Building knowledge in societies for a sustainable future

Knowledge, Credentials, Or Both: And How

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Sustainability – In vogue in American Higher Education

**Sustaining** the physical environment -- preserving the earth for future generations

- Research Agenda
  - Climate studies
  - Alternative energy sources
  - The carbon footprint

- Education Agenda
  - Blended curriculum
  - New fields of study

- The business of higher education – cleaning up our own act.
But there is more to sustainability than sustaining “the earth”

**Sustaining** the Non-physical environment

- War & Peace
- Preserving Democracy
- Civilized citizenry versus Barbarianism
- Expanding access to “the good life”
  - Personal happiness
  - Personal self-worth
  - Personal commitment to others

**The Premise:** Education is key to sustaining both the physical and non-physical worlds in which we live.
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The World View – OECD Data
Differences in College Attainment (Associate and Higher) Between Younger and Older Adults - U.S. and OECD Countries, 2005

The Premise: Education is key to sustaining both the physical and non-physical worlds in which we live.

The World View – OECD Data

Except the United States!

Or not?
Differences in College Attainment (Associate and Higher) Between Younger and Older Adults - U.S., 2005

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 ACS
“By 2020, America will Once again have the highest Proportion of college graduates In the World”

President Barrack Obama, 2/24/09
The Response Within the U.S.

Improve preparedness for higher learning

- Better information for Assessment, Accountability, and Consumer Behavior
- Alignment of exit to entrance (upper secondary to higher education)
- New pedagogy for upper secondary

From *Access* to *Access to Success*

Particular focus on *Access Institutions*, particularly *Community Colleges*

Renewed focus on *adult students* -- 40 million with some college but no degree
Quality Concerns

The possible perverse consequences of focusing on graduation rates.
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The possible perverse consequences of focusing on graduation rates.

Example: Increase grad rate from 50% to 67%

Admit 1,000, graduate 500  =  50% Graduation rate

Admit 1,000, graduate 670  =  67% Graduation rate

Admit    750, graduate 500  =  67% Graduation rate
Quality Concerns

- The possible perverse consequences of focusing on graduation rates.
- The possible perverse consequences – lowering standards to achieve higher completion rates.
- Telltale signs that U.S. already in trouble:
  - National Adult Literacy Survey
  - Remedial rates of 40% for entry into higher education
  - Disappointing growth in critical thinking skills, assessed on value-added exams.

Response to Quality Concerns
Response to Quality Concerns

- Preparedness (discussed earlier)
- Movement to “Evidence-Based Practice”
  - Student Unit Data Bases -- elementary, secondary, higher education, work force
  - Measuring Student Learning Outcomes
    - Content in Major Area of Study
    - Critical Thinking and Analytic Skills
  - Data analytics – using data “right now” to improve learning
- Pedagogical Change.
  - On-line, blended, diagnostic learning
  - From hunch to evidence based practice
The U.S. Dilemma

FINANCES

Or, Lack thereof.

Past public investment unsustainable in the "NEW NORMAL" U. S. Governmental Arenas – federal and state.
Projected State and Local Budget Surplus (Gap) as a Percent of Revenues, 2016

Source: NCHEMS; Don Boyd (Rockefeller Institute of Government), 2009 Via NCHEMS
The U.S. Dilemma

**FINANCES**

*Or, Lack thereof.*

Past public investment unsustainable in the “**NEW NORMAL**” U. S. Governmental Arenas – federal and state.

**Growth** in private investment unsustainable in the **NEW NORMAL** for students & families.
Preparing for the "New Normal"


Note: Net tuition revenue used for capital debt service is included in the above figures. All figures are adjusted by SHEEO Higher Education Cost Adjustment (HECA).

Source: SHEEO, SHEF 2008
We know the value of higher education.
Relational between Educational Attainment, Personal Income, and Economic Strength

State New Economy Index (2002)
- Top Tier
- Middle Tier
- Low Tier

Source: NCHEMS
The U. S. Higher Education Dilemma

- We know the value of higher education
- And, we know our current vulnerability
Differences in College Attainment (Associate and Higher) Between Younger and Older Adults - U.S. and OECD Countries, 2005

High School Graduation Rates - Public High School Graduates as a Percent of 9th Graders Four Years Earlier, 2006

Source: Tom Mortenson, Postsecondary Opportunity Via NCHEMS
College-Going Rates – First-Time Freshmen Directly Out of High School as a Percent of Recent High School Graduates, 2006

Source: Tom Mortenson, Postsecondary Opportunity Via NCHEMS
We know the value of higher education

And, we know our current vulnerability

And, We know what we have to do
  Increase productivity
  Without investment capital to do so

That’s very difficult
Options for the U.S.

- Make the necessary investments in the public sector
- Rely on the private for-profit sector, and investments from the stock market
- Slip-slide away

The Jury Is Still Out on What We Will Do!
Building Knowledge
In Societies
For A Sustainable Future