Adapt, Adjust, Respond: Perspectives on Current Trends In American Colleges and Universities

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Abstract:

Tension over the norms, values, and practices within higher education and between higher education and American culture has been multiplying since World War II. Numerous concepts and theories characterized the range of these forces and factors. This review discusses five such factors that appear to effect change in higher education in the United States. These five trends indicate an increasing frequency of the discussion of and calls for change in higher education in American Colleges and Universities.

Introduction

From its inception over 900 years ago in Europe through its 364 year history on American soil, higher education has evolved and revolved in its attempts to remain the independent, competitive, and creative creature that is a defining institution of the U.S. nation. Although it has been likened to a 'runaway glacier' in its alacrity toward change, change nevertheless does occur (Hackney, 1994, p. 311). The university is in the business of knowledge, and since knowledge and the knowledgeable are not static, neither is the university.

"Modern higher education is a product of the Enlightenment with its emphasis on reason, on science and technology, and on efficient management" (Kerr, 1997). The road to this modern definition was not, however, one of total agreement among the groups that shaped our educational system. The roots of the university can be traced to the Greeks: Plato's Academy devoted to seeking the truth, the Sophists' penchant for rhetoric and useful skills and the Pythagoreans, who focused on mathematics and astronomy. These were the forerunners of today's university system – a system with many competing goals and philosophies that at any given time reflect various missions achieved by various means (Kerr, 1963/1995).

Universities are no longer the cloistered ivory towers of yesteryear. Lefkowitz (1998) states, "I doubt that any of the folks who still believe in the ivory tower have been near a university in recent years" (p. A64). The demolition of the tower and the opening of the gates of the academy have exposed America's institutions of higher learning to the waxing and waning of popular ideas and trends. These ideas and trends bring about heated debates among the many stakeholders in higher education. Society forms visions of educational possibilities based on current values and then charges the university with the task of making these possibilities into realities. Unfortunately, there is not always a consensus in a democracy about what exactly should be valued. Fortunately, the university has proven to be an extraordinarily flexible institution, and ways to alter the university are constantly being considered (Wilshire, 1990). These alterations reflect current societal and educational trends and issues. Aside from entreaties from society, one compelling reason for universities to embrace change involves scholarship. Despite the chaos and general unrest that can be incited by change, "the health and quality of scholarship will benefit from thoughtful change" (Rhodes, 1997, p. 169). In light of the ever-changing face of education, this article reviews five current trends prevalent in higher education today: a focus on scholarship, the presence of part-time faculty, the use of remedial instruction, distance education, and the university as a corporation. These are selective and not definitive. However they are not the only significant trends; these are five evolving trends and issues that will shape the role and function of higher education.

Focus of Scholarship

The largest and best-known universities in the United Sates are mistakenly considered institutions of higher learning. In actuality, these esteemed and elite schools are research centers. They surreptitiously offer undergraduate courses, but that is not their primary focus. As acknowledged and accepted as this arrangement has been for many years, there exists a facet of providers and consumers of higher education

who are saying, "Enough!" Although not necessarily a new issue, the idea of a shift in focus from research to teaching and service is currently on the agenda of higher education. It is no longer acceptable to laugh off the axiom that "We all know what research university means: To hell with the undergraduates" (Wilshire, 1990, p. xiii). The social and intellectual environment of colleges is demoralized when teaching, advising, and building relationships with students are neither prioritized nor rewarded activities (Glassick, Taylor-Huber, & Maeroff, 1997). Many authorities on the topic conclude that universities need to rethink their research focus. If publishing is the path to tenure, to fame, and to financial benefit, then faculty will understandably focus on this activity to the exclusion of developing teaching skills (Elfin, 1990). To change the status quo, institutions must broaden their definition of scholarship to recognize teaching and service as legitimate scholarly activities. Likewise, the reward systems of universities will have to be altered to provide financial compensation for activities other than research.

As campuses reexamine traditional ideas about scholarship, and possibly emerge with a more inclusive vision of education — a vision that goes beyond research — there will be a certain level of discomfort. However, this discomfort will be necessary if educational practice is to achieve a healthier balance. "All institutions need to scrutinize their practices and alter their procedures in the face of new realities" (Glassick, Taylor-Huber, & Maeroff, 1997). The question remains as to what degree institutions of higher education will display the confidence necessary to scrutinize and revise their current practices. After careful consideration and reflection, will they let go of their security blankets of research and prove that they have maintained the capacity for teaching and service as well?

Part-Time Faculty

In the past 20 years, the number of part-time faculty in U.S. higher education has grown to approximately 200,000 (Clark, 1993). Nationally, part-time instructors currently account for 40 percent of faculty membership (Leatherman, 1998). These numbers have grown in response to the increasing need for institutions to employ cheap, dispensable labor (Clark, 1993). And if the growing numbers of adjuncts forming unions is any indication, they are not particularly happy with their position on the fringe of academia. Part-timers, despairing of voluntary action by administration to improve their working conditions, have decided "that unionization is the solution to their problems" (Leatherman, 1998, p. A12).

Use of adjuncts has also been a result of an anticipated hiring boom that thus far has not come to pass. This projected academic hiring boom of the 90s did not happen for two reasons: tenured faculty are delaying retirement, and when a position is vacated, if it is filled at all, it may be filled by adjunct faculty instead of a full-time appointment (Boufis & Olsen, 1997). This trend has created "vast armies of teaching assistants and part-timers [who] work for what some professors call 'starvation wages'" (Schneider, 1998, p. A14).

Using packs of adjuncts allows colleges to balance their budgets and provide smaller classes with more individualized instruction (Koltai, 1993). At a national average earning of $1000.00 to $3000.00 per course, part-timers are a definite bargain for their employers (Leatherman, 1998). Also, employers do not offer full benefit packages for adjuncts, which means substantial savings for institutions. The most publicly stated argument for the use of adjuncts is that they have special skills to bring to the classroom

(Leatherman, 1998). For example, the liberal arts emphasis at Columbia College is supplemented by the employment of adjuncts who have 'day jobs' in the arts. Bringing the 'real world' to the classroom has long been a selling point to students for the use of part-timers. However, adjuncts would like to see more financial compensation provided for their special contributions.

In light of the growing use of adjunct faculty, it is also important to consider the type of academic community created by this practice. Adjuncts do not typically have office space to use to meet with or advise students. These wandering scholars typically come to campus to teach their assigned courses and then head for the parking lot, probably heading off to teach at another campus, thus earning them the nickname "freeway fliers" (Leatherman, 1998, p. A12). This transience, coupled with the fact that adjuncts are rarely involved in committee work or official advising duties, leads to a fragmentation of scholarship for the instructors and for the students in their classes. It is difficult to be part of a community of scholars when your office is your car.

An indication of part-timers' influence on education is exemplified by the startling realization that "adjuncts outnumber full-timers in the classroom by at least three to one" (Leatherman, 1998, p. A14). If not dealt with fairly and effectively, classroom instruction will suffer a major upheaval; these part-timers provide the bulk of educational training and cultural enlightenment in our country. This fact is even more eye-opening when thrown into the mix with the trend in unionization. As the ranks of part-timers grow, so do the unions. "About 225 institutions around the country have unions that jointly represent full- and parttime faculty members" (Leatherman, 1998, p. A12). This translates into the reality that if all part-time instructors were unionized they would have a numerical majority over full-timers.

Adjunct faculty also present a threat to full-time faculty. Even if unionized, they are still cheaper to employ than full-time instructors are. This could lead to increased denial of tenure for full-timers for the express purpose of weeding them out of the institutions so that their positions can be filled by part-timers — all done of course, for the financial betterment of the institution.

How institutions of higher education choose to deal with the growing voice of part-time faculty will be a reflection of the individual philosophies toward adjuncts that are held by the many campuses across the country. Research universities will obviously have available a different set of options than liberal arts colleges or community colleges when it comes to meeting the demands of part-time instructors while attempting to maintain the fiscal status quo. Nonetheless, these part-timers and 'freeway fliers' will continue to protest, demonstrate, organize and exert an influence in higher education.

Remedial Instruction

Nationwide, U.S. institutions of higher education are expanding their offerings of basic reading, writing and math courses (Mancuso-Edwards, 1993). Droves of students are graduating from the K-12 system with fundamental academic deficiencies, and it has become the cross for higher education to bear. Although all classifications of institutions are affected by these skill deficits within the college population, it is perhaps community colleges that bear the brunt of the responsibility for developing programs to "repair the deficiencies of the past" (Mancuso-Edwards, 1993, p. 312). As they are at the bottom of the hierarchy of institutional prestige, it is no surprise

that community colleges carry the lion's share of the burden of remedial education (Clark, 1993). This only stands to reason as students at community colleges are, oftentimes, also at the bottom of society's hierarchy. Community colleges are "the major point of entry into higher education for America's low-income youth, underrepresented ethnic minorities, and new immigrants" (Koltai, 1993, p. 100).

The community college environment is different in that perhaps no other institutions of higher education serve more students who lack both confidence and skill. The typical student at the community college is the most fragile academically, this fragility resulting from years of educational neglect (Mancuso-Edwards, 1993). Community colleges do not support a community of exclusion; with open-admissions policies they are about inclusion, no matter the educational background of the individual. When the doors of the academy were flung open for all to enter, that is exactly what happened; "They came from the tenements of the south Bronx; they came down from the hills of Appalachia; they stood on the plains of the Indian reservation and heeded our call" (Mancuso-Edwards, 1993, p. 311). As a result, community colleges today are providing education for one-third of America's college population — a large proportion of which is under-prepared (Koltai, 1993).

This influx of the under-prepared has brought about a new age in higher education, the age of remediation. Community college teachers can, almost without fail, count on teaching sub-introductory and introductory courses ad nauseam. They work to prepare students ranging from the high school graduate who is woefully lacking in basic skills to the functionally illiterate adult, so that these students can get on with the business of 'real' college. Remediation has led to a reduction of sophomore-level courses at community colleges. The community college schedule of courses is dominated by remedial, introductory and freshman offerings (Koltai, 1993). Although this is necessary, it presents a financial problem for community college administration. If there are no sophomore-level classes offered, or the selection is limited, then the community colleges may experience a drop in another population of students who come to their campuses. They will lose the students who are prepared for and desirous of acquiring the skills needed to transfer to a four-year institution after two years of community college coursework.

According to Koltai (1993) community colleges will need to continue to hire faculty who are willing and able to provide remedial and basic skills, as the population of underprepared students will not wane in the near future. "The teaching task is then more like that of the secondary school than that of the university. The task of remedial education adds to the downward thrust, requiring subcollege instruction on a plane below first-year introductory instruction" (Clark, 1993, p. 172). Although presented as a primary issue of community colleges, remediation and 'dumbing-down' are issues that permeate all levels of higher education. Students may confidently enroll in four-year institutions only to find themselves lacking the basic skills needed to master the course work.

Kerr (1963/1995) has predicted that "Tidal Wave II of students will hit (1997) and continue to about 2015" (p.175). He allows that Tidal Wave II will most greatly impact community colleges and comprehensive colleges and universities. It follows logically that Tidal Wave II will be awash with shipwrecked students — students who are in need of remedial and basic skills in order to make it to the shores of higher education. Higher

education will need to prepare for this wave and plan financially to support the programs and human resources needed to manage this demand that will be placed upon the institutions. Community colleges will need to brace themselves for the flood, and four-year colleges and universities will need to communicate and work with their contributory community colleges to insure the success of transfer students. There does not appear to be any relief from the need for remedial post-secondary education in the near future — this trend will likely continue indefinitely.

Distance Education

Light years away from yesterday's ideas of convenience — correspondence courses and video courses — is the electronically oriented cybercollege. Mary Beth Susman, director of Colorado Community College Online program, has been quoted as saying, "Our goal is to make getting an education as simple as driving up to an A.T.M. machine" [sic] (Guernsey, 1998, p. A25). This is a shocking concept for teachers who prefer chalkboards, pop quizzes, and unit exams to convenience for the students. Time and location have typically limited education, but an 'A.T.M.' approach will change all of that. "Universities are gradually shifting from investment in the physical presence of information to the creation of electronic access" (Noam, 1995, p. 248). Access and economics drive distance learning. Ideally, cybercollege provides education quickly and economically to a large population of students who could not pursue post-secondary education if it entailed a personal appearance on campus.

The widely touted benefits of a flexible, electronically provided education include the selling point that online education makes it possible for students anywhere to enroll in classes offered by universities thousands of miles away. Additionally, the courses can be offered for a substantially lower cost than standard classroom courses (Noam, 1995). Students who cannot commute to campus or make arrangements with their jobs are the targeted population of cyberlearning (Gubernick & Ebeling, 1997). But Daniel (1997) alleges that "U.S. higher education is not using technology intelligently" (p. 12). He summarizes that our outmoded idea of thinking of education as a product of real-time teaching will undermine our ability to use technology to advance the quality and outcomes of education. He maintains that technological advances have afforded higher education the opportunity to resolve the crises of access, cost, and flexibility. "Technology is the way to reduce costs and enhance quality" (p. 13).

Aside from the reduction in cost, Daniel (1997) cites 'unique attractions' as another offering of the cybercollege that is superior to the traditional model of obtaining an education. The major attraction is that students can study whenever and wherever they choose due to the focus on the learner, not the teacher. Daniel goes on to state that resistance on the part of U.S. higher education to adopt the technological model of education may be in part due to a value system that places teaching above learning. The main beneficiaries of maintenance of the status quo, namely low-tech teaching, are the faculty (Noam, 1995). Ironically, this is the group most needed to disrupt the balance and usher in the age of technologically grounded instruction (Noam, 1995). This dilemma is drolly characterized by Daniel (1997) when he exclaims, "Turkeys don't vote for Thanksgiving either" (p. 16). The adoption of the cybercollege as a mainstream form of obtaining a higher education will necessitate a societal change in the way we determine what is valuable in the educational process. This is a tall order for a system that has been

described by Gubernick and Ebeling (1997) as follows: “despite the liberalism of their political cultures, [colleges] are deeply conservative places that resist change of every sort” (p. 85).

The University of Phoenix provides an example of a successful U.S. cybercollege. This university, however, is more accurately described as a ‘para-university’. “It has the operational core of higher education — students, teachers, classrooms, exams, degree-granting programs — without a campus life, or even an intellectual life. There are no tenured professors” (Traub, 1997/1998, p. 6). The University of Phoenix boasts forty-seven sites and claims that it is the second-largest private university in the U.S. Its online program serves 2,500 students (Traub, 1997/1998). The financial picture for the University of Phoenix is a rosy one: one credit hour of cybereducation costs the institution $237 compared to the $486 per credit hour for traditional instruction at Arizona State. Arizona State professors average a $67,000 a year salary; University of Phoenix online professors are non-tenured, typically part-timers, and they make $2,000 per course (Gubernick & Ebeling, 1997). When considering the quality of online education the University of Phoenix provides some valuable information. The University of Phoenix administered standardized achievement tests to a group of online B.S. graduates. The same test was then given to a group of traditionally educated B.S. graduates at three public universities in Arizona. “On average, the on-line students scored 5% to 10% higher than their traditionally educated peers and maintained that margin upon completing their coursework” (Gubernick & Ebeling, 1997, p. 90). What has worked for McDonald’s is working as the philosophical basis for the University of Phoenix — mass production of a cheap, easily obtained product with millions served.

Cybercollege does, despite some glowing reports, have very real drawbacks to consider, namely, the loss of the ‘college experience’. Should it be possible to earn a degree without ever meeting any other students or coming face-to-face with a professor? Being a part of a community of scholars is a major shaping force in the education of the members of society. If students never leave their home computers this aspect of education gained through social contact will be lost. Although many of today’s college students are not interested or able to participate in the social scene because of age or work and family responsibilities, it is still important to provide social opportunities for those who can participate (Guernsey, 1998). There is the danger that the pendulum may swing too far; and with the adoption of cyberlearning, traditional education may fall by the wayside. The lure of decreased costs and increased customers served will be hard to resist. It may become unthinkable in the minds of administrators to continue to spend money on the upkeep of campuses when all that is really needed are computer terminals and personnel to man the lines and collect the fees.

A second drawback to consider involves the very personal aspect of instruction. A system that is already under fire for neglecting undergraduates might find an extremely large faction of people — faculty, students and parents — who would see cybereducation as the ultimate neglect. While parents and legislators applaud the efficient delivery of education, they likewise insist that undergraduates need to be treated as individuals — a goal inconsistent with the anonymity and lack of personalization of online education (Berube, 1988). According to Noam (1995), “while it is true that the advantages of electronic forms of instruction have sometimes been absurdly exaggerated, the point is not that they are superior to face-to-face teaching” (p. 248). Teachers like Robert F.

Norden at Colorado Community College, who "measures his students' comprehension by reading their faces" may feel helpless to interpret the level of comprehension displayed through e-mail or cyber-chats (Guernsey, 1998, p. A25). This is a legitimate concern in view of the fact that "most experts on the subject of nonverbal communication [facial expression, gestures, body position] agree that more than 60 percent of our communication is by nonverbal means" (Walker & Brokaw, 1992, p. 176).
We need to share physical space to understand each other. In short, education is based on mentoring, internalization, identification, role modeling, guidance, socialization, interaction, and group activity, "all of which depend on physical proximity" (Noam, 1995, p. 249). Although costly and inefficient, personal contact with students is "one of the most valuable — and the most educational" services that a university provides (Berube, 1988, p. B5).

A third issue exists in the threat imposed by outside parties on the monopoly of higher education. The providers of electronic education can easily expand beyond universities. Commercial firms, such as textbook companies, may throw their hats into the ring of cyberlearning (Noam, 1995). Corporations have the financial resources to woo the most prestigious lecturers into employment. These corporations could then offer the best lectures to virtually anyone interested in signing up for their course offerings. A glimpse of this future is provided by Noam (1995), who notes that "commercial publishers will assemble an effective and even updated teaching package, making the traditional curriculum at universities look dull by comparison" (p. 248). Society and employers could be convinced to see that credentials earned through corporate based educational systems are as desirable as, or more desirable than, either the traditional or university provided cybereducation. Videos featuring "America's Superstar Teachers" are already available (p. 248). These lecturers are being advertised as the "'dream team' of America's best lecture professors" (p. 248). If you can have the 'dream team' in your living room, produced by media savvy, slick production companies, why bother to go to the dusty old classroom and listen to Dr. Bore drone on about opposable thumbs and the discovery of fire? Even if Dr. Bore goes online, the university cannot afford to provide the level of technological fireworks that a for-profit corporation can in producing an online course. In short, the role of the university may be substantially weakened by the virtually unlimited potential of cyberlearning.

Higher education will need to first acknowledge that there does indeed loom on the horizon a very real threat to the university system as we know it; forewarned is forearmed. Thus far the cultural value of the university has remained, by and large, unchallenged. The university will, however, need to consider that it may not always be the dominant provider of education to the populace. Remodeling and revisioning will be needed to ensure that, to some degree, education maintains some stability. "In the past, people came to the information, which was stored at the university. In the future, the information will come to the people, wherever they are" (Noam, 1995, p. 249). This is an important thing for providers of higher education to keep in mind. The 'information highway' gets widened and improved everyday; cyberlearning is gaining momentum, and will continue to exert greater and greater worldwide impact on the provision of higher education. The question stands as to whether education will change with it. Considering the many successful transformations of higher education since its inception, it is likely that it will also make a successful adaptation to this new challenge.

The University as a Corporation

Milam J. Joseph, president of the University of Dallas, has offered a pragmatic, if somewhat startling, paradigm of the university. He has stated that "when you boil it down, [this job] is like running a business. You've got to have revenue. In order to get revenue, you've got to have students. In order to get students you have to have a wonderful product" (Tarrant, 1998, p. 7E). This type of statement may provoke rage or reverie on the parts of educators and the public. Historically, universities have served as the cultural centers of society. They are intended to cultivate intellect through the process of free inquiry (Levine, 1996). A university serves as the center of intellectual authority and achieves a unique type of elitism "in the sense that it focuses on the pinnacle of human cultural and intellectual achievement" (p. 13). Universities were not created with profit margins, supply and demand, or customer service in mind. How will this new corporate educational philosophy affect one of our oldest societal institutions?

The idea of running a university like a business can be seen in many of the newest and most unorthodox institutions of higher education today. The profit and product mindset is permeating the minds of many who, like Milam Joseph, are in the position to make the corporate model a reality for the university. According to Rhodes (1997), "the external environment of the university has changed. It has changed relatively rapidly and markedly in a way that suggests we are facing not a temporal fluctuation but a fundamental structural change to which we must adapt or face decline" (p. 165). Funding is of great relevance in this changing external environment. As state and federal funding become less abundant, colleges and universities increasingly turn to their customers (students) for revenue, a phenomenon exemplified in the recent past tuition increases that have far outstripped the rate of inflation (Lee & Roth, 1996). Traditionalist groups in academics, such as the National Association of Scholars, may complain about many of the contemporary trends abounding on our campuses, "but for all their complaints ... they generally have not opposed the push by some policy makers, trustees, and administrators to reshape universities into the corporate mold — to 'maximize' profits [and] evaluate departments and programs by their 'efficiency' and 'productivity'" (Berube, 1998, p. B4).

Marketing has exemplified the efficiency of offering a product (education) to the customer (student) in order to experience financial health. Ask the CEOs at Nike, or Levi Strauss, or Coke how it works. Better yet, ask officials at DeVry. "DeVry isn't just another university. It is a publicly traded company (Nasdaq: DVRY) charging $3,000 a semester in tuition, or $24,000 for a B.S. This is almost half of what a B.S. costs at some big state universities and about a third what it can cost at a private college. Yet DeVry has shown solid earnings and steady growth since going public in 1991" (Spencer, 1995, p. 47). Likewise, consider the University of Phoenix. In the past 10 years the enrollment at University of Phoenix has grown from three thousand to forty thousand (Traub, 1997/1998). This is bound to be good news for the stockholders of the university! The University of Phoenix is the principal subsidiary of a for-profit company called Apollo Group. Shares for the university (a.k.a. company) have been offered on the NASDAQ since 1994. Stockholders have enjoyed a rise in their stock from two-dollars a share to thirty-five dollars a share; interestingly a fair number of these stockholders are professors from Arizona State (Traub, 1997/1998).

Does the possibility exist that schools like DeVry and the University of Phoenix are simply fads or experiments? Linda Thor, president of Rio Salado College in Arizona does not think so. Instead she sees the University of Phoenix as competition, and describes Rio Salado as the type of college she hears being described an institution that will provide higher education in the next century (Healy, 1998). Rio Salado is seen as a standard for college innovation because of its "booming enrollment and low overhead" (p. A32). These sound suspiciously like terms that would be thrown around at a corporate profit planning meeting. Healy has provided other corporate inspired descriptions of Rio Salado: "Rio makes instruction very consumable"; "the 'product' speeds down the assembly line"; and Rio Salado is "very market driven" (p. A32). "If predictions come true that colleges will soon treat students like customers and education as a commodity that can be adapted to what the market demands ... then Rio will have been ahead of the curve" (p. A32). Unfortunately, this will place the overwhelming majority of America's colleges and universities behind the curve if they don't rapidly begin to assume the corporate model exemplified by schools such as Rio Salado, DeVry and the University of Phoenix.

Another interesting aspect related to the adoption of the corporate model involves trends in administrative hiring. As universities face increasing economic pressures, conventional wisdom dictates that "when it comes to raising money and balancing budgets in academe ... few people are as adept as business deans, who have spent much of their careers with one foot in the corporate world" (Mangan, 1998, p. A43). A fork in the road to the college presidency has emerged — whereas traditionally, most college presidents had served as a provost, there is an increasing number of presidents being recruited from the post of business-school dean (Mangan, 1998). Despite the financial logic of these decisions, everyone involved in higher education is not equally convinced of the merits of appointing business-school deans to the presidency.

Scott S. Cowen, who assumed the presidency of Tulane University in July 1998, describes the skepticism that sometimes meets the merger of business and academics. "They [people outside of business] wonder whether we're going to come in and treat the university as though it were a for-profit corporation. They don't always give us enough credit for being scholars and academic leaders" (Mangan, 1988, p. A43). With DeVry, University of Phoenix and Rio Salado out there, is it any wonder that they might be suspicious?

Despite the business and financial savvy that businessmen can bring to academe, there is not always unanimous approval on the part of the public for the hiring of presidents from the business schools or private sectors. "Some students, as well as faculty members, are likely to view such hires as evidence that the university is 'selling out' to the business world" (Mangan, 1988, p. A44). They do not always protest quietly, as was exemplified early in March 1998 when students protested the increasing pervasiveness of corporate influence in higher education by holding teach-ins on about 100 U.S. and Canadian campuses (A44). Faculty also take issue with the customer service, business oriented university. Robert Owen, assistant professor of marketing at the State University of New York College at Oswego, echoes the sentiments of many faculty when he states, "the student in college is being treated as a customer in a retail environment and I have to worry about customer complaints" (Wilson, 1998, p. A12). The essential relationship between teachers and students is violated and changed by the introduction of corporate

principles into the university environment. Berube (1998) indicates that in this time of battle cries of 'efficiency' and 'productivity' by administrators, students and faculty need to fight the corporate efficiency model. He specifically bemoans the fate of the liberal arts education within a corporate model. Berube advises that "we [faculty] must convince administrators that a better university for students of liberal arts is, above all, an nefficient university. It is a university ... where students themselves are names, faces, and advisees, not modular production units" (p. B5).

Higher education increasingly operates like a business in the following ways: by focusing on research for its revenue generating properties; by reducing expensive tenured faculty through employment of increasing numbers of part-timers to increase cash flow in and decrease cash flow out; by offering more remedial courses in order to appeal to an identified population of underprepared patrons; and by engaging in distance education to serve an everexpanding customer base. In the wake of these trends will the true nature of the university be irretrievably lost? Kerr (1963/1995) has indicated that the uses of the university are "better knowledge and higher skills" (p. 196). Perhaps, despite the seeming threat to the structure of the university that the corporate model poses, the uses will remain just that.

The Implications for Higher Education

In reviewing a limited number of current trends prevalent in higher education today, it becomes obvious that this topic is virtually limitless. Each of the discussed topics could springboard into discussions about other trends and issues. However, an overriding theme is change — change for the university that manifests mainly as a response or reaction to change in the financial status and security of higher education. "The prospects for a continued golden flow of money, from state resources in particular, appear to be less assured" (Kerr, 1963/1995, p. 165). Therefore, change is required for survival.

As government support for higher education is unlikely to increase, the university must continue to provide educational opportunities for an ever-expanding and increasingly diverse population while still maintaining an operating budget. As universities are pulled away from a cultural emphasis and pushed more towards the secular world of profit, efficiency, and finances, a transformation is occurring. Kerr (1963/1995) describes the campus as possibly being "in one of the earlier of the final stages of incorporation into society, of assimilation, of integration, of homogenization — no more 'Ivory Tower', no more 'Town and Gown' " (p. 170). Reality exerts itself in the financial tangles of the university and the expanding student population — more people to educate, less money to spend to educate them. Kerr is both idealistic and brutal when he sums up the actuality of today's situation. He pines for the days of freely flowing resources and ruminates about the 'good old days' of unfettered cash flow, while without hesitation or any attempt at softening the blow, he asserts that things would be better off if the students of Tidal Wave II "had never been born" (p. 182).

Can higher education endure the constant remodeling while maintaining structural integrity and aesthetic dignity? Will the university still serve the same purpose? Will it still be recognizable as the foremost provider of higher education? If the university cannot maintain its integrity in the maelstrom of competing financial voices, will this lead to the vulgarization of intellectual life? Can higher education be everything to everyone

and continue to be true to its purpose? Fortunately, the university has a good track record. As pointed out by Kerr, only eighty-five institutions established by 1522 in the Western world remain in existence today — among those remaining are "the Catholic Church, the parliaments of the Isle of Man, of Iceland, and of Great Britain, several Swiss cantons, and seventy universities" (in Rhodes, 1997, p. 166). Apparently the American university comes from hearty stock. Nevertheless, survival is only a portion of the battle to be won with unrelenting change. "Universities must be nimble, flexible, and responsive to the changing needs of society and the changing opportunities for understanding if they are to serve our generation well" (p. 166).

If the 'institutional species' is to survive, there will need to be conscious adaptation to the changes in the educational and societal environment by the providers of higher education. As Kerr (1997) notes, it is important "to keep the future under constant review, to be prepared to adapt in order to survive" (p. 347). Yet, no matter what the trends of contemporary society are at any given time, universities have an obligation to be responsive to these trends while maintaining their distinctive function as centers of teaching, service, and research. Change, when considered thoughtfully, embarked upon cautiously, and viewed as a challenge, can be a positive and growth inducing experience, both for individuals and for institutions.

Universities are a national treasure. They have provided education for scores of generations, and rightfully held a central role in society for over a century. Universities have changed the lives of individual members of society in more ways and more times than can be counted. At times universities have been maligned, at other times they have been exalted, but never have they been considered inconsequential. "Higher education in the United States is built on three-and-one-half centuries of triumph, not tragedy" (Kerr, 1963/1995, p. 197). As higher education reflects on its history and its future, all evidence suggests that despite the changes that are made to its periphery, it will continue to serve as a primary provider of knowledge — at the core it will remain a vehicle of both change and stability for society.

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