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The Past, Present and Future of American Research Universities

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Historical Background:

- American higher education experienced extraordinary change during the past 150 years
 - internal intellectual trends as well as external societal forces.
- First era of change (ca. 1880-1910)
 - creation of the modern university
- Second period of rapid change (ca. 1945-1975) radically reordered American higher education
 - greatly expanding federal government funding for research and student aid, increasing enrollments, and improving diversity



Birth of the Research University (ca. 1880-1910):

- Through the middle of the 19th century higher education in the United States remained focused on a rigid curriculum of Ancient Greek and Latin, the classics, law and divinity
- Inroads into this method of education began in 1825 when the University of Virginia began to allow students to choose from a series of elective courses as part of their studies
- By mid-century institutions began to establish separate graduate professional schools



Birth of the Research University (ca. 1880-1910):

- In response to economic growth, industrialization, and westward expansion, the U.S. Congress passed the Morrill Act of 1862, funding colleges to enhance agricultural and industrial production

- Although the new funds greatly expanded the number of colleges throughout the country, the new institutions tended to propagate preexisting pedagogical and curricular norms



Birth of the Research University (ca. 1880-1910):

- The reticence of colleges to change their curricula met serious societal criticism in the 1870's
 - People increasingly perceived a disconnect between the education provided by the denominational colleges that dominated higher education and the needs of young people embarking on careers in a changing business and technological climate
- Change came when societal forces converged with trends within the scholarly community



Birth of the Research University (ca. 1880-1910):

- American universities were deeply influenced by Wilhelm von Humboldt's innovations at the University of Berlin, founded in 1809
- By the late 19th century a cadre of American scholars sought to transplant the Humboldtian system to the United States
- In 1878 Johns Hopkins University introduced into American higher education the German concept of graduate study and *Wissenschaft*, the application of the scientific method and rational argumentation to scholarly inquiry



Birth of the Research University (ca. 1880-1910):

- Graduate study required faculty who were highly trained in a focused area of study
- New institutions were founded on the Johns Hopkins model, and many - but not all - existing institutions added graduate training and research to their missions
- During the same period, the scholarly disciplines took shape in terms of the content of the fields, their methodologies, and as collections of like-minded researchers



Birth of the Research University (ca. 1880-1910):

- The combination of societal pressure, professionalization of the faculty, the establishment of the disciplines, and the commitment to *Wissenschaft* fueled rapid change in higher education
- In 1900 the leading research universities established the Association of American Universities, and by 1910 the modern research university had taken its current shape



Birth of the Research University (ca. 1880-1910):

- Much like changes we see underway today in higher education around the world, this first period of rapid change at American colleges and universities came from a wide-spread concern that education needed to change to meet the demands of modernity, and from developments within the scholarly community that altered the topics people studied and methodologies they used to create new knowledge



Birth of the Research University (ca. 1880-1910):

- 1910-1940 tended toward more gradual change, including greater uniformity of curricula, increasing enrollments, and expansion of scholarly activity at research universities
- During this period, collegiate life took shape with trends toward students living on campus, the growth of athletics and 'Greek' life, and the establishment of other extracurricular pursuits now associated with the university experience



Research, Campuses, and Students Transformed (ca. 1945-1975):

- Another sea-change swept through American higher education in the wake of the Second World War
- Unlike the earlier era of rapid transformation the primary instigating factors came from events outside higher education
- The war effort brought a system of contractual funding relationships between the federal government and universities, leading to the creation of radar, proximity fuses, penicillin, and atomic weapons



Research, Campuses, and Students Transformed (ca. 1945-1975):

- The crucial role played by academic researchers in the Allied victory motivated continued federal funding of university-based research as a way to create a pool of highly trained individuals
- The Cold War engaged the US in both a war of preparation - creation of advanced technologies for carrying out war - and a war to win the support of the unaligned nations of the world.



Research, Campuses, and Students Transformed (ca. 1945-1975):

- The Soviet launch of Sputnik in 1957 led to even more dramatic increases in federal funding for research in universities
 - In a mere four years, from 1958 to 1962, the National Science Foundation budget grew from \$40 million to \$260 million
 - The National Institutes of Health budget grew from \$98 million to \$1.4 billion in the ten years after the Soviet satellite orbited the Earth
 - Graduate education figured prominently in the funding, developing a larger pool of researchers
 - universities increased the number of doctoral degrees awarded ten fold between the 1940's and the 1970's



Research, Campuses, and Students Transformed (ca. 1945-1975):

- The immediate postwar years saw spending focused on a few elite institutions, but research funding soon began to spread
 - After 1963 funding also came to include money for constructing facilities
- The G.I. Bill funded undergraduate and graduate education for returning veterans
- This brought huge increases in enrollments and tuition revenue
- Federal funding also began to support general undergraduate financial aid



Research, Campuses, and Students Transformed (ca. 1945-1975):

- As a result of these changes, universities grew increasingly reliant on federal monies to sustain dramatic growth in personnel and facilities
- Just as post-war political forces stimulated the precipitous rise in federal funding of scientific research, post-war social forces reshaped American society and transformed higher education
- The civil rights movement of the 1950's and 1960's and the other social justice movements it inspired—such as the women's movement—quickly took root on campuses



Research, Campuses, and Students Transformed (ca. 1945-1975):

- Humanists and social scientists introduced new methodologies such as feminist analysis, post-structuralism, and post-modernism
- The ensuing struggles within academe occasioned public criticism of the scholarly community, with critics questioning the relevance of curricula



Research, Campuses, and Students Transformed (ca. 1945-1975):

- Unlike the first era of rapid change, in the late 19th century, which responded to forced within academe and from society as a whole, this second era of change stemmed almost entirely from forces external to higher education



The Last Decades of the 20th Century

- Student enrollments continued to increase over the period because of population growth and increased access to higher education
- The Cold War ended
 - Rationale for support of basic research was called into question
 - Attention could focus more on societal problems
 - Funding began shifting from the physical sciences to the life sciences
- Technology played an increasing role in society in general and made inroads into universities



The 21st Century

- Most universities now receive a large amount of their funding from the federal and state governments
 - Through research grants and student financial aid
- The American government increasingly regulates high education, with implications for public and private universities alike
- As such, the differences between private universities and public universities continue to narrow, making the distinction less and less relevant



Current and Future Trends

- Although many trends influence American higher education at present, five broad trends encompass most of the changes underway:

- Demographics
- Globalization
- Commodification
- Economics
- Intellectual currents



Current and Future Trends

Demographics

- The ebb and flow of baby boom echos
- A long-term trend toward 'massification'
- The increasing need for credentialing
- More professionals returning to higher education for additional training
- Increasing interest in life-long learning
- Impending retirement of the professorial cohort hired during the baby boom



Current and Future Trends

Globalization

- More students coming to the U.S. to study, and U.S. students studying abroad
- Increasing international competition among universities
- Emerging international collaborations
- Internationalizing curricula
- The death (and rebirth?) of area studies
- Off-shore campuses
- Licensing of American higher education 'brands' at international institutions
- Distance learning



Current and Future Trends

Commodification

- For-profit providers
- Corporate universities
- Universities as vendors
- Students as customers
- Universities as corporations
- Changing perceptions of the 'value' or 'relevance' of higher education
- Regulating higher education



Current and Future Trends

Economics of Higher Education

- Rising tuition and fees
- Salary competition with industry
- Pressure for improved infrastructure
- The future of libraries
- Concerns over the competitiveness of professorial salaries
- Federal research funding
- Fundraising
- Technology transfer, patenting, and links with industry
- Intellectual property



Current and Future Trends

Intellectual currents

- The disconnect between low-context and applied disciplines
- The vogue for interdisciplinarity: rhetoric or reality?
- The decline of reeducationism
- The decline in the institutional dominance of the arts and sciences
- Professional education in transition
- Increasing openness to corporate ties and applied research
- The 'loss of confidence' in rationality



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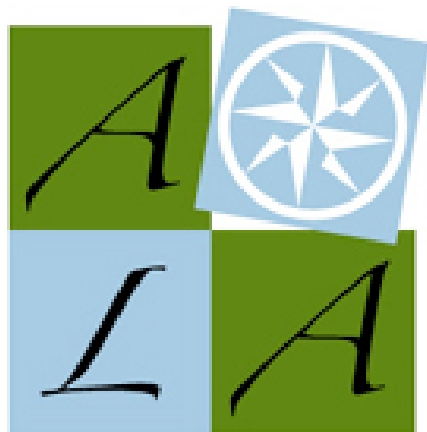
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