional autonomy and national sovereignty. Because there are direct correlations between societal value systems and policy choices, what matters is how governments prioritize their objectives of a skilled labour force, equity, regional growth, better citizens, future Einsteins and global competitiveness, and translate them into policy.

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Rankings and Institutional Autonomy

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I will talk on the implications of rankings to institutional autonomy from the perspective of a producer of ranking. So you should not expect a general critique of rankings.

The notion of ranking refers to a method: the comparison and hierarchical ordering of units, in our case universities by quantitative indicators. Within this common framework university rankings can, and they do, differ by their purposes and main target audiences, their methodology of collecting and analyzing data and, most important, by their indicators. Hence it is not so easy to talk about rankings as such. At the same time it is easy of course to pick out negative aspects of different individual rankings concluding that rankings as such are an evil thing. But the same could be said with regard to cars: Some cars have a very high consumption, others have only two seats, some cars might have problems with the brakes – following the argumentation of some

criticisms of rankings the conclusion would be that cars are bad vehicles. This is of course not to say that rankings are a good thing per se. This would be the same kind of argumentation. If we want to discuss questions of negative impacts of rankings on institutional autonomy we have to look on different ranking approaches and methodologies and come to a more differentiated view.

Explicitly or implicitly rankings are defining good performance or quality of higher education institutions by their set of indicators. Rankings necessarily have to limit the number of indicators out of the total of possible indicators. Hence the selection of indicators has severe consequences– the more influential and popular the ranking is. Talking about impacts of rankings on institutional autonomy there are two aspects of the selection of indicators we have to discuss. One is linked with particular approaches to ranking; the other applies to rankings and indicator systems in general.

First, and this is an issue of all rankings, individual indicators can have negative or even perverse impacts. We know the example from the US where the selectivity in student admission is an indicator in the most prominent ranking. As a result some universities stimulated students to apply knowing that they will never accept them just in order to increase the selectivity score in the ranking. This is a waste of resources and irresponsible against students. Rankings should be sensitive to negative impacts of their indicators, but clearly not all rankings are.

Second, the set of indicators used in ranking defines what is regarded as relevant for the assessment of performance responsible for high quality. Most national and international rankings are using composite indica-

tors. Composite indicators are measuring the performance of a complex system like a university with one single number. Having a score of 87.5 then signals this university is better than another one with a score of 86.3. The calculation of a composite score implicates the assignment of weight to each indicator by the producers of rankings. This means that the producers of rankings decide about the importance and relevance of the indicators. This feature of rankings in particular sets incentives for universities to adapt their strategies to the ranking. If the ranking assigns the highest weight to research performance (as measured by publications and citations), the best strategy of a university to improve in the ranking is to shift resources from teaching to research, to concentrate on the hard, bio-medical sciences (due to the field biases of bibliometric data bases) and forget about social sciences and humanities. Currently we are witnessing an obsession about being or becoming a world-class university, which means being among the top 200 of the global ranking and this means to be an excellent internationally oriented research university. Yet the vast majority of higher education institutions in the world have a different mission; they are not internationally oriented research universities, they will never be and, in my view, they should not waste their money by trying to become one. In this sense rankings can be a thread to institutional diversity.

But is there an alternative? – Yes, there is. The answer is: Multi-dimensional rankings avoid this negative impact of rankings. From the quality assurance debate we know that there is no uniform definition of quality. “Quality lies in the eye of the beholder”. Different stakeholders have different ideas and concepts of what

makes a god university. For students quality of a higher education institution can be very different than for academic researchers, or policy makers or employers. If there is no "objective" quality there is no objective ranking, too. This is an epistemological argument!

Multi-dimensional rankings are taking this argument seriously. First, they cover different dimensions of the performance of universities which have different relevance for different groups of stakeholders. Of course, no ranking can cover all aspects of the missions and activities of higher education institutions. And it may be legitimate to look on one specific dimension only. But then the ranking should explicitly point out that it is a ranking of this dimension only and it does not identify "the best" university. But in general rankings should cover a broader range of dimensions of performance, at least teaching and research. U-Multirank e.g. includes both plus the dimensions of knowledge transfer, international orientation and regional engagement.

More important, multi-dimensional rankings do not calculate composite indicators. They leave the decision about the relevance of the individual indicators to the users. This takes seriously the argument that there is no objective ranking; that there are neither theoretical nor empirical reasons to assign a particular weight to an indicator. Multi-dimensional rankings are user-driven in a sense that the user decides which indicators are relevant for him/her. Students have different preferences and priorities than researchers and different students have different priorities in selecting a university. We do not live in the time of printed hard-copy rankings anymore. Most rankings are web-based now and web-

based rankings can be interactive and let the user make his personalized ranking based on his own idea what is relevant to him. This concept of multi-dimensional rankings does not pre-define which indicators are more important than others and hence they avoid setting incentives for universities to improve on exactly those indicators the rankers think as being most important. Of course multi-dimensional rankings, like any indicator system, stimulate universities to improve their performance on their indicators, but they leave the decision about the priorities to the institutions – according to their own mission and strategy.

Most of the most popular and influential rankings, such as the Shanghai Ranking, the QS ranking but also national rankings as the US News and World Report ranking still stick to the composite indicator approach. But there is a growing number of multi-dimensional and personalized rankings now. CHE ranking is one example, the concept of U-Multirank is another example, but there are also systems in the Netherlands, Canada and Taiwan. And there will probably be more in the future; there are some initiatives (at different stages) in countries like Spain, Thailand and France.

To conclude: I am convinced that a more sophisticated multi-dimensional ranking approach can avoid being a threat to institutional autonomy. On the contrary, multi-dimensional rankings in the understanding of CHE and U-Multirank are instruments to make visible different institutional profiles. They do not create one single ranking list, they can show that there are multiple excellences beyond research excellence – excellence in teaching, excellence in knowledge transfer

into the region, excellence in lifelong learning activities and so on. As they do not present "the number one university" to the public they may be less spectacular and less interesting for the media. But I think we can live with that.

Quality Assessment in Italian Higher Education

Fiorella Kostoris, Governing Council
Italian Quality Assurance Agency – ANVUR, Rome

First I would like to thank the organizers of this conference of the Magna Charta Observatory; I am very pleased and honoured to be here today.

Academic freedom has to be maintained and sheltered, both as far as teaching and research are concerned. This is because academic freedom is a necessary condition for dialogue, for mutual understanding, for reaching new frontiers in knowledge and in well being, in one word it is a condition to boost Universities' ability to develop human capital.

Yet if Universities are largely financed through public resources as tuitions, donations, research grants, private funding only cover a small fraction of total costs, Universities have to become accountable relative to the tax payer, more so when taxes are paid by a very large percentage of families but only a small percentage of these families has children benefitting from Universities' services, as it is the case for example in Italy.

The tax payer, then, not only deserves full disclosure but also needs to be reassured that meritocracy is implemented in Universities, as this represents a social preference of current democracies for equity and efficiency at the same time. In this way the tax payer really understands the value for money he or she has spent for.

In my opinion Universities' quality assurance becomes necessary mainly for this reason, although it may provide many more tasks, as Professor Williams has pointed out today in his introduction. The Universities' quality, both in teaching and research, has therefore to be measured at least in comparative terms at the national level. And rankings have to be supplied in a professional, honest and transparent, although still subjective way, in order to consequently allocate public resources in the most efficient and just way according to merit. This is a particularly important public goal when the public budget constraint is very strict as it is currently the case in many developed countries, certainly in Italy.

Quality assessment is significant ex ante, *in fieri*, ex post. But the most relevant and innovative assessment concerns products and outcomes: therefore it has to be carried out mainly ex post.

In some countries the market could in principle provide even for public Universities the correct rankings on the quality of research and teaching through a bottom up procedure. This appears to be the case when public Universities represent a strict minority and, even if public, their costs are largely covered by tuitions, donations and private research grants, for example in the U.S. : the signal of their quality may then be the variable level of their professors' salaries and of their students' tuitions, the rejection rates observed on their students' applica-

tions, the impact factor of the papers published by their researchers, the size of donations and grants obtained and similar data.

This is not, however, the case in most European countries and certainly not in Italy, where I will focus from now on.

In Italian Universities, both public and private (the public ones are the vast majority), public funding represents the very large component of total entries; private donations are practically inexistent; professors' salaries are uniform for a given level of seniority, at each step of the career ending with the position of full professor; tuitions show a small variability across the country and are very far from the coverage of costs; the main degrees given by Italian Universities have what we call a legal value, namely have to be considered of equal quality for all kinds of public employment, which itself constitutes the largest percentage of total employment of those who have a University degree.

In Italy, on the one hand, University freedom is guaranteed (to some extent) even by our Constitution, but on the other hand, the quality assessment on research products of all fields has been done in the past at the national level only once for the years 2001-2003 by a public committee called CIVR and the quality assessment on all tertiary education outcomes has never been done at the national level. Some important ex post assessments, however, have been produced in the past in some specific fields and/or at some local level, notably in the Osservatorio of Bologna University.

Only this year an Italian public Agency devoted to assess the quality of research and education in all fields of all Universities and Research Institutes financed by

the Ministry of University and Research was born in May. Its name is ANVUR and I serve as one of the seven members of its board of directors, being responsible, among other things, for the external relations. Therefore I hope to become the Italian contact point of all foreign colleagues who are here today. ANVUR is public but by law it is independent from the Government. The procedures for the nomination of the board members guarantee this independence: we were nominated through a decree law of the President of the Republic, following a proposal by the Government which was almost unanimously approved by the Parliament members in a bipartisan vote. Moreover, a further signal of our independence is that, among our multiple tasks, there is the one to evaluate the Minister's decisions concerning allocation of funds to Universities according to merit, as a sort of follow up of our quality assessment on research and education.

ANVUR has already launched a new evaluation exercise on the quality of research products for the years 2004 to 2010. Each full time equivalent researcher has to present six products (in fact three products if they belong to Universities, six if they belong to Research Institutes).We will evaluate individuals, departments, Universities. We will use a combination of peer view and appropriate bibliometric indicators. We will examine the degree of excellence of each University and Research Institute but we will use the whole distribution of researchers' quality on elements such as their products' innovation, relevance, internationalisation (and also socio-economic effects in the case of patents only). And we will construct median values for many purposes, for example to suggest to the Minister the best allocation of

public research funding or the best allocation of fellowships in the PhD programs on a meritocratic basis, or to propose the optimal choice of future evaluators, particularly of the professors who will have to appoint new colleagues in the national concourses, or to build proper criteria for the public accreditation of University's PHD courses or for the creation and merging of different high level Universities.

ANVUR has to perform many other tasks including the quality evaluation of tertiary education. In this field, however, we have not launched any new project yet. The Italian law requires from us an ex post evaluation and measure on the one hand of learning outcomes and on the other hand of employment results: indeed one could not agree more on the relevance of these points. Site visits will be done, but should not be by any means a unique instrument of quality assessment of tertiary education. Alternative or complementary instruments are now becoming available: for example an OECD feasibility study called AHELO (Assessing Higher Education Learning Outcomes) appears extremely innovative and promising as it is trying for the first time to evaluate the quality of University students' understanding and ability in problem solving through students' tests valid for all developed and developing countries. I may anticipate that the feasibility study will be completed by December 2012 in my capacity in AHELO as Vice President of the OECD Bureau, as the Italian expert and National Project Manager nominated by the Italian Minister and as one of the seven Economics Experts chosen by ETS in Princeton to collaborate in formulating AHELO tests in Economics. ANVUR will no doubt analyse the pros and the cons of AHELO results in order

to decide whether to adopt its new methodologies in its tertiary education quality assessment.

Finally, an ex ante evaluation of the University education quality is also useful and ANVUR can share this task with the internal system of Universities' evaluators called *nuclei interni di valutazione*. Among the most relevant data to be considered, we list the number of credits of each course, the professors' CV, the characteristics of students' dorms and of other infrastructures, the opening hours of University's libraries and the like. But the latter are only inputs, certainly not outputs and at best their quantity and virtues are necessary not sufficient conditions for high quality tertiary education.

Can Quality Assurance harm Academic Freedom? A Short Case Study from Germany

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The relationship between quality assurance and its diverse tools and measure and academic freedom is often discussed. Especially those actors in higher education that are not very fond of quality assurance often use the argument that demands from these processes inflict with their academic freedom to fight of any interferences in their activities. To show that the relationship of these two concepts has a conflicting potential not only in debates within higher education or scientific mind-games a recent case example from Germany will be presented to underline that this relation might even have legal implications.

The German system of higher education is heavily de-centralized and federalized. All sixteen Bundesländer have their own law on higher education and nearly all overarching regulations have to be agreed between all the Länder in a consensus based process. The quality assurance system is still mainly based on pro-

gram accreditation. These accreditations are carried out through private not-for-profit agencies, which have to be certified by a public foundation, the Akkreditierungsrat. The actual accreditation is then conducted by a panel of peers including stakeholder representatives like for example students. The rules and regulations for the accreditation processes come from decisions of the Akkreditierungsrat, the common standards for higher education agreed upon by the different Bundesländer as well as the respective law on higher education of the Land in which the accreditation takes place. Most of the higher education laws of the Bundesländer ask for a successful accreditation before allowing higher education institutions to start a study program as well as a successful re-accreditation after several years.

In 2008 one of the accreditation agencies conducted a program accreditation for two study programs at a private higher education institution in North-Rhine-Westphalia. Both programs were found not to fulfill the required standards and thus have not been reaccredited. Since the higher education law of the Bundesland demands besides other things from private higher education institutions to be recognized by the state, to have at least several accredited study programs the negative decision of accreditation panel of the agency also had the potential to influence the state recognition of this institution. After receiving the negative decision from the accreditation agency the private higher education institution objected and appealed to a court to revise the decision.

The court in Arnsberg decided on the matter on April 16, 2010. It was decided to transfer the case to the German constitutional court. The rationale for this was based on

the courts finding that two central constitutional problems need to be clarified (Verwaltungsgericht Arnsberg 2010): First the court stated that the way in which the local higher education law in North-Rhine-Westphalia transfers the decision making on the question whether a higher education institution is allowed to run a study program to the accreditation agencies is not sufficiently legally regulated. This problem is mainly a question of the political system and how the public sphere can delegate tasks to private actors. The second problem stated by the court touched the issue of academic freedom. In their view the accreditation system as it is laid out at the moment violates the right to the freedom of teaching as specified in article 5 of the German constitution. This statement was especially interesting because for the court academic freedom not only relates to the individual academic and his/her choice of content, methods and conduct of study programs but also higher education institutions as legal entities. It is seen as one of the basic rights of self-governance of higher education institutions to create and deliver study programs. The accreditation system harms this right because it forces the institutions to use an extensive amount of time and money to justify their activities towards the external accreditation agency. Thus especially when the accreditation decision is negative the rights of the institution are violated.

The court in Arnsberg directed its specific criticism towards the fact that the rules and regulations for accreditations in Germany are not specified as laws but instead are regulations decided upon by the Akkreditierungsrat as well as common standards agreed upon by the sixteen ministers of higher education of the Bun-

desländer. Since the content of these regulations potentially limits the constitutional rights of academics and higher education institutions by exposing them to outside interference concerning the conduct of their study programs, the court demands for a clear legal basis for these interferences and stated that it is not sufficient to base them on the existing rules.

The constitutional court has not yet decided on the matter but many stakeholders in the higher education area have been invited to provide expert opinions for the proceeding. Most of the actors in the German accreditation area are holding their breath and waiting for the constitutional court's decision fearing that it might lead to a movement back to stronger state regulation instead of the existing quality assurance system. What this case already shows is that the relationship between academic freedom and quality assurance mechanisms has the potential for conflicts and that there is a need for clear legal regulations and rules to ensure the acceptance and sustainability of a quality assurance system in the light of constitutional rights concerning academic freedom.

Reference*:*

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Does Quality Assurance Threaten Institutional Autonomy and Academic Freedom?

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The contribution focuses on external quality assurance mechanisms in higher education, including evaluation, accreditation and audit at institutional or programme level. External quality assurance is undertaken for a range of purposes that differ according to context. These may include:

– Supporting higher education institutions in developing their quality;

– Ensuring public accountability of higher education institutions;

– Protection of students from spurious providers;

– Enhancing the relevance of qualification to the labour market;

– Ensuring minimum standards of programmes and qualifications.

These are not mutually exclusive. External quality assurance systems in practice are put in place for a combination of some of these purposes.

Academic freedom is the right of the academic community to carry out study, teaching and research freely, i.e. to engage with different models, theories and approaches at their discretion and without external interference. It may also be considered to include the right of students to pursue a meaningful education path. At the same time, it does not mean that every individual can do whatever s/he wants without any framework.

Institutional autonomy is the right of higher education institutions to decide on its own affairs freely and without being micro-managed externally. This, again, is always within the context of a general framework set by the society in which the institution operates.

Based on these introductory remarks, I wish to make five main points:

1. The goals and purposes of external quality assurance should be seen as legitimate demands of various constituencies, stakeholders and society at large. They may sometimes coincide with the principles of academic freedom and institutional autonomy, and sometimes be contradictory.

In such cases, there needs to be an appropriate balance between institutional autonomy, academic freedom and other legitimate interests, such as, for instance, the students' right to a meaningful education.

2. Different external quality assurance arrangements constrain institutional autonomy and academic freedom to a different extent. Very intrusive programme accreditation systems might constrain academic freedom to a greater extent than an institutional audit, which might rather have a limited impact on institutional autonomy and none at all on academic freedom.

This can, however, not mean that specific arrange-

ments are as such preferable because they have less impact on academic freedom and institutional autonomy. External quality assurance systems are always developed in a specific cultural and societal context. What is appropriate in one place might not be in another.

3. Often, external quality assurance does not interfere directly with the content of study and research. Sometimes, institutions are required to fulfil certain structural framework requirements.

Other systems require institutions to put in place internal quality assurance arrangements, while leaving it up to the institutions which system to implement and how. This could hardly be seen as a major constraint to institutional autonomy.

Programme-level quality assurance is often based on a fitness for purpose approach, requiring institutions to demonstrate how a study programme is fit to achieve the objectives set by the institution itself.

The constraint to academic freedom is minimal, provided that the external reviewers respect the institution's right to set its own objectives. At the same time, at least the students' academic freedom, in the sense of having a meaningful education path, is protected by ensuring that the programme lives up to its promises.

4. Moreover, it should be noted that external quality assurance usually follows the principle of peer review, with an extended notion of "peers", including academics, students and practitioners from outside the higher education system.

Given the peer review approach external quality assurance judgements are essentially made by the wider academic community, rather than a totally external entity.

5. External quality assurance is not always a new external governing or steering mechanism influencing the work of institutions and academics. In many cases, it replaces other mechanisms, such as the micro-management by ministries in terms of budget, staff or organisational structure, or the approval of study programmes by ministries.

The specific realities are different everywhere. Nevertheless, external quality assurance systems have the potential to give greater autonomy and responsibility to higher education institutions, while holding them accountable at a general level. This might be less intrusive in terms of academic freedom and institutional autonomy than some of the "old" management mechanisms.

There is no (and probably never was) absolute academic freedom and institutional autonomy, since both have always been constrained by budgets, structures and the context in which institutions work. External quality assurance is one of the external mechanisms that have an impact on and might constrain academic freedom and institutional autonomy.

The legitimate goals and objectives of external quality assurance have to be put in a good balance with these two principles. At the same time, due to its characteristics, external quality assurance mechanisms have the potential to be a less intrusive governing mechanism than what we have seen before, possibly allowing greater academic freedom, institutional autonomy and diversity.

Does Quality Assurance Threaten Institutional Autonomy and Academic Freedom?

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Does quality assurance threaten institutional autonomy and academic freedom? At least for quality assurance and quality improvement as carried through U.S. accreditation, my answer may be "yes" – depending on how accreditation is handled in the future. There is a long history of the interrelationship of accreditation, institutional autonomy and academic freedom; they are mutually reinforcing in a number of ways. Actions that undermine and weaken this inter-relationship are likely to constitute a threat.

U.S. Accreditation

The key features of U.S. accreditation are familiar to many around the world. Accreditation in the United States is more than 100 years old, focused on the quality of public and private, postsecondary (or tertiary), nonprofit and for-profit institutions. Although there has al-

ways been some criticism of the process over the years, accreditation is nonetheless viewed by many in government, the public and academe as the primary form of effective external review of quality in U.S. higher education.

Accreditation both assures threshold quality and assists institutions and programs to improve. The process is based on the centrality of institutional mission and fitness for purpose. Accreditation is standards-based, evidence-based and trust-based. Academic professionals review other academic professionals, combining a reliance on self-review with peer review. Accreditation is mainly a qualitative review that is formative in nature – in contrast to relying heavily on quantitative indicators of quality that are explicitly defined, e.g., test scores. Finally, accreditation is periodic: Maintaining accredited status requires that self- and peer review be conducted on a regular basis.

Institutional Autonomy and Academic Freedom

Both institutional autonomy and academic freedom have been central to the effective functioning of higher education in the United States. They are key factors in its success.

Institutional autonomy has been acknowledged in both federal and state law as the expectation that colleges and universities will carry out their academic leadership role in a context of responsible independence. Autonomy is about academics leading and managing academe. It has been a cornerstone of accreditation as well. Institutional autonomy is vital to accreditation's sustaining its mission-based orientation.

Academic freedom is about the social contract between the U.S. professoriate and society. It is an agreement that faculty have rights and carry out responsibilities related to judgments about who is to be taught, what is to be taught and who is to teach. With academic freedom, teaching, learning and research can be carried out without threats of retribution. It defines an arena of responsible freedom for intellectual inquiry and debate.

Academic freedom has long been supported by accreditation. A key element in today's U.S. conversations about academic freedom is the extent to which it requires both institutional autonomy and shared governance, both of which tie this freedom to accreditation. In addition, there is considerable discussion about who has academic freedom: Is this freedom confined to faculty or do students have academic freedom? Should academic freedom be considered a desirable institutional characteristic as well?

U.S. Accreditation: Change and Pressure

All this said, U.S. accreditation is changing. This is taking place more through external pressure than internal desire. To what accreditation is evolving or the place of accreditation resulting from these pressures will determine the extent to which this well-regarded process will pose a threat to either academic freedom or institutional autonomy.

While many of these pressures have been present for decades, their most recent iteration derives from the 2005-06 U.S. Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education. The major pressures on accreditation are (1) to respond to calls for greater pub-

lic accountability and transparency, (2) to move toward using national standards rather than sustain accreditation's current mission-based application of standards, (3) to accept a larger government role in quality review, (4) to shift from formative to summative evaluation of higher education quality and (5) to agree to a larger role for non-academics in judging academics.

The pressures are expedited and reinforced by an array of "external accountability tools" that have emerged over the past 20 years. These tools include the widespread and growing national and international use of rankings to judge higher education quality, They include national and international qualifications frameworks to array expectations of student performance and align these expectations with, in the case of higher education, degree levels.

The accountability tools include the potentially influential international quality indicators for student achievement under development by the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development. They include what I call "customized comparability tools" such as U-Map developed by the European Commission or the "College Navigator" developed by the U.S. Department of Education. Both allow students and the public to compare institutions based on key characteristics such as admissions practices, available student aid, tuition and enrollments.

Implications for Accreditation, Institutional Autonomy and Academic Freedom

These external pressures are disruptive to traditional accreditation practice. They are requiring U.S. accredi-

tors to focus more intently on accountability and less on quality improvement – this last, arguably, the greatest area of value-added in accreditation. They are shifting accreditation away from peer review – academics judging academics – to external actors being primarily responsible for judging higher education. They are enhancing the role of government as its own judge of quality in contrast to its 60-year role as an enabler of academic processes to judge quality. And, they are forcing accreditation to serve purposes at considerable variance with its traditional role – with significant implications for both institutional autonomy and academic freedom.

With regard to institutional autonomy, if accreditors accede or are forced to accede to the pressures, it likely means that less attention will be given to institutional mission, the underpinning of autonomy. This, coupled with more attention to national standards and external judgment of quality, could undermine autonomy, reducing opportunity for, e.g., faculty to provide academic leadership.

With regard to academic freedom, accreditation would be pressured to question the social contract between the professoriate and society, adopting the increased skepticism of the rights of faculty and greater insistence on their responsibilities, reflective of the current public and government attitudes. The United States has entered a period in which the public is judging faculty harshly, especially as faculty are involved in the current challenges to unions and budget cuts that has been taking place in a number of states. Accreditors are pressured to follow suit. There would be considerable concern that this would result in a diminishing of faculty freedom of inquiry.

Where Do We Go From Here?

My sense is that U.S. accreditation has an obligation to more fully address public accountability through providing additional information to the public about what accreditation means and its basis for awarding accredited status. This needs to be coupled with calling on accredited institutions and programs to further expand their information to the public as well, especially with regard to student achievement and the performance of colleges and universities.

At the same time, U.S. accreditation needs to take additional steps to protect institutional autonomy. This can be done through greater emphasis on mission and supporting strong institutional leadership for quality. Accreditation needs to acknowledge that additional centralization of judgment of higher education is increasingly a fact of life, but advocate forcefully for national expectations to be framed in aspirational and general terms – not establish uniform national standards or "bright lines," requiring lock-step behavior from the great diversity of U.S. institutions.

For academic freedom, we would all benefit from additional emphasis from accreditors on its value and importance. Accreditation can be even more explicit about standards that require academic freedom. There needs to be considerable expansion of faculty involvement in accreditation. We need a national dialogue about whether we have academic freedom practices that are "right" for the 21st century.

Summary

Although there is a long history of U.S. accreditation's support and engagement in institutional autonomy and academic freedom, accreditation is changing. The changes are not the result of the interests and desires of accreditation, but are driven by factors and pressures external to the enterprise. They are driven by calls for greater transparency and accountability, greater attention to national needs and judgments about academic quality and, in general, a replacement of primary emphasis on self- and peer review with public review and public judgment about the quality of higher education.

However unintentionally, the changes can undermine institutional autonomy and academic freedom. The choices that accreditation makes to respond to these pressure will determine how the threat to institutional autonomy and academic freedom is handled. I am urging that accreditation offer a robust and effective response to calls for greater public accountability while, simultaneously, reinforcing its commitment to both institutional autonomy and academic freedom. While a challenging task, it is not impossible.

Defining Quality

Lee Harvey, Professor Emeritus
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Introduction

In this presentation I will focus on four concepts: quality, standards, quality assurance and quality culture. Being clear about these concepts aid understanding of higher education policy and practice.

In essence, quality is about process; standards are about outcomes; quality assurance is about monitoring; and quality culture is about implementation. That, though, is where simplicity ends and complications arise.

Quality

Twenty years ago (Harvey and Green, 1993) I suggested a set of definitions of quality, which, although tweaked by various commentators, have stood the test of time. Quality is defined as follows (derived from 'Understanding Quality' [Harvey, 2006]):

Quality as exceptional or as excellence:

The exceptional notion sees quality as something special (Harvey and Green, 1993). There are three variations on this. First, the traditional notion of quality as distinctive, second, a view of quality as exceeding very high standards (or 'excellence') and third, a weaker notion of exceptional quality, as passing a set of required (minimum) standards. The excellence approach, which provides benchmarks (or other criteria) against which 'high' standards can be evaluated is the main meaning used by institutions in their mission statements, reflecting the approach in various ranking systems.

Quality as perfection or consistency:

Quality is also construed as perfection or consistency. This involves a shift from outcome standards measurement to process standards. A quality product in this sense is one that is consistent or without flaws (Ingle, 1985). This notion of quality emphasises reliability and is encapsulated in two interrelated ideas: *zero defects* and *quality culture*. 'Zero defects' is not just about conforming to specification; it also embodies a philosophy of *prevention* rather than inspection (Peters and Waterman, 1982). Quality culture in this sense means everyone is responsible for quality; it relates to the idea of delegated responsibility for educational quality. It evokes issues of trust and the locus of control of the educational process, reflecting current battles about managerialist control and academic autonomy. A quality culture, aimed at consistency of output, requires a facilitative managerial infrastructure alongside a trusting delegation of the academic process to those who directly engage with teaching or research.

Quality as fitness for/of purpose:

Quality is also defined as fitness for purpose of a product or service. Fitness for purpose equates quality with the fulfillment of a specification or stated outcomes. Quality is thus judged by the extent to which the product or service fits a stated purpose.

This fitness-for-purpose notion is distinct from the idea of quality as something special, elitist, or difficult to attain. It is a functional definition of quality rather than an exceptional one. If something does the job it is designed for then it is deemed to be a quality product or service. Unlike the exceptional notion of quality, which, by definition, must be exclusive (even in the weaker standards checking approach) fitness for purpose, like 'zero defects', is inclusive. Every product and service has the potential to fit its purpose and thus be a quality product or service.

Although apparently straightforward in conception, 'fitness for purpose' is deceptive (Moodie, 1986), for it raises the issues of 'whose purpose?' and 'how is fitness assessed?' For some, the objectives are set externally and fitness for purpose becomes compliance.

Where fitness *for* purpose opened up the possibility of inclusive quality, as every product and service has the potential to fit its purpose and thus be a quality product or service, fitness *of* purpose closed down inclusivity as there are external determinants of what is acceptable as a quality criterion.

Broadly, fitness for purpose offers two alternative priorities for specifying purpose. The first puts the onus on the customer to specify requirements; the second lo-

cates it with the provider, as expressed through mission, and is the more usual in higher education.

Quality as value for money:

Value for money is a definition of quality that judges the quality of provision, processes or outcomes against the monetary cost (both overt and hidden) of making the provision, undertaking the process or achieving the outcomes.

In essence, quality as value for money sees quality as return on investment. One view sees value for money as being achieved if a specified outcome (product or service) is obtained at lowest cost. An alternative view sees value for money as getting a specified product for a predetermined cost that suits the customer. These are slightly different: the first suggests one should always look for the lowest cost, the other specifies a fixed amount that will be spent on a given product and value is achieved if that product can be obtained for that amount.

Value for money is a growing concern of major stakeholders in higher education. Governments, for example, seek to minimize expenditure on higher education and, through various accountability mechanisms, seek value for money from higher education institutions. Likewise, as students in many countries pay more and more for higher education, they also seek value-for-money.

Quality as transformation:

Quality as *transformation* is 'a classic notion' of quality that involves a 'qualitative change' from one state to another (Harvey and Green, 1993).

Transformation as a process of transmutation can apply to an individual or an organisation or the product or service supplied by the organisation. In an educational setting, 'transformation refers to the enhancement and empowerment of students or the development of new knowledge' (Harvey and Green, 1993). When related to higher education, transformation usually refers to the development and change that occurs to a student through the learning process. However, it can also apply to changes within an institution so that it is better able to provide transformative learning or research (Harvey and Knight, 1996; Eckel *et al*., 1998).

Transformation involves either or both the enhancement of the participant (or providing institution) the empowerment of the participant (learner or researcher). Empowering the learner, involves engaging all relevant participants in the learning process, in setting standards, endorsing practices, specifying curricula, and constructing assessment criteria. Quality is judged through the democratisation of the process, not just the outcome. Thus, at an institutional level, transformation is about changing the culture and practices of institutions so that they provide a transformational experience for students (Harvey and Knight, 1996). In brief, such transformation requires *inter alia*, shifting from teaching to learning; encouraging critical reflection; developing explicit skills, attitudes and abilities as well as knowledge; developing appropriate assessment procedures; rewarding transformative teaching; encouraging discussion of pedagogy; linking quality improvement to learning.

Standards

Standards are distinct from quality. They relate to outcomes.

(Note that the term standard is complicated because it means both a fixed criterion (against which an outcome can be matched) and a level of attainment. A sporting analogy helps explain: in golf, the standard score for a course is set out by specifying the expected number of strokes to complete each hole (the par score). This is the equivalent to the fixed criterion. This is distinct from the standard of the play; a high standard of play may still be achieved even when scoring above par if, for example, the weather conditions are very difficult. Alternatively, the course may be easy and all competitors find it easy to score better than par. In this paper, the emphasis is on standards of attainment not on criterion standards (on the playing score rather than the par score in the golf analogy). The confusing term 'quality standards' is not a 'standard' but rather a norm and equivalent to the notion of standard as criterion, as mentioned above, and in the golf analogy, 'quality standard' would be the par score.)

There are four broad areas in higher education where standards are set and assessed: academic, competence, service and organisational standards.

Academic standards relate to the intellectual abilities of students. It is the demonstrated ability to meet specified level of academic attainment, usually relating to objectives or stated outcomes, operationalised via performance on assessed pieces of work. In this context, the grade achieved by the student would be the academic standard of the student; the 'quality standard' would be the pass mark (minimum grade required to achieve

the award). For research, standards are assessed, for example, via peer recognition.

Standards of competence relate to the technical abilities of students. It is a demonstration that a specified level of ability on a range of competencies has been achieved. Competencies may include general transferable skills as well as 'higher level' academic skills appropriate to an award. In some cases competence includes particular abilities congruent with induction into a profession and the award of a licence to practice, as for example, in medicine or law.

Service standards refer to the standards of service provided by the organisation to the student. It assesses whether identified elements of the service (process or facilities) are congruent with specified benchmarks or expectations. Such things as benchmark statements and student charters often focus on quantifiable and measurable items. *Post hoc* measurements of customer opinions (satisfaction surveys) are used as indicators of service provision. Thus, service standards in higher education parallel consumer standards.

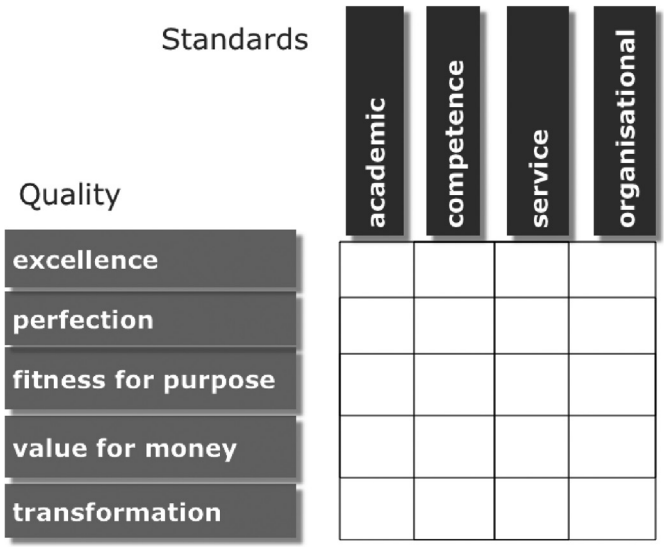
Organisational standards are the principles and procedures by which the institution assures that it provides an appropriate learning and research environment. Organisational standards measure the attainment of formal recognition of systems to ensure effective management of organisational processes and clear dissemination of organisational practices. Organisational standards are also sometimes called 'quality standards'. This is somewhat confusing. In the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ENQA 2005), for example, the standards are normative aims for quality processes, which are elaborated

through a set of expectations (the guidelines) that are similar to objectives.

Quality and standards

Quality as process and standards as outcome can be seen to intersect (Figure 1), suggesting 20 points of intersection.

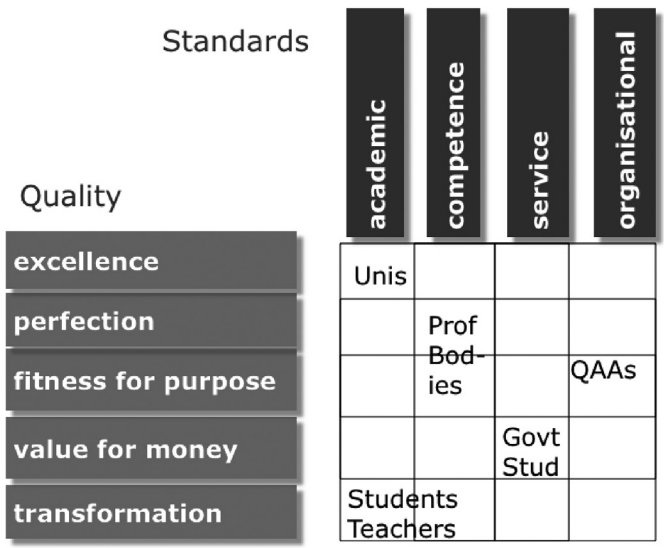
Figure 1: Intersection of quality and standards.



For example, as noted above, most university mission statements emphasise excellence of research and academic standards, although explications of the way this is to be achieved are vague. Governments and, increasingly, students are concerned with value for money of provision (service standards). Historically,

and still fundamentally, students, and their teachers, have been focused on the development of their skills and abilities (the intersection of transformation and both academic standards and standards of competence). Professional bodies are concerned with both the consistency of professional competence produced by an institution in graduates hoping to practice and in the fitness-for-purpose of the programmes in delivering the competences specified by the professional or regulatory body. Quality agencies are mainly concerned with the fitness-for-purpose of organisational standards. (Figure 2)

Figure 2: Intersection of quality and standards: some preferred focuses.



Quality Assurance

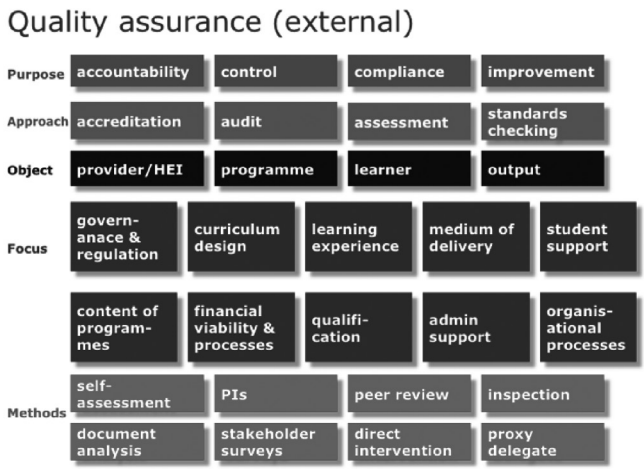
There are four broad approaches to quality assurance: accreditation, audit, assessment, and external examination (or external review of service and outcomes standards of one sort or another). (Note: quality assurance used to have a narrower meaning, referring principally to auditing processes rather than assessment, accreditation or standards checking, but since most of these processes in practice tend to use much the same methods, the term assurance has become a catch-all term although in some cases 'monitoring' is used to encompass the variety of procedures.) These are not distinct approaches as there is considerable overlap in practice.

The object of attention of assurance processes ranges from the institution, through subject and programme to the service provision, the learner or the learning outcomes. Different systems vary the emphasis placed on each of these elements.

The focus of quality evaluations can also be diverse, ranging from governance and regulation and financial viability to the student experience of learning, curriculum design, programme content, and teacher competence.

Although methods vary and include inspection, documents analysis, direct observation of teaching and consumer surveys, the process of self-assessment followed by peer review is prevalent (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Purpose, approach, object, focus and methods of quality assurance.



There is no simple correlation of purpose with approach, object, focus and method. Indeed, different approaches may have the same object or diverse objects, focuses and methods, depending on the unique circumstances of the evaluation/monitoring process.

Figure 4 indicates what types of quality assurance approach are adopted for each of the quality and standards intersections in Figure 1.

Figure 4: Relationship between quality and standards in higher education and means of assurance (items in parentheses are indirect assurance mechanisms).

Standards *Quality*	*Academic standards*	*Standards of competence*	*Service standards*	*Organisational standards*
Exceptional	Emphasis on summative assessment of knowledge and, implicitly, some 'higher-level' skills. Implicit normative gold standard. Comparative evaluation of research output. Elitism: the presupposition of a need to maintain pockets of high quality and standards in a mass education system.	Linked to professional competence; emphasis mainly on traditional demarcation between knowledge and (professional) skills.	Input-driven assumptions of resource-linked service/ facilities. Good facilities, well-qualified staff, etc. 'guarantee' service standards. Reluctance to expose professional (teaching) competence to scrutiny.	Clear role hierarchy reflecting academic status and experience. Often a heavy emphasis on 'traditional values'. Strong emphasis on autonomy and academic freedom. Aversion to transparency.

Standards *Quality*	*Academic standards*	*Standards of competence*	*Service standards*	*Organisational standards*
	Assured by: Standards monitoring Research assessment Teacher assessment (Accreditation)	Assured by: Standards monitoring Professional accreditation	Assured by: Accreditation (Performance indicators)	Assured by: Institutional Accreditation (Audit of quality processes)
Perfection or consistency	A target level of academic standard is consistently achieved (year on year).	Expectation of a minimum prescribed level of professional competence. Problem in assessing for 'zero defects'.	Primarily relates to reliable and consistent student grading and to administrative processes, such as accuracy and reliability of record keeping, timetables, coursework arrangements.	Right first time. Document procedures, regulations and good practice. Obtain ISO9000 certification.
	Assured by: (Standards monitoring)	Assured by: Standards monitoring (Accreditation)	Assured by: Participant/user feedback (Audit) (Assessment)	Assured by: External QM certification (Accreditation)

Standards *Quality*	*Academic standards*	*Standards of competence*	*Service standards*	*Organisational standards*
Fitness for purpose (Fitness of purpose)	Theoretically, standards should relate to the defined objectives that relate to the purpose of the course (or institution). Summative assessment should be criteria referenced, although as purposes often include a comparative element (e.g., in mission statement) these are mediated by norm-referenced criteria.	Explicit specification of skills and abilities related to objectives. Evidence required to at least identify threshold standards. Professional competence primarily assessed in terms of threshold minimums against professional body requirements for practice. This is similar to excellence approaches to checking minimum standards.	The purpose involves the provision of a service. Thus, process is assessed in terms of (minimum) standards for the purpose – usually teaching competence, the link between teaching and research, student support (academic and non-academic), other facilities. Purpose is, for students, often judged against expectations.	Ensure appropriate mechanisms in place to assess whether practices and procedures fit the stated mission-based purposes.

Standards *Quality*	*Academic standards*	*Standards of competence*	*Service standards*	*Organisational standards*
	Assured by: Assessment (Accreditation)	Assured by: Standards monitoring (Accreditation Subject assessment)	Assured by: Customer charters/ surveys (Accountability audit) (Assessment) (Accreditation)	Assured by: Institutional accountability audit
Value for money	Maintenance or improvement of academic outcomes (graduate standards and research output) for the same (or declining) unit of resource. That is, ensure greater efficiency. Concern that efficiency gains work in the opposite direction to quality improvement.	Maintain or improve the output of generally 'employable' graduates for the same unit of resource. Similarly, ensure a continual or increasing supply of recruits to post-graduation professional bodies.	Customer satisfaction analyses (student, employers, funding bodies) to assess process and outcomes. Students and other stakeholders are seen as 'paying customers'.	Relies heavily on periodic or *ad hoc* reviews of whether organisational structure is effective and efficient, often informed by management information (especially basic output statistics).

Standards *Quality*	*Academic standards*	*Standards of competence*	*Service standards*	*Organisational standards*
Value for money	Provide students with an academic experience (qualification, training, personal development) to warrant the investment.	Provide students with an educational experience that increases competence, in relation to career advancement, which ensures a return on investment.	Customer charters specify minimum levels of service (and facilities) that students (parents, employers) can expect.	
Assured by: Performance indicators Graduate feedback (Accreditation)	Assured by: Performance indicators Graduate feedback (Accreditation)	Assured by: Performance indicators Graduate feedback (Accreditation)	Assured by: Customer surveys and charters (Performance indicators)	Assured by: (Institutional accountability audit) (Performance indicators)

Standards *Quality*	*Academic standards*	*Standards of competence*	*Service standards*	*Organisational standards*
Transformation	Assessment of students' acquisition of transformative knowledge and skills (analysis, critique, synthesis, innovation) against explicit objectives. Focus on adding value rather than gold standards.	Provide students with enhanced skills and abilities that empower them to continue learning and to engage effectively with the complexities of the 'outside' world. Assessment of students in terms of the acquisition of transformative skills synthesis, innovation)	Emphasis on specification and assessment of standards of service and facilities that enable the process of student learning *and* the acquisition of transformative abilities.	Emphasis on organisational structure that encourages dialogue, teamworking and, ultimately, empowerment of the learner. Delegated responsibility for quality and standards. Innovation, responsiveness and 'trust' are prominent.

Standards *Quality*	*Academic standards*	*Standards of competence*	*Service standards*	*Organisational standards*
	As transformation includes empowerment, formative as well as summative assessment is required. Transformative research standards are assessed on their *impact* in relation to objectives.	(analysis, critique, synthesis, innovation) and the transformative impact they have post-graduation.		
Assured by: Value added performance indicators. (External examination) (Accreditation)	Assured by: Value added. Professional accreditation	Assured by: Participant feedback (Accreditation) (Assessment)	Assured by: Participant feedback (Accreditation) (Assessment)	Assured by: Improvement audit

Source: Expanded version of a diagram first published in Harvey (1995).

The process is perhaps even more complex. If, for example, we identify the intersections between quality assurance purposes and approaches (Figure 5) there are again 16 possible intersections (not to mention the further possible arrays if we were to take into account object, focus and method).

Figure 5: Purpose and approach of quality assurance.

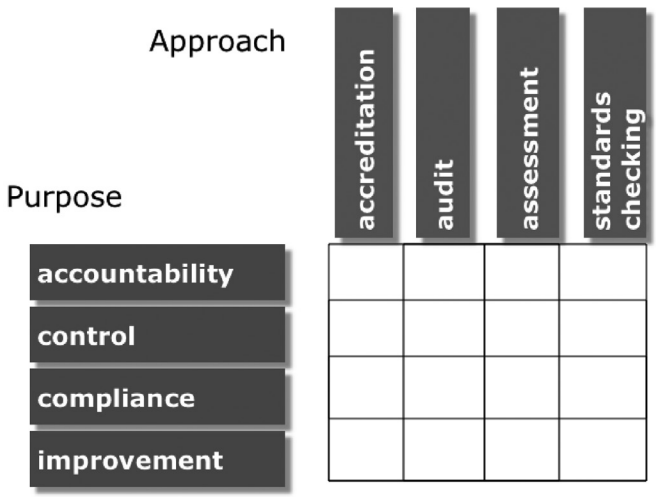
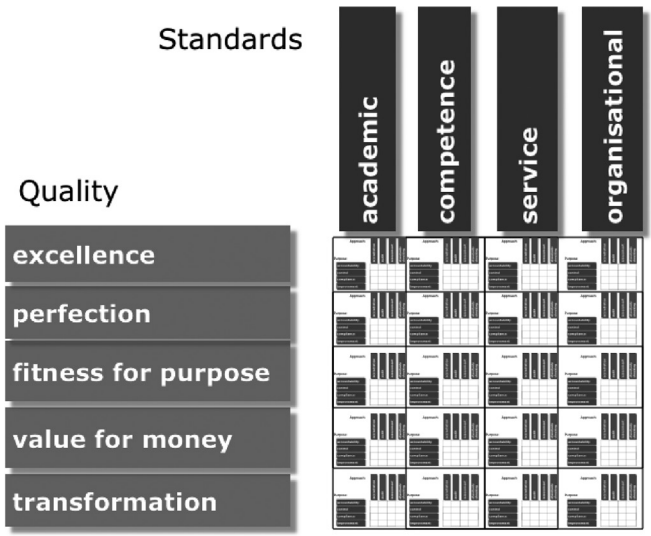
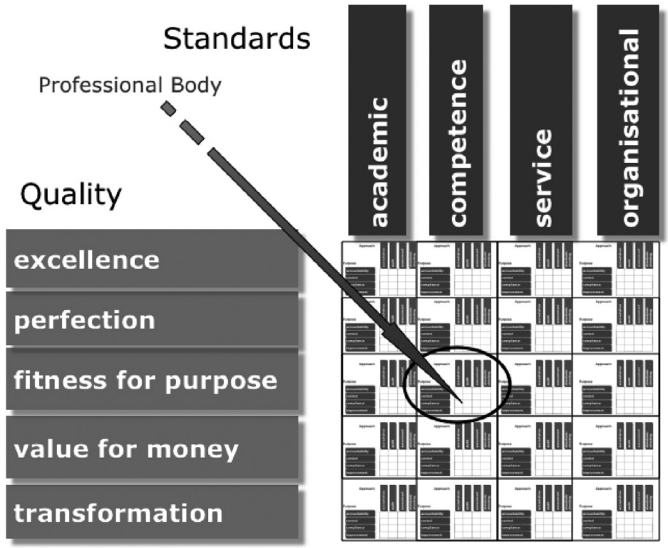


Figure 6: Quality, standards, purpose and approach of quality assurance.



As an example, professional body regulation demands compliance to the requirements of professional competence, which most bodies attest to through a form of accreditation based on a fitness-for-purpose methodology (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Professional accreditation example.



So much for policy and procedures. However, policy has to be implemented and quality assurance procedures serve to encourage appropriate activity: although the whole notion is a contested terrain and the question remains 'appropriate for whom'?

Quality culture is about implementation. As noted above; the 'perfection' approach to manufacturing is about establishing a quality culture where everyone takes responsibility for ensuring that their part of the process is done flawlessly. Education is rather more complex that producing a consumer object and the notion of what constitutes a quality process is, as we have seen, more complicated. However, implementation, in the end, is primary and this can be said to manifest itself through the so-called quality culture.

Quality culture

Quality culture tends to have a variety of interpretations and meanings. One established way of addressing culture is to examine the extent to which it is group oriented (whether individual behaviour is group-controlled) and prescriptive (whether individual behaviour is pre-scribed by external rules and regulations) (Douglas, 1982; Thompson *et al*., 1990). This results in four possible Weberian ideal-types of 'quality culture' (Figure 8) and the following description is from Harvey and Stensaker (2008).

Figure 8: Types of quality culture.

Quality culture			
		Degree of group-control	
		Strong	Weak
Intensity of external rules	Strong	*Responsive*	*Reactive*
	Weak	*Regenerative*	*Reproductive*

Responsive quality culture: as an ideal-type, is primarily led by external demands, be they governmental imperatives, such as widening access, or agency expectations of compliance, such as delivering a self-assessment document. The responsive mode is positive in taking the opportunities offered (or forced on) the institution and using them to review practices, create forward looking agendas, explore how to maximise benefit from engagement with policies or requirements and to engineer improvement. The responsive mode will thus

have an improvement agenda for quality assurance, although it will be acutely aware of accountability issues and compliance requirements. It is likely that the responsive mode will attempt to learn from culturally similar good practice, adopt it and (hopefully) modify it but essentially see the culture as something created to deal with the evaluation problem, a solution to an issue created by others. This is likely to be exacerbated internally by a lack of buy-in to a quality culture as a way of life and lack of feeling of ownership or of any real control. Rather quality culture will appear as existing beyond their control as something, perhaps, that the institution encourages its staff to embrace but which is unconnected with everyday experience, a parallel reality that staff journey to periodically.

Reactive quality culture: as an ideal-type, reacts to, rather than engages with external demands. The reactive mode may take advantage when action is linked to reward, such as research evaluations linked to funding, but is likely to be reluctant to embrace most forms of quality evaluation having reservations about the potential outcomes. The reactive mode, will have doubts about any improvement potential resulting from evaluation, will tend to be driven by compliance and, reluctantly, accountability; although mourning the lost of trust (and autonomy). The reactive mode will tend to deal with one thing at a time, with a rather disjointed or dislocated cultural ethos that may well reinvent wheels. The quality culture is likely to be construed as externally constructed, managed and imposed, with little or no sense of ownership. It is more likely to be something delegated to a specific space (a quality office). The reactive mode may, for example, harbour counter cultures

among academics that perceives any kind of quality culture as a beast to be fed (Newton, 2000).

Regenerative quality culture: as an ideal-type, is focused on internal developments, albeit fully aware of the external context and expectations. The regenerative mode, although taking the opportunities afforded via review exercises and making the most of government initiatives, is one that has a co-ordinated plan for its own internal regeneration which has primacy and external opportunities are included where they add value, otherwise they are accommodated at the margins or even actively subverted. A regenerative quality culture tends to be widespread, with clear overall goals, in a state of flux as activities and events evolve. Its dynamism is manifest not just in an improvement agenda but also in an ongoing reconceptualisation of what it knows, where it is going and even the language in which it frames its future direction. The improvement process will be a taken-for-granted norm and the regenerative mode will assume that its continual improvement programme is itself a form of accountability. The regenerative mode will likely encompass a learning-organisation approach, seeking out learning opportunities, benchmarking possibilities and generating space for reflective review. The quality culture will be indistinguishable from everyday work practice and while it leads to regeneration it will be unquestioned. Ideologically, the quality culture will be attuned with the aspirations of the team. However, if regeneration stalls or is interfered with externally, be it by a higher layer of management or by an external force, the quality culture will have an intrinsic subversive potential.

Reproductive quality culture: as an ideal-type, is fo-

cused on reproducing the *status quo*, manipulating the situation to minimise the impact of external factors as far as possible. The reproductive mode is focused on what the institution or its sub units do best and for what it is rewarded and its plans go little beyond reproducing them. A widespread, internalised quality but with clear boundaries, it has established norms and is unlikely to reconceptualise core concepts or future goals. The quality culture, although indistinguishable from everyday work practice, is not transparent and is encoded in various taken-for-granted or esoteric practices. Nonetheless a sense of a job well done is maintained and perpetuated through the culture. Ideologically, the quality culture reflects the expertise and individual aspirations of members. Any attempt to develop a more open, self-critical approach is likely to result in an implacable resistance culture.

Although the outlines of the four quality cultures are ideal-types, their central characteristics are to be found in various higher education settings. As such they may serve as a starting point for investigating how structure and culture can be matched with respect to quality assurance. This is an important point as studies have shown how structures of quality assurance often are designed without taking into account existing social structures and tacit institutional ways of handling quality assurance issues (Henkel 2000, Newton 2000). Hence, it should be quite obvious that a quality assurance system (and 'quality cultures') will be inclined to look very different located within a reactive or regenerative cultural setting, or within a responsive or reproductive cultural setting.

To be successful, a quality culture, in the last re-

sort, has to synchronise with academic culture and become part of the taken-for-granted. This means that systems alone will not work; quality must have a cultural element.

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Institutional Autonomy and Academic Freedom in Light of the New Conditions under which Higher Education Operates

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Introduction

The issues of institutional autonomy and academic freedom are continuously on the agenda of higher education debates. Two reasons for this can be identified: (a) the conditions under which higher education operates around the world are very diverse and (b) these conditions are also in constant flux. The selection of academic leadership by external governing boards is common practice in some places, while considered a threat in others. Appointment of staff through a Minister's decision was regarded as a significant breach of autonomy in some countries, while at the same time not so far it may have been a rather unproblematic practice. What was deemed appropriate by some of the stakeholders in the early ages of higher education (e.g. when the University of Bologna was founded), was not given to those working under the threat of the Inquisition, may

not have been seen as acceptable for scholars living and working in the peak of the Scientific Revolution, researchers who worked in the heyday of the Cold War and the Space Race, students and staff after the much-referred-to-1968 or indeed those who are now working and studying in universities around the world.

However, despite such highly contextualised nature of autonomy and academic freedom, both spatially and temporally, it is actually useful to adopt some understandings of both concepts, even if only to facilitate comparison and to use them as frames of reference. Therefore, the paper will follow the distinctions offered by Prof. Berdahl:

Academic freedom I define as the right of the scholar in his/her teaching and research to follow truth where it seems to lead without fear of punishment for having violated some political, social or religious orthodoxy.

The concept of autonomy can usefully be divided into two parts: one to be called "Substantive Autonomy" dealing with the basic role and mission of the institution (e.g., the staff hired, the students admitted, the courses taught, the research undertaken), or the so-called "What of Academe"; the other to be called "Procedural Autonomy" dealing with the ways that universities carry out their missions (e.g., pre-audits of expenditures, post-audits, capital outlay regulations, civil service and/or staff regulations), or the so-called "How of Academe."

The paper will try to provide an overview of a number of wider conditions that influence how higher education operates (or can operate) and discusses academic

freedom and both aspects of autonomy (substantive and procedural) in light of changes of these conditions. The next section will focus on the academic freedom and substantive autonomy in terms of changing conditions for education and research. The following section will focus on more procedural issues related to governance and funding. Throughout the paper, issues of legitimacy and authority in decision making will be addressed, since they touch upon both dimensions of autonomy and academic freedom.

Substantive autonomy and academic freedom in the academic heartland: education and research functions

Education and research are considered to be two primary processes of higher education (Clark 1983) and, in light of Berdahl's definition above, are primarily an issue of substantive autonomy of a higher education institution.

Education function and massification

When it comes to the education function, many of the challenges facing higher education can potentially be linked to massification. Up until the second half of the XX century, all higher education systems in the world were, in terms of Martin Trow (2000), elite – less than 15% of the expected age cohort was attending a higher education programme. The USA, partly due to its G.I. Bill, was the first to go through massification. At present, higher education is massified (15 – 50%) or universal (more than 50%) in the developed world and many developing countries are struggling to match the pace. The reasons behind massification are many and

complex and their analysis goes beyond the scope of this paper. What is interesting in the present context is what kind of consequences this has for higher education systems and institutions.

Massification of higher education has often been connected to democratization of higher education, in the sense that the doors of the academia got open wider and that the student population was starting to be less different from the population in general. However, similar to Trow's (*ibid.)* discussion of the implications of increasing numbers of African-American students in American universities, the diversification of the student population also means a diversification of students' interests and motivations for studying. Consequently, this could also mean diversification of the curriculum, but the first dilemma to arise is: Can the pressure to diversify the curriculum in response to the changing needs and interests of the diversified student population seen as a breach of the principle of substantive autonomy? Are students in this respect seen as insiders, and in that sense equal partners in decision-making, or as outsiders – even just mere consumers of the services provided?

Connected to this are also the changes in terms of "higher education becoming more important, but therefore less special"[1]. Due to its perceived importance for economic development (as epitomized for example in the communications of the European Commission), higher education is no longer the turf of a small group of decision-makers on the system level. Higher education

[1] http://uv-net.uio.no/wpmu/hedda/2010/01/10/cher-conference-in-oslo-norway-june-10-12-2010/ (page accessed 31 August 2008).

is being "exported as a policy solution" (Elken et al., 2011) to other sectors such as industry, economic development, environment or even defence. Various stakeholders can claim that they should have a say about the education function of higher education, most often in terms of it becoming more responsive to the needs of the society and the labour market, more flexible and open for different learning paths and students with quite diverse needs, expectations and learning styles.

In that respect, it is perhaps not surprising to hear complaints from the academic staff who do not always welcome suggestions for a diversified or a more flexible curriculum. From their perspective, they have the legitimacy and authority to decide on what to teach because of their disciplinary training and experience in being part of the academic culture. As Clark (1983) indicates, these two cultures are stronger than the affiliation staff may feel towards their institution or higher education system. A student, or for that matter anyone outside the disciplinary guild (e.g. a representative of employers), should not have a say in how e.g. political science or physics is supposed to be taught. While one could argue that students as either (a) participants and contributors to the learning process or as (b) passive consumers of the service should have a say in the decision[2], the basic structure of a curriculum still remains rather simi-

[2] The discussion on how these two opposite perspectives can end up in the same argument in favour of student participation goes beyond the scope of this paper. A very good overview of different perspectives on students and their role in decision making can be found in Luescher-Mamashela T. (2011). "Student involvement in university decision-making: Good reasons, a new lens." *International Journal of Leadership in Education*.

lar throughout the worldNaturally, radical changes in knowledge and its structures do not, can not and should not happen overnight. However, in some cases rigid disciplinary divides are far from being productive, especially in light of demands for highly employable graduates and a curriculum that is more responsive to the labour market needs. In addition, disciplinary divides are often stronger between neighbouring disciplines. They have been set up that way in order to legitimize disciplinary spin-offs and strengthen a disciplinary identity. The claim here is not that the academic staff should mechanically respond to any demand in terms of curricular changes that come from students or other stakeholders, but that the massification and its related processes (diversification of the student population, emergence of new stakeholders that make a legitimate claim for participating in the decision-making) open up several lines of potential conflict: (a) between the academic staff of an institution and all others (students, employers, government or other stakeholders) and (b) between academic staff belonging to different (perhaps neighbouring) disciplines within one institution. These lines of conflict are primarily connected to the understanding of substantive autonomy. The possible conflicts between the institution and an individual academic can also arise in this sense, but they are more connected to the fundamental aspects of the institutional autonomy – academic freedom relationship[3].

The next development partly connected to massification is the diversification of types of higher education

[3] The potential clash between institutional autonomy and academic freedom is discussed by Berdahl in his presentation.

institutions and the changes in the relationship between university and non-university sector. In many higher education systems, polytechnics (or corresponding higher education institutions) have had less institutional autonomy than universities. The legislative framework, financing as well as quality assurance procedures were often quite different. However, such strong binary divides seem to be falling down (Kyvik 2004): many higher education systems moved from university dominated or binary systems to systems which are more unified and where the distinction between university and non-university institutions is less and less evident. The fact that the strict binary divide remains in some cases (e.g. Finland) or that it was erased in some others (e.g. UK) does not necessarily mean that the higher education institutions are strikingly different in the first case or almost the same in the second one. Polytechnics in Finland are quite active in research while even after almost 20 years some distinctions between pre-1992 and post-1992 universities in UK remain. This implies a number of changes that correspond to governance and funding (and will be dealt with later) but also may result in changes in understandings of what to teach and, more concretely, who decides what to teach? Again, the new context in which a particular HEI is expected to operate may be at odds with internal understandings of both substantive autonomy and academic freedom.

Research function and excellence

To some extent one can also argue that research has also been massified. Numbers of PhD positions have been steadily on the rise which in many cases is seen

to lead to problems with over-education or under-employment[4]. The Economist even published an article in late December 2010 titled "The disposable academic" and similar concerns have been voiced elsewhere[5], up to the point of claiming that universities are PhD factories[6]. According to the OECD, the number of PhDs grew 40% in the 1998-2008 periods. Funding of research also increased, for a number of reasons as well, but the competition for funding and the race for excellence (as measured by various, sometimes contested indicators) is at its highest. Rankings focusing on scientific productivity are proliferating, several European countries have introduced different excellence initiatives and allocated significant funding (Germany being the primary example) and the same is promoted through the European programmes for funding research (the framework programmes in general and the ERC in particular). While from a system level perspective it could be argued that such initiatives are sound and indeed benefit the overall higher education sector by introducing more funding and more competition, the implications of this situation for autonomy and academic freedom are manifold.

The first is connected to the aforementioned in-

[4] Available at: http://www.economist.com/node/17723223, page accessed 12 August 2011.

[5] http://www.independent.co.uk/student/postgraduate/postgraduate-study/whats-up-doc-are-too-many-students-sailing-through-the-british-phd-1684291.html, http://www.nature.com/naturejobs/2011/110421/full/nj7343-381a.html, pages accessed 12 August 2011.

[6] http://www.nature.com/news/2011/110420/full/472276a.html, page accessed 12 August 2011.

dicators. The focus on scientific productivity (i.e. the "publish or perish" principle which is not that new!) may be a useful tool to handle massified research; but it assumes that the indicators defined and the procedures used to assess productivity are valid, reliable and fair. However, anyone who aspires to work in research knows that there is substantial strategic thinking behind every publication: which journal to choose, who is in the editorial board and which theoretical and methodological approaches they favour, how long does it take to get comments and what is their rejection rate are some of the questions that come to mind. However, prior to those there are questions that are more relevant from the substantive autonomy perspective: how to cut a particular research project and the related results so they are most publishable? Or even before that, if I choose topic A, what are the chances to obtain funding or be able to publish something afterwards?

The second implication is connected to the increasing focus on innovation and applicable research. This also limits the choice of research topics and approaches, by individual researchers and institutions alike. In the case of institutions, another dimension is added – which fields to prioritize, how to profile an institution and how to ensure that the decisions on strategy and direction taken on the institutional level are follow up on the department or individual level. It is also connected to the expanding practice of research funding agencies to require identification of potential beneficiaries of the research results. While in many cases researchers can work around these requirements it does introduce an additional obstacle for both individuals and institutions.

The third implication is related to ethical issues. Be-

fore addressing the concerns that arise in relation to cutting edge research in life sciences, the basic ethical considerations related to scientific fraud such as fabrication of data need to be addressed, especially in the light of the aforementioned consequences of research massification. If the motto is "publish or perish" or "application at all costs" (although in some sense both mottos are somewhat exaggerations) then one can imagine that there may be situations in which fabrication of data may be seen as the easy way out. Although may be seen as more procedural than substantive, these are seen as majors offenses in academia and have long lasting consequences for reputations of institutions and careers of individuals who are caught. In relation to ethical questions emerging due to what is essentially scientific progress, it is worth recalling that Berdahl clearly states that academic freedom means "following the truth … without fear of punishment for having violated some political, social or religious orthodoxy". The question here is whether it is possible to distinguish between legitimate and justified ethical concerns and "orthodoxy", or rather who has the authority and the legitimacy to work towards such distinction. To some extent, science may be a victim of its own success: two fundamental factors of scientific progress – substantive autonomy and academic freedom in research – are being put to a test.

Procedural autonomy and academic freedom: governance and funding

In terms of governance and funding, the major change that has been identified is the move from a Regulative to an Evaluative State (Neave 1998), or the upwards,

downwards and sideways shifts in governance arrangements (Hooghe and Marks 2003). The first implies that the role of the state authorities in governance has changed. In simple terms: the state is not involved in *a priori* regulation but in *a posteriori* evaluation. This implies some sideways shifts in governance arrangements in terms of introducing various buffer structures (such as funding councils) or agencies (e.g. for QA and accreditation). It also means that some downwards shifts, since the institutions are expected to ensure on their own that they deliver graduates or research as expected. Upward shifts are connected to an increasing impact European level processes (e.g. the Bologna Process) have on higher education systems and institutions. Many of these developments are often perceived to lead to more autonomy of higher education institutions. However, as Christensen (2010) notes, the bulk of these developments leads perhaps to an increase in formal autonomy but less real autonomy. Instead of regulation in forms of laws and bylaws by the state, higher education is now "regulated" through a set of quality standards, accountability measures, quality audits and naming and shaming procedures. Some of these new "regulations" (e.g. accreditation standards) can be quite detailed and prescriptive. Although many have a "peer review" element in them, they are often burdened by bureaucracy and thus may act as a constraint for both institutions and individuals, both in terms of how they organise teaching and research, but also in terms of introducing institutional administrative procedures of dubious necessity and effectiveness for accountability reasons.

The aforementioned changes in governance were coupled with similar changes in funding. The public

funding has decreased, although to some extent this is an artificial phenomenon: the funding in most cases (effects of economic crisis excluded) did not decrease in absolute terms, but it did in relative terms (e.g. per student). Furthermore, as an element of deregulation, the allocation mechanisms have changed and are more and more based on outputs. Similar to the previous point, this may seem as an increase in autonomy – institutions are free to spend the allocated funds as they see fit as long as they deliver – but there are significant isomorphic pressures (DiMaggio and Powell 1983) as well as internal inertia that lead to the situation in which the scope of choices for institutions becomes constrained. Apart from the massification in terms of sheer student numbers or researchers, there is a corresponding "massification" of higher education institutions or research groups which leads to a situation in which there are more competitors for the pot of money that may be increasing in some cases, but is also under threat from the "neighbouring" sectors such as welfare (including pensions) or health. One consequence of this is the institutions focusing more on the so-called third party funding, or funding from industry, community, private donors etc. In principle, such diversification of funding sources may indeed lead to greater (procedural) autonomy since the institution will "serve many masters, but be slave to none". However, not all third party funding comes without strings attached and some of these strings can be fundamentally in opposition with principles of both academic freedom and autonomy (substantive and procedural alike).

The changes in funding also may be and often are used as a justification to introduce tuition fees. The

consequences on accessibility of higher education or the impression that in some instances institutions act quite greedily (e.g. UK) may be highly relevant but are not within the scope of this paper. However, introduction of tuition fees implies also a shift in perception of students towards seeing them more and more as customers. Quite elaborate argumentations on how the paying for higher education may improve progress and therefore increase quality of graduates (and thus higher education in general) are put forward. However, the following dilemma emerges: if one sees students as customers then coming to a higher education institution only to get a qualification is a perfectly legitimate motivation. A customer should have an opportunity to choose what kind of a qualification s/he wants. In that sense, the institution is required to respond (or the customer will take her business elsewhere) with a "take away" curriculum, a response which may require a different understanding of both autonomy and academic freedom. Finally, such a development that can be traced back to more procedural autonomy would essentially lead to less substantive autonomy and less academic freedom.

By way of conclusion

A number of changes in conditions under which higher education operates have been highlighted in this paper and implications for institutional autonomy and academic freedom have been discussed. A number of final observations are therefore in order.

Some of these conditions are not really new. Research was always supposed to be relevant and excel-

lent and the "golden days" of research for its own sake are largely a myth. Furthermore, strictly speaking, disciplines with their knowledge structures, methodological and theoretical preferences and often strict rites of passage can actually be seen as the first obstacle to academic freedom.

Given that the academia is the one continuously asking for more institutional autonomy and more academic freedom it is also important to observe that it is also often its own worst enemy. There may be complaints or even outcries against rankings but one can also hear "yes, rankings are terrible, but we are the top ranked institution in our country" or, which also indicates internal differences and competitions "we would be ranked much higher if it was not for department A". Internal disciplinary clashes and the consequent lack of solidarity may also lead to further fragmentation of higher education institutions in which some of the fields end up in a much worse financial situation due to lack of coherent institutional response to external pressures.

In some cases, one actually wonders "how did it come to this". To put it bluntly: why are strict QA and accountability procedures seen as necessary? Who is responsible for the situation in which the authorities have to introduce robust infrastructure criteria to avoid overcrowding or elaborate ways for identifying staff which is moonlighting? In essence, perhaps as a consequence of its autonomy and academic freedom, the academic profession did not manage to protect itself against opportunistic individuals (which is a common problem in professions in general). It also often fails to assume a more proactive role towards the government or other actors.

And while it may be easy to paint a rather bleak picture of the academia failing to protect itself from external threats due to internal fragmentation and lack of integrity, another aspect is also true. Despite the continuously changing conditions, higher education still operates and some of the higher education institutions are amongst the oldest institutions in human history (Kerr 2001). Higher education survives, fortunately or not. And so will the demands for more institutional autonomy and more academic freedom.

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Keynote Address of the Ceremony

Romano Prodi, Economist, formerly President of the European Commission and Italian President of the Council of Ministers

We are here to celebrate the great achievement of the signature of the Magna Charta. It was 23 years ago and we are here to welcome 31 new universities signing it, to demonstrate how this process is going on and how it was well taken by academia and by the scientific environment. I read some of the outstanding papers concerning quality of teaching, monitoring and the great eternal problem of the relations between equality, autonomy and freedom and even more between freedom and the necessity of any democratic institution to be accountable to the society.

When I was invited to be here I clearly stated to the rector and to the former rector, my two friends, that my life in the university ended when I started my political life in 1995, that is too many years ago to give a contribution to your wisdom. I am therefore obliged to spend the few minutes that I have at my disposal trying to understand what happened around the sacred principles of the Magna Charta in the last 23 years.

The problems of our university examined in the new context of the globalised world. And the contribution of the university to the change of the world and the change of the universities, because and in consequence of the change of the world is such a rapid change in environment that we have to monitor every day.

The first statement of the Magna Charta is that the future is mainly based on the cultural, scientific and technical development and this is in large part the task of the university. And the fantastic increase of the university numbers in the new developing countries is the clear message in this direction, as it is a worrying message in the opposite direction the decreasing engagement of many governments (not only in Europe), in financing the university system. We could quote many European examples but it is certainly more striking to consider California. Few decades ago in order to assure access for all, the tuition charges for in state Californians were abolished and the funding was one of the primary duties of the state because, I quote, "University is a public good, the best guarantee for the future".

In the fifties the state of California was paying around 80 % of the cost of the students as a consequence of this general right recognised by the Californian state and the contribution has dropped to less than 50% in the last 3 years and this year will be cut again. We read in the last issue of the Economist that in California the spending on prisons passed the spending of university since 2004. Can you believe that? The tuition, of course, is higher and higher and is not far from the 40 thousand dollars of the comparable private university.

Of course nobody can imagine that the resources to universities are unlimited but we have to be worried that

the first sacred principle of the Magna Charta is applied to less and less people, i.e. the right to be part of the scientific evolution. We understand that in the period of economic crisis and budget crisis the university must give its contribution to the necessity of public finance and the equilibrium of the budget. But the dynamic equilibrium of any democratic state can be achieved through a growth of productivity and innovation. And growth of productivity and innovation cannot be achieved without a great contribution of university. And so a cut in the expenditures is not sufficient. We need the resources in order to build a new society, that is, to create more knowledge. We cannot imagine a better future simply cutting our engagement on the future.

It is clear that this does not mean a submission of the university and of the knowledge to the economic growth but certainly there is the necessity of a balance between cost and benefit in our public or private action, university included; and the inseparable mix of research and teaching that is the task of the university. The crucial role of higher education is an undisputed character of our society but the growing cost of high education is an undisputed concern. We are squeezed between the growing number of students and the growing costs to be paid to offer each one of them the needed education and the needed capacity to understand and promote innovative research.

Universities are under this strain and universities have the right to ask governments for adequate financing but they must be ready to answer to both this challenge and must be ready to offer to the government and the public a clear answer to the demand of accountability. In the academic freedom, we have to pose a question

at this point: is the academic freedom squeezed between relevance and accountability? This is our problem that we have in any university of the advanced democratic countries. In any case, the essential task of our universities cannot be achieved if we have not the adequate finance to do it. It is so for the future of the principle of the Magna Charta; this problem of the adequacy of the instruments is one of the basic problems.

Maybe we are squeezed between relevance and accountability but only if we have not clear in our mind that this is not an end, is not a value per sé but is a means to get better education and research. Academic freedom cannot be nullified by the judgement of state controllers but we need in any case to have a judgement of external nature provided that there are rules and guaranties. Academics freedom must make any effort to meet the expectation of the society. Sometimes there will be conflicts between them but part of our academic duty to make any effort to reconcile freedom and expectations of the society. Reconciliation has no specific rule but it must be renovated every day. It is a difficult task of any academic board. Academia must play an important role in the evaluation of the balance between efficiency and freedom.

In the great innovation process we all agree that the three "T" that the Anglo-Saxon culture stresses: Talent, Transgression and Tolerance (also transgression is part of the innovation of university) must live together in a synergy between the individual and the institution. Conflicts are unavoidable, but if you want to have a growing role of the university, accountability and freedom must find their way to live together.

The sophisticated methodology that you have dis-

cussed yesterday in order to grasp the appropriated presidium and value of accreditation requirements, quality assurance process and rating have demonstrated a certainly positive implication on the reconciliation of freedom, authority and effectiveness, in line with the Magna Charta principle but taking account what is happening now after 23 years in the world.

Let us go back to the initial question: had the university been able to win the challenge with the globalisation in these 23 years? For many aspects, yes. New universities were born in many parts of the world, relations and synergies among universities are every day increasing. Many universities open branches abroad. There is a new synergy in this field, especially in China, India and many Asian states, and South America. New universities open every year new campuses and laboratories. There are new campuses even in Saudi Arabian desert. If we follow the birth and the development of these new universities, it is clear how deep was the influence of the principles of the Magna Charta. Nevertheless, we have important examples which demonstrate how the university is not a priority in the political choices.

I give you some examples of my experience as President of the European Union. The progress on the harmonisation of curricula, so important in the Bologna process, has made real progress. But difficult steps on the mobility of students and professors are still there. The medieval mobility is clearly testified in the pictures of our ancient palaces here in Bologna. Our university has given an incredible contribution to the creation of a common European demos. Few politicians think that the same contribution can be given by the university today. I have personally experienced when I asked

an increase in the budget of the Erasmus project. This project has helped to mix young generations, the European young generations, and to create a new universal generation. It was blocked, absolutely blocked by the ministers of finance. There are also proposals to cancel it or diminish it, heavily. The proposal of the creation of a Mediterranean university sharing headquarters north and south, with the same number of professors, north and south, the same number of students north and south, the students having the curricula of two years in the university the north and two years in the university to the south, had been vetoed This is not a priority of the new Europe.

Clearly the universities are not considered among the great political instruments of the contemporary societies. And why? Budget constraint? Yes, but also a much more interesting evolution: the shorter and shorter view of the decision making process. And this is a great problem for contemporary democracies and universities, because education by definition is a long term investment. Investing in Academia is against the short-terms bias of contemporary politics. Therefore, my dear colleagues, the role of the university will be under strain as a consequence of this evolution of our democracy. No surprise, therefore, if also the principles of the Magna Charta will be under strain, even in the countries in which the universities and democracy are deeply rooted.

The academia needs by definition a bet on the future. This is true in Europe and outside Europe. As the Magna Charta underlines, it is depository of the heritage of the European humanism and the great responsibility in order to avoid clashes, conflicts and divisions because, just because of the long term view that is typi-

cal of the academia. If you look at the contemporary political events higher education is still a driving force in the change of the society. Take Egypt: the Egyptian universities were the place where fundamentalism was born, but it is around the universities the Arab spring has taken shape. In any avant-garde movement there is a moment in which the university takes a leading role. And we could quote a long list of examples. This is why the relation between university and political power is always difficult. The political power understands well that the new events and changes happen inside or around a university.

And this is why there is such a delicate balance between freedom and accountability. Because it goes just inside the core of the political life. In most cases university can be a cradle and a pillar of democracy; always linked to the contribution of the improvement of society and even more directly to the future life of the students.

The most dramatic aspect of the university today in many parts of Europe is that this link between high education and a better future is more and more uncertain, or is more and more under strain. We are assisting to the end of the correlation between graduation and a better future: this is a great problem.

With higher unemployment and even higher youth unemployment, young people look at the university with increasing distance, because it is not anymore their safe harbour. You have the youth unemployment that is 41% in Spain, 28% in Ireland, 28% in Italy, 23% in France, 19% in UK, 18% in US, and even in Germany, where unemployment is very low, young unemployment is 10%. And it is not easy to explain to this generation the wonders of the spirit of the Magna Charta,

that is all written for the future. The beauty of it is that is written for the future. And I did remember the years of the Magna Charta, the year before, when, I remember father of a very humble graduate, who in the graduation came to me and told "Professor, I didn't have any chance in my life, but my son today is a graduate!"

This sense of hope for the future is not anymore in our university and this is a problem for us. We have to reinstate it; the university has always been a source of hope and in order to implement faithfully our principle we must start again to create hope! Clearly it is not the main mission of the university. The university was born to create knowledge and wisdom, but hope is the instrument to have more effect on creating wisdom and knowledge. It is clear that to create hope is the main task of politicians but if university is not a place forging hope for tomorrow it is in the meantime difficult to perform our task to create innovation. Hope and desire to know go together and we have the moral obligation to inject hope into the new generations. And the difference that I find in the students in Asia from our students here in Europe is this: that they have clear idea that the university gives them hope, gives them a door open to their future life.

I think that we must give our contribution to this great social task.

Concluding Remarks

Üstün Ergüder, President of the Council
Magna Charta Observatory, Bologna

I would like to start my concluding remarks by expressing my gratitude to all of the rectors of who have signed the Universitatum here today. Some of you have travelled far to do so. This is very encouraging for us at the Magna Charta Observatory.

We are defenders and promoters of values – institutional autonomy and academic freedom – that make universities very distinctive organizations.

Our task is difficult. Many, in our societies – and even some among ourselves – look at universities as mere transmitters of accumulated knowledge and expertise or as centres where students are trained to acquire vocations.

In many places universities are seen as simple transmitters of ideology and as instruments of nation building.

A university, however, is beyond all those things.

The universities for us are there to challenge and

ever expand the frontiers of knowledge. Collectively they have to think, if you will, the unthinkable and even question the collective wisdom.

And; institutional autonomy and academic freedom are the values that distinguish and make universities distinct from any other organization in the society.

The promotion and defence of those values at a universal and within a very diverse context requires persistence and patience and unwavering belief in their strength.

The demonstration of your commitment to those values today by signing the Universitatum is very heartening for us.

How can we protect and promote the values enshrined in the Magna Charta Universitatum? After all, almost a quarter of a century has passed since the signing of the Universitatum in 1988. And many new threats and opportunities have arisen. This is what we discussed yesterday with the help of contributions from a group of excellent speakers. Important questions were asked with respect to contemporary threats posed to academic freedom and institutional autonomy by quality assurance, accreditation and rankings. Did we answer these questions? My answer is no. Yet, we walked away with more questions asked at a higher and more sophisticated level. I feel better armed to reflect on those threats to academic freedom and institutional autonomy.

Anyway, the success of conferences like this lies at the level of questions it raises and not in its ability to come up with solutions and pet formulas. I believe there are three levels of analysis or action to deal with contemporary threats to our values. Quality assurance and accreditation are no exception. Our institutions

should be able to turn them into opportunities rather than threats.

First and foremost is the institutional level, that is the university, internalization of the values of institutional autonomy and academic freedom that make our institutions very distinctive by leaders, academic and administrative staff and students is critically important in the operationalization of these values.

This is one of the reasons why we ask our signatories to post on their websites a symbol or a statement that they have signed the Magna Charta Universitatum. We believe that this will be a small but an important step towards the internalization of the values enshrined in the Universitatum. It will also help universities shield themselves from pressures coming from outside the institution. I know that there are good practices on this count. Some universities that I know of have developed their own academic freedom statements drawing from and referring to the Universitatum. In some cases they are posted on their website for all to see and I have personally witnessed that the statement has acted as an important reference point and a guideline in helping the university position itself when faced with threats to academic freedom.

Second level of action is the local, or if you will, the national context. A whole and interrelated series of cultural, political, social and legal factors determine the environment within which each university functions.

All or some of these factors may be supportive of the values of universities thus enhancing and complementing efforts to promote the integrity of universities. They may also be a threat and often are. Simplest such framework is the local higher education legislation which sets

guidelines for institutions to follow by students, faculty and executive and administrative personnel.

The state often asks us to teach more students and perform better on research. The state, however, often tries to secure these outcomes through a regulatory framework based on input controls, which, more often than not threatens institutional autonomy. This is where quality assurance and accreditation may be supportive of institutional autonomy by focusing on performance and outcomes rather than restrictive input controls.

Another dimension that might be a threat to institutional autonomy is the rising incidence of corruption and mal-practice in research and teaching that is likely to invite intrusion, especially by the state, from outside the university, which in turn would threaten institutional autonomy.

I strongly believe that the universities themselves should play a leading role in fighting mal-practice through codes of ethics developed internally to ward off outside intervention.

A few words on the international dimension are also appropriate. Given increasing mobility of students and faculty across borders, international intergovernmental regulatory framework is bound to flourish as well. The Bologna process is a case in point. This may both be a threat and an opportunity. It will be a threat if the international regulatory framework becomes too intrusive. It will be an opportunity if it helps sustain universal values related to our profession.

I place great hope on international non-governmental networking between universities and international non-governmental organizations to disseminate and keep the universal values of good practice and higher education

on the agenda of our institutions. Conferences such as these, and networking by organizations such as Scholars at Risk, EUA, IAU, Magna Charta Observatory and other organizations promoting transparency are terribly important.

Development of international codes of ethics and values and their dissemination is critical for the development of institutional autonomy based on responsible governance. The Magna Charta Universitatum is a case in point.

I would like to stress at this point that Magna Charta Observatory and the values it upholds is a significant and global effort that should not be taken lightly. The Observatory, by organizing conferences, through its publications, inviting rectors from all over the world to sign the Magna Charta Universitatum, by cooperating with other international non-governmental organizations of higher education tries to keep the issues of academic freedom and institutional autonomy on the agendas of universities. This has to be a persistent, patient, insistent effort not to be discouraged by periodic reversals and threats to those values to see to it that pessimistic scenario does not materialize.

Final Greetings

Fabio Roversi-Monaco, Honorary President
Magna Charta Observatory, Bologna

I wish to thank the Rector of the University of Bologna and the President of the Observatory for the possibility given to me to deliver the final greetings to all of you, who have attended this ceremony for the signature of Magna Charta Universitatum.

Twenty-three years have gone since that day, September 18 (eighteen) 1988 (nineteen-eighty eight), when 388 (three hundred and eighty eight) Rectors representing the main Universities in the world gathered in Bologna to sign that document, now translated into 48 languages.

This year – as already happened in recent years – there are many Rectors of Asian universities; with them Rectors of French universities, like Montpellier, as well as Slovenian, Turkish and Ukrainian. Equally important and significant is the list of guests and participants.

I believe that the climate and the atmosphere of those original times are impossible to repeat, but I also

believe that the existence of such a high number of universities that every year submit their application to enter the group of the undersigned Universities is a strong signal both of the importance and of the lasting validity of this document, and it is also the expression of a commitment voluntarily taken and, just for this reason, even more relevant.

It would be a nonsense to join the Universities which originally signed the document – and those added in the following years – with the aim of disregard those principles which the proper Universities, "true" Universities says the Magna Charta, solemnly declared to respect and support; in the interest of their own national communities, in the interest of students – regardless their nationality – and, last but not least, in the interest of academic freedom and autonomy.

It is with these auspices that I wish to conclude.

The speakers

BERDAHL Robert, majoring in Western European Comparative Government, he received a B.A. from the University of California at Los Angeles (1949), and a Master's (1953) and Doctorate (1959) from U.C., Berkeley. On a Marshall Scholarship in Britain, he received a Master's Degree (with distinction) from the London School of Economics (1957) and on a Rotary International Fellowship a Certificate of Study from the Institute d'Etudes Politiques in Paris (1953). He has taught at San Francisco State University, the State University of New York at Buffalo, and the University of Maryland. He was a Founding Member of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, and later served as its President and as a recipient of its Howard Bowen award. His research has centered on the relations between higher education and governments, principally in the U.S., Britain and Canada. His books include British Universities and the State (1959) and Statewide Coor-

dination of Higher Education (1971). He was co-Commissioner with Sir James Duff of Britain of a study of university government in Canada and co-authored the so-called Duff-Berdahl Report, University Government in Canada (1969). With co-editors Philip Altbach and Patricia Gumport, he has just published the Third Edition of American Higher Education in the 21st Century (2011), the standard introductory text in doctoral programs in the U.S.

DIONIGI Ivano is Rector of the University of Bologna since 2009. He obtained his education at the same university and continued as a researcher and lecturer until 1990. He then became Professor at the University Ca' Foscari in Venice and came back to the University of Bologna as Professor of Latin literature. He is a member of the Centre for the Studies of Cicero as well as of the Academy of Science in Bologna. He was a member of the Administrative Council and the Senate of the University of Bologna and also Director of the Department of Classical Philology. He was a member of the Council of the Bologna Commune between 1990 and 2004 and is President of the Don Gaudiano di Pesaro Foundation.

EATON Judith is president of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), the largest institutional higher education membership organization in the United States. A national advocate and institutional voice for self-regulation of academic quality through accreditation, CHEA is an association of 3,000 degree-granting colleges and universities. CHEA is the only private sector body in the United States that "recognizes" U.S. institutional and programmatic accreditors for

quality, scrutinizing these organizations and affirming that they meet CHEA's quality standards. At present, 60 accreditors are CHEA-recognized. Prior to her work at CHEA, Dr. Eaton served as chancellor of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, where she was responsible for leadership and coordination of 32 institutions serving more than 162,000 students statewide. Previously, she was president of the Council for Aid to Education, Community College of Philadelphia and the Community College of Southern Nevada, and served as vice president of the American Council on Education. She also has held full – and part-time teaching positions at Columbia University, the University of Michigan and Wayne State University. A sought-after speaker on higher education issues both in the United States and internationally, Dr. Eaton currently serves on a range of boards and has authored numerous books and articles on higher education and accreditation topics.

ERGÜDER Üstün is currently an Emeritus Professor at Sabanci University and the Director of the Education Reform Initiative. He studied in the UK (Manchester), the United States (Syracuse, New York) and Turkey. He holds a PhD in Political Science from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University. He joined the academic staff of Bogazici University in 1970. Between August 1992 and August 2000 he served as the Rector of Bogazici University. Prior to his appointment as Rector, he chaired the Department of Political Science and International Relations. In addition to his academic responsibilities, he is the Chairman of both the Board of Trustees and of the Executive Committee of the Third Sector Foundation

of Turkey, an organisation formed by the participation and support of foundations and NGOs in Turkey. He is currently a member of the Board of Trustees of Ozyegin University. In terms of international involvement he sits on the Board of Trustees of Robert College and is a member of the Governing Council of the European Foundation Centre. Since 2009 he is the President of the Council of the Magna Charta Observatory.

FEDERKEIL Gero is Project Manager at the CHE – Centre for Higher Education, Guetersloh, Germany. He is responsible for CHE ranking and international ranking activities at CHE, including the U-Multirank project funded by the European Union. In October 2009, he has been elected Vice-President of IREG Observatory on Academic Ranking and Excellence. He is an internationally recognized expert in the field of rankings. His main fields of work and publications include rankings, performance indicators, benchmarking, quality assurance and issues of employability/university – labour market relations. He is a member of the German Association of Evaluation and a team member of the CHERPA Network. Before joining the CHE in 200 he worked for the German Council of Science and Humanities for seven years in the field of higher education policy, labour market and higher education, investments in higher education, evaluation and university medicine. He holds a Master Degree in Sociology (1989) from Bielefeld University.

JUNGBLUT Jens is a member of the Bachelor/Master-Team at the Johannes Gutenberg-University in Mainz where he supports the implementation of the Bologna

Process at the institutional level. He is also a member of the German team of Bologna experts at the DAAD and pursuing a PhD in Political Science. Mr. Jungblut received his MA in Political Science from the Johannes Gutenberg-University in Mainz with minors in history and business. His work in the field of higher education started as a student representative on the local and national level. From 2008 until 2009 he was a member of the Student Union Development Committee of the European Students' Union (ESU). In this capacity he supported the development of nascent student movements for example in Armenia or Bosnia and Herzegovina and he worked on the issue of students' rights.

HARVEY Lee has been researching higher education issues since the early 1990s. Lee Harvey was Professor at Copenhagen Business School until 31st December 2010. Prior to that he established and was Director of both the Centre for Research into Quality at University of Central England in Birmingham and the Centre for Research and Evaluation at Sheffield Hallam University. He was also Director of Research at the Higher Education Academy. Lee has wide experience of social research as a research methodologist and social philosopher. He has a teaching qualification alongside his masters in information technology and doctorate in sociology. Lee taught sociology at the University of Central England in Birmingham for 20 years from 1971. His current and recent research areas are: higher education policy; quality, quality assurance and quality culture; employability; student feedback; learning and teaching, diversity and funding. He is widely published with over 35 books and research monographs and over

120 articles in international journals, books and compendiums. He has been a quality advisor to institutions across the world. He is regularly invited to major international conferences and has given over 50 keynotes at such events. Current work has also returned to a focus on research methodology.

HAZELKORN Ellen is Vice President of Research and Enterprise, and Dean of the Graduate Research School, Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland; she also leads the Higher Education Policy Research Unit. She is Consultant to the OECD Programme on Institutional Management of Higher Education, and is associated with the International Association of Universities. She is a member of the Higher Education Authority (Ireland), and chairs the Dublin Regional Higher Education Alliance (DRHEA). Professor Hazelkorn has been a member of review teams for Dutch Higher Education (2010), the state of Victoria, Australia (OECD, 2009) and Catalonia, Spain (OECD, 2010), and chaired the Teaching Evaluation Exercise, School of Art and Design, Aalto University, Finland (2011). She was Rapporteur/lead author of *Assessing Europe's University-based Research* (EU, 2010). Ellen has published widely on university rankings, higher education systems, management and leadership, university strategy and research policy. Her research and commentary has been reported by *The New York Times*, *International Herald Tribune*, *The Economist*, *The Australian*, *Le Monde*, the *Times Higher Education*, *U.S. News & World Report*, the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, and *University World News*. *Rankings and the Reshaping of Higher Education: The Battle for World-Class Excellence* was published by Palgrave Macmillan (2011).

KOSTORIS Fiorella is Professor of Economics, since 1980, at the Department of Economics of the University of Rome "*La Sapienza*"; on leave at the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research, namely the CIVR, since 2004. She is also one of the 7 Members of Board of Directors of ANVUR (National Agency for the Evaluation of the Universities and Research Centres) (since 2011). She has been President of ISPE – *Istituto di Studi per la Programmazione Economica* – (1993 – 1998); President of ISAE – *Istituto di Studi e Analisi Economica* – (with the double role of CEO and Director of Research) (1999 – 2003); Economic Advisor to Riccardo Illy, President of the Italian Administrative Region *Friuli-Venezia Giulia* (2005). She has been nominated *Grande Ufficiale al Merito* of the Italian Republic by the President of the Republic of Italy (2000) and *Officier dans l'Ordre National de la Légion d'Honneur* by the President of the Republic of France (2001). Her publications include 30 books, more than 100 articles and comments in journals and volumes. Her research interests include Macroeconomics, Labour Economics, Public Finance, European Economics and Economic Policy, Pension Reform, Social Mobility, Poverty and Education, Fiscal Federalism and Redistribution, Gender Equality.

PRODI Romano was born in Scandiano (Reggio Emilia, Italy) in 1939. Married with Flavia Franzoni, they have two sons, Giorgio and Antonio. After graduation at the Faculty of Law of the University of Milan and at the London School of Economics, his academic career began at the department of economics and at the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Bolo-

gna, where he worked as an assistant professor (1963), associate professor (1966) and lastly professor (1971-1999) of industrial organisation and industrial policy. In 1974 he was a visiting professor at Harvard University at the Stanford Research Institute. In 1981 he founded Nomisma, the largest Italian institute of economic studies, whose scientific committee he chaired until 1995. From November 1978 to March 1979, Romano Prodi was Minister of Industry. In February 1995 he founded the "Olive tree" centre-left coalition, which designated him as its candidate for premiership. The coalition won the 1996 election and, in May 1996, he was appointed Prime Minister. He remained in office until October 1998. The bold measures introduced by his Cabinet enabled Italy to meet the Maastricht criteria for joining the Euro zone. From 1999 to 2005 he has been President of the European Commission. During his presidency, the euro was successfully introduced, the Union was enlarged to 10 new countries from Central, Eastern and Southern Europe and the treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe was signed. In 2006 Romano Prodi was elected leader of the centre-left coalition in Italy and after a victory in 2006 elections he became Prime Minister, until May 8, 2008. He is, since then, President of the Foundation for Worldwide Cooperation and in July 2008 he has been named Chairman of the UN-AU High Level Panel for Peacekeeping in Africa. From February 2009, he is Professor at-large at Brown University (USA). From 2010 he has been appointed Professor of CEIBS (China Europe International Business School) in Shanghai. During his academic and institutional career, Romano Prodi has been awarded a number of recognitions and he also holds various honorary degrees.

ROVERSI-MONACO Fabio is the President of the Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio, Bologna. He is Doctor in Law by the University of Bologna. He was Professor at the Faculty of Political Sciences and the Faculty of Law during almost 10 years. From 1978 until 2006 he was the Director of the School of Administrative Science of the University of Bologna. He was a member of the Board of Directors of the University of Bologna and between 1985 and 2000 he was Rector. Currently he is President of the European Secretariat for Scientific Publications, President of the Inter-University Association "Almalaurea", President of the Association of Italian and Spanish Public Law Professors, President of the Bologna Art Academy and President of the Mozart Orchestra in Bologna. He is also Director and member of the scientific committee of numerous magazines of public law and member of the committee of the Italian Academy of Advanced Studies in New York. He is author of many studies, articles and publications. He has been awarded honorary doctors by numerous universities from the Americas, Europe and Asia. He was the initiator of the Magna Charta Universitatum in 1988, founding member of the Magna Charta Observatory and first President of its Collegium for eight years. He is now Honorary President of the Magna Charta Observatory.

TÜCK Colin is working as Director of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR). He has been working for EQAR since October 2007, initially as Project Manager on behalf of its founding members (ENQA, ESU, EUA and EURASHE). Prior to joining EQAR he was involved

in quality assurance-related topics as a member of the European Students' Union's (ESU, formerly ESIB) Bologna Process Committee. He was a member of member of the Executive Board of the National Union of Students in Germany before his involvement in ESU.

VAN GINKEL Hans is a Dutch citizen, born in Indonesia (Aceh, 1940). He received his MSc degree in geography, with history and anthropology, in 1965, and his PhD in social sciences in 1979 from Utrecht University, the Netherlands; both (summa) cum laude. He was Dean of the Faculty Geo-sciences, 1980-85, and Rector Magnificus of Utrecht, 1986-97. From 1997-2007 he was an Under-Secretary General of the United Nations and Rector of the United Nations University in Tokyo. He has always been very active in the internationalization of higher education; for instance he was one of the authors of the Magna Charta Universitatum (Bologna 1988) and one of the initiators of the CRE-Copernicus Program and CRE's Institutional Evaluation Program and has been vice-president of the European University Association (CRE/EUA, 1994-98), president of the International Association of Universities (IAU, 2000-04) and the West European member of the Organizational Committee of UNESCO's World Conference on Higher Education (WCHE, Paris 1998). He is a member of Academia Europea, as well as a fellow of TWAS (Academy of Sciences for the Developing Countries). He has received 5 honorary doctorates (Cluj, Romania; Sacramento, California; Accra, Ghana; Zvolen, Slovakia and McMasters, Canada). He is also a Knight in the Order of the Netherlands' Lion (1994) and was awarded the Order of the Rising Sun, Grand Cordon (Japan, 2007).

VARDAR Öktem graduated from Robert College, Istanbul in 1971 with a BS degree in Mechanical Engineering. He received his MS and PhD degrees at the University of California at Berkeley, in 1972 and 1975, respectively. He was a faculty member at Boğaziçi University from 1975 to 2004 where he was promoted to associate professor in 1981 and to full professor in 1988. His field of specialization covers mechanical design, mechanical behavior of engineering materials, fatigue and fracture mechanics. He established the Fracture Laboratory in Boğaziçi University. He served as the vice rector of Boğaziçi University in 1994-2000, and as the chairman of the Department of Mechanical Engineering in 2001-2004. He joined Işık University in 2004-2010 as the provost and the vice rector for academic affairs. Dr Vardar was a member of the Higher Education Council (YÖK), member of the Executive Board of the Scientific and Technical Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK), chairman of the Executive Board of Feza Gursey Research Institute, member of the Executive Board of the Turkish Institute for Industrial Management (TÜSSIDE), member of the Executive Board of National Metrology Institute. He is currently a reviewer in the EUA Institutional Evaluation Program and a consultant on higher education management issues. He is the Secretary General of the Magna Charta Observatory since March 2011.

VUKASOVIĆ Martina is the Research fellow at the Department of Education, University of Oslo, where she is working towards her PhD. She is also a member of the Governing Board of the Centre for Education Policy in Belgrade. She graduated with a joint European

Master in Higher Education of the Universities of Oslo, Tampere and Aveiro as part of the Erasmus Mundus Programme and also holds a degree in Astrophysics. Before that, she worked as a Programme Officer in the Alternative Academic Educational Network in Serbia, did consultancy work for the Open Society Institute and also spent a year at the Council of Europe as an intern and assistant in the Division for Higher Education and Research. Her interest for higher education had developed earlier during her six years of commitment to student work, first in the Student Union of Serbia and then in ESIB – the National Unions of Students in Europe (now European Students' Union) – an association she chaired in 2002. She is a member of the Observatory Council since 2009.

WILLIAMS Peter studied English at Exeter University. Following an early career in printing and university administration, he was Deputy Secretary of the British Academy from 1984-1990. In 1990 Peter was appointed as the founding Director of the Academic Audit Unit (AAU) and between 1992 and 1997 was a Director of the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC). In 1997 Peter became Director of Institutional Review in the new Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). In August 2001 he was appointed Acting Chief Executive and, in March 2002, Chief Executive. Peter retired from QAA in September 2009. Besides his work in the UK, Peter has participated in many international quality assurance projects. Between 2005 and 2008 he served as the President of ENQA and represented ENQA on the Bologna Follow-Up Group. He was one of the principal authors of the *European Standards and*

Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. Peter holds three honorary Doctorates, is a Fellow of the University of Worcester and an Honorary Fellow of the College of Teachers. In June 2009 Peter was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the Queen's Birthday honours list in recognition of his services to higher education.

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