

HIGHER EDUCATION: ACCESS AND EXCELLENCE

Remarks of

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before

• The Council on Higher Education for Israel

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Introduction

Daniel J. Boorstin, in Democracy and Its Discontents,
entitled the final chapter of his book "Getting There Is All
the Fun."

That statement, a bit tongue-in-cheek perhaps, seems to
capture today's higher education mood.

- o During the past 20 years, ~~in~~ America, ~~has~~
~~which~~ moved from a relatively ~~tight~~
^{higher education} selective system to a sprawling
enterprise.
- o It hasn't been all fun, of course, but at
least we were ~~not~~ very, very busy.

o o o

Now, after two decades of dramatic growth, a kind of
morning-after mood has settled in.

- o Enrollments have began to level off.
- Building new facilities has declined.
- o ^{And} We're not quite sure what has happened to the ~~university's~~ traditional goals of liberal learning and research.

Early Elitist Tendencies

The truth is that the university in America--from the very first--~~was~~ elitist in its inclination.

- o Students ~~in American colleges~~ were nearly all children of wealth -- sons of merchants, shipbuilders, ~~master mariners~~, magistrates, lawyers gentleman farmers, ~~militia officers~~, and, above all, ministers.
- o Only about 10 percent ^{of students in our best colleges} came from the homes of poor farmers, servants, or seamen.
- o Nearly all Harvard students prepared for college by private tutoring, usually from a clergyman, and a thorough knowledge of Latin and Greek was the basic admissions test.

Compared to European models our colleges were more ^{American} but still the institution served primarily the socially & economically privileged

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~~system~~ ^{system} ~~for~~ ^{for} ~~it~~ ^{it} ~~is~~ ^{is} ~~by~~ ^{by} ~~no~~ ^{no} ~~level~~ ^{level} ~~today~~ ^{today}.

1000 2000 3000

chronic growth - 4 -

This ~~expansion~~ ^{also} -- in turn -- sparked aspirations among historically by passed students, those who never dreamed of college.

- o So long as higher education was restricted to the privileged few, - the blacks, Chicanos, and the economically deprived [^] accepted their exclusion.
- o But ^{why} middle income students ^{reached} ~~were going~~ off to college, and the poor now ~~are~~ ^{perceived} themselves ^{as} tightly and prejudicially locked out of social progress.

Langston Hughes in his poem "Dream Deferred" asks rhetorically--

What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up
Like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore . . .
Or does it explode?

o o o

*In fact it seems to
There is I suspect a big 'out part'
in my culture where high school moments
become self defeating*

Through the 1960's American higher education ~~confronted~~,
quite literally, ^{well} ~~confronted~~ an explosion of rising expectations.
Colleges and universities from coast to coast -- often torn
between tradition and turmoil -- aggressively recruited
minority and low income students. And ^{- once again} ~~Higher education~~
enrollment took another leap ahead.

- o From 1960 to 1977, ^{just} enrollment increased from 3.2 million to 11.4 million.
- o And even more significantly, the percentage of minority students enrolled in higher education increased from about seven percent to 17.5 percent in just 15 years.

in just 15 years.
~~all of this in 15 years~~ have educated expectations have been raised
 and once
 the peace could be secured.

Education As A Right

And here's where all of this has led. ~~Since World War~~
 II, ~~Higher~~ education in America has -- in fact -- become not
 just a privilege but a "right." A \$6 billion student
 assistance program has been approved by Congress ~~and it is now~~
 a ~~matter~~ of public policy that no eligible student is ~~to~~ be
 denied access to higher education because of social or eco-
 nomic barriers.

Some ~~things~~ WWTIA

The University has -- ~~increased~~ -- become a ~~prime~~ distributor of status and a principle means by which upward mobility is achieved.

Once educated in politics have been raised
and once ~~a~~ ~~the~~ ~~other~~
The movement feeds on himself

Jerome Karabel, writing in The Educational Record,*
declares that

If the modern university conferred no
benefits on anyone . . . there would be
little clamor for universal access. But
this is not the case . . . Universities
are irrevocably committed to the business
of conveying rewards, and once this fact
is recognized their exclusionary stance,
based on an idealized image, becomes less
defensible.

of course
~~well~~, the university has always conveyed rewards. It's
just that, as more and more people are involved, *exclusion becomes discrimination* par-
ticipating in the reward becomes more and more essential.
As Riesman and his associates observed,** middle class and
lower middle class neighborhoods have in recent years been
tipped in the direction of college, "making it harder for
the majority of young people not to go to college than to
go."
*the more
the middle
class
go to college
the more
the lower
middle class
are tipped
into it.*

~~By embracing the "legitimizing" function
higher education has, in fact, become an urgent expectation
for more and more young people or at least for parents.~~

* Winter 1972.
** Riesman et al, Academic Values and Mass Education.
Doubleday & Co., 1970.

*induce
These students
to go to college
without that said
the parents
are it more to college*

*There is a big gap
in a culture in which
high education
is more
Social structure will
be higher*

Winning The Access Battle

- 7 - While we do hear occasionally someone say - "too many kids go on to college" - the open admission policy is about inclusion, not exclusion. American is all about access.

This brings me to a central premise. I believe the access to higher education battle in America has been largely won. ^{Today, partly because of accident & partly by design} Almost all qualified students who want to go to college can find a place -- somewhere in the system. And a very generous federal assistance program has largely overcome the cost barriers as well. ^{Increasingly} The future focus, ~~is~~

~~will be~~, will be -- not on gaining access to the system -- but on gaining admission to ^{a specific} particular programs -- to medicine or law or engineering, professions where the rewards are high, competition keen and where minorities and women have been excluded in the past.

One important point is beginning to emerge. ^{It now seems clear that} an open admissions policy does in fact have limits. ^{we are beginning to discover that} Universal higher education ^{is not quite} ~~is not quite~~ ^{may extend in fact do not}

Consider, for example that

- o For ~~almost~~ five years now the proportion of high school graduates going on to college has ~~held steady~~ -- levelling off at about 60 percent.
- o And in the City of New York, where open admission was most aggressively pursued by the City University of ~~New York~~, the percentage of high school graduates going on to college peaked in 1973 at 80 percent and dropped back to 75 percent in 1977.

There is, in short, strong evidence to suggest that even when ^{almost all} barriers are removed a significant percentage of high school graduates will not go on to ~~the more~~ traditional higher learning institutions. For the foreseeable future at least, I believe the outer limits have been reached. The enrollment ^{is now} ~~is now somewhat~~ stabilized.

for the 18-21 year old student

~~All of this relates to the 18 to 21-year-old Adult~~
~~enrollments~~ ^{adult enrollments} On the other hand ^{student} will continue to expand.

America is growing older. By the year 2000 the number of adults over 21 years of age will increase from 64 to 73 percent.

- o In response, ~~prejudices toward the older students are beginning to break down.~~

The Academy is shifting both its content and its calendar to pull the older student back to campus.

- o In 1975, 17 million persons participated in adult education, 4 million more than in 1969.

- o ^{and} I'm convinced this pattern will persist.
~~Mature students increasingly will influence the shape of higher education.~~

what happens to the group. ^{- 9 -} There is a big risk that
 One other point. I also suspect nontraditional institu-
 tions will continue to expand. ^{some say} ^{identify}
 We have ~~all sort of~~ ^{external} ^{institutions} ^{after} ^{profit}
 Today, American business and industry ^{make}
 are spending between 40 and 50 billion ^{hair}
 dollars a year on "in-company" training. ^{Cost 30 -}

~~And~~ During the next 10 years many ^{students} ~~high school graduates~~
 who do not go on to college will ~~in fact~~ take special cour-
 ses or enroll in short term training programs -- either on
 or off the job. ^{and} As the youth population continues to
 decline the "non collegiate" schools may, in fact, compete
 with more traditional higher learning institutions.

~~now it~~ ^{II} So much of value on this case come
 so what are we to say about a -- not quite universal --
 higher education system, one that serves two-thirds of all
 high school graduates.

- o It's very big, of course.
- o It's quite untidy.
- o It struggles with competing values--just like the society it serves.
- o It offers remedial education to students who would not have been admitted in the past.
- o And ^{as some would argue} viewed from one perspective, it is a system where quality has declined.

But it's more than this, of course.

The open university reflects the fact that knowledge has expanded, work has become more complicated and more education for more people is absolutely crucial.

- o Just as secondary education with 12 years of schooling was pushed one hundred years ago, so it is that 14 or more years of formal education seems not unreasonable for those about to enter century twenty one.

- o The expanded university ~~is also a~~ *also reflects the fact that education is becoming a social institution - a more authentic reflection of the culture as a whole.*

- ~~o It expresses confidence in the many~~
~~not the few.~~

- o It recognizes that there is no God-given cut-off line where the gifted and the non-gifted are arbitrarily split apart.

- The Expanded Univ also*
 - o ~~it~~ *tries to open* accepts the rather brash *one education* assumption that openness and excellence *mind of equity* in higher education are, in fact, not contradictions.

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o o o

In the spirit of this conference, I should like to pick up that final note and in the remaining moments explore the rather novel notion that increased access has, in fact, led to increased quality in academic life.

To prep up that rather wobbly proposition, four specific assumptions will be ~~explored~~. *tested.*

III

First, mass higher education forced the university to confront more seriously its educational obligation to the student.

For far too long, colleges and universities fell back on a self fulfilling prophecy.

- o Admissions officers were expected to recruit the gifted student who in turn would become the gifted graduate.
- o The aim was to keep the institutional risks very, very low *(the strategy was to -- by finding*
← students those who would "look good at the institution rather than ~~finding~~ *recruiting* those *students* who would profit most from a college education -- and there is a difference.

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As Karabel observes, the function of mass higher education -- is not just ["]picking winners["]. Rather the critical variable is the "value added" notion of college education.

"...a truly successful institution would change students' performance level rather than insure its own prestige by a combination of selection procedures" -- which are only marginal in their predictive value.

He said that -

"When admissions is approached from the perspective of value added rather than viewed as a process designed to identify those who have already proved themselves able, the use of traditional meritocratic criteria become difficult to justify."

The point I make is this.

So long as colleges depend on the selection process to screen out all but the academic winners -- colleges can function -- as Astin suggests -- much as handicappers do: more interested in predicting performance rather than improving it.

well, traditional meritocratic criteria are in fact appropriately used by some schools & for some academic purposes. But a problem is they are insufficient.

But if the system is designed so that students can continue to develop their potential

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College *in fact forced*
But in the 1960's ~~we~~ were asked to put our own performance rather than the students' talent on the line. *They* ~~we~~ were forced to reexamine just how the college or university itself contributed to the development of students from many different backgrounds and to ~~justify traditions~~. *It was --* *this college* *is to* *orbiting* *it not* *prejudiced.*
I am convinced -- ~~the~~ *del* introduction of a healthy tension and in the process the fiber of the academic enterprise was strengthened.

IV

Second, mass higher education forced us to clarify the separate purposes of our institutions and build new kinds of colleges to serve new kinds of students.

America has always had a patchwork of high / low schools. (met in 1960) years this diversity became more explicit as
As enrollments continued to expand and ~~student bodies~~ *lower* *segmented* *and* continued to diversify, it became absolutely clear that the traditional liberal arts college or research university could not exclusively do the job. We ~~needed~~ *needed* other kinds of ~~institutions~~.

- o From 1960 to 1970 some 550 new institutions were established.
- o Most of this growth occurred at the two-year college level.

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During the decade of the 60's a new community college was built in America every 12 days.

o o o

The State University of New York, with which I am most familiar, illustrates how universities sought to clarify in rather formal fashion just how the new academic functions were to be assigned.

The statewide system in New York has 64 separate institutions.

- o There are 30 open-access community colleges.
- o Six are two-year technical institutes.
All of these are committed to the popular functions of the university.
- o The 14 arts and science colleges, four medical centers, four universities and specialized research centers are to some degree committed to the traditional scholastic functions.
- o The upper level institutions are more or less selective.

- o Students who successfully complete a two-year program can transfer to a senior institution.

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~~This division of labor which has not been so elaborately~~
~~developed in every state is absolutely crucial to open~~
~~access -- and it has been economically beneficial.~~ *he not have*
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expanding the enrollment did introduce tension at first and threaten the insulation of functions about which Martin Trow has written ~~XX~~ I believe a rather adequate system of separate institutions has been built to serve different functions -- with overlap, of course.

Here I must insert one important caveat. Any network of institutions *it is allowed to work* must permit mobility.

- o If, for example, two-year colleges are academic cul-de-sacs they will be seen both by students and by faculty as "second class." The Academy will have built a class structure of its own and will have arbitrarily frozen out able students from further progress. Only one "legitimate" entry point will in fact remain.

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- o If, on the other hand, students who enter a two-year program know that if they succeed they can in fact move on, then the inclination to rank order colleges on a "status" rather than a mission yardstick will be diminished. And the prospect of excellence at all levels will be unusually enhanced.

IV

Do you see how the document is written?
Third, mass higher education has not only ~~reshaped~~ our facilities, it has ~~reshaped~~ our curriculum as well. *reshaped in 2nd/22* *found a path to redefine* *Sh*

Why good school
In the early days American higher education was *more or less* cohesive.

- o Harvard, the state-church school, received public money to perform services whose purposes were at once both religious and intellectual.
- o The production of a learned ministry for the colony, the creation of a professional class, the passing on of eternal verities -- these were the goals of Harvard College and of hundreds of imitative institutions.

Chas Ellin

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But

Finally
In the 20th century American higher education, like America itself, was shaken by war, the crash, the alienation of modern life, the erosion of faith and religion and even rationality. *It was a challenge to the strength of a common set of values. The whole* But, with all, colleges still served a *have* cross section of a culture which accepted some notion of coherence, *in spite of the fact that it was not* albeit a pale after glow of the vivid puritan commitment.

This common heritage notion was, however, sharply challenged in the 1960's. *As we admitted students from all elements*
o Diversity -- not conformity -- was
the new ideology to be worshipped. *o said group*
o Students, often joined by faculty
members, viewed as cultural imperialism *the notion of*
any attempt intellectually to unite *collaboration*
Chicanos, native Americans, blacks, *shock*
New York Jews, San Francisco WASPs, *challenged.*
oriental immigrants, ghetto kids, and
fundamentalists.

The boundaries defining the basic nature of a college education were blurred.

- o An emerging pluralism called into question what were once assumptions no one challenged.

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- o Traditional requirements often were attacked and toppled while new values were aggressively affirmed.

o o o

An anecdote from Stanford University is instructive. After having dropped almost all requirements in the 60's a faculty committee proposed -- in 1976 -- a required course in western culture.

The student newspaper in a biting attack on the proposition said the new report

proposes to remove from students the right to choose for themselves a course . . . This is not to deny that courses in western culture are valuable and that most persons could benefit from them. To require them to take them, however, carries a strong illiberal connotation . . . It imposes a uniform standard on nonuniform people.

Conventional wisdom had it that all intellectual and cultural connections among students had been snapped.

o o o

I hope I share this feeling which passed on my career in health.
I found in the future as roots and
But I believe the curriculum pendulum is swinging back
again -- and that a new more authentic cohesion ^{can} ^{is key to} emerge.

- o There is of course a danger. ^{in this part} Students must be free to follow their own interests, to develop their own aptitudes, and to pursue their own goals.
- o On this liberty no one must trespass; this is why colleges have academic majors and electives.

to choose within constraints

To further ~~insist~~ that individuals temper their demands and negotiate limits to their freedom could mean repression. Calling for sacrifice in the name of some common good may arouse suspicion.

- And yet we are by to accept the cold fact that*
- o Truly educated persons move beyond themselves, gain social perspective, see themselves in relation to other peoples and times, understand how their origins and wants and needs are tied to the origins and wants and needs of others.
 - o Such perspectives are central to the academic quest.

o o o

A college curriculum that suggests that students have nothing in common is as flawed as one that suggests that all students are alike. The new ~~common core~~ curriculum is built on the proposition that students should be encouraged to investigate how we are one as well as many; the core curriculum must give meaning, in a democratic context, to e pluribus unum. What are these experiences all people share? And which of these common experiences should be studied by the college student? Within the answers to these questions will be found the new common core.

It is about to come to head for a

~~No single course of study will succeed while all others~~

~~fail~~ But to reject a rigid sequence does not mean that a grab bag of electives is the answer, that any academic sequence is as good as any other. General education that focuses on what is shared will not be achieved by accident. To weave such a program into the educational fabric of the college, priorities must be fixed and new academic guideposts set in place. And this process already has begun.

John R. Davis, in writing about our current quest, said that behind our

search for standards is a more fundamental search for purpose. The confusion about standards and the emerging pluralism in higher education are symptoms of a quest for new formulations of purpose.

*for what we need on south
have authentic
then the truth
is the danger
it is in
find a
search
for some
fundamental
purpose*

What may emerge, along with the emerging pluralism, is a new concept of liberal education. Unlike traditional liberal education, rooted as it was in concepts of mental discipline and transfer of training, liberal education for the decade ahead will increasingly use . . . contemporary problems of society as the medium of education.

In my own book Educating for Survival, Marty Kaplan and I have also discussed themes drawn from our common heritage, contemporary circumstances and prospects for the future which we believe justify of consideration.

In any event, I suggest that the general education pattern in America which had reduced itself on most campuses to something called "distribution requirements" had for all practical purposes lost its intellectual soul.

The irreverent confrontations of the 60's shook the skeletons and broke bones but ~~I suggest that~~ out of that assault a new more authentic notion of liberal education may, ^{in fact}, emerge.

Finally, mass higher education in a curious indirect way
also may have strengthened research and scholarship. The
sine qua non of academic excellence.

Trow, in his brilliant essay on "The Transition from Mass to Universal Higher Education," comments on what he calls the autonomous and the popular functions of the university. The former, he says, are those functions which are intrinsic to the conception of the university as they have evolved in Europe and America over the past 150 years and are now shared with universities around the world. The universities' commitment to

- o the transmission of high culture,
the creation of new knowledge, and
the formation, selection,
- o and certification of elite groups,
the learned professions, the civil
servants.

The popular functions in turn flow more directly from the university as a redistributor of privilege and the provision of useful knowledge to many social groups and institutions -- the functions of the open institutions.

Trow suggests that the big state universities in America -- many are our most distinguished institutions -- perform both autonomous and popular functions, keeping the functions insulated from each through graduate and undergraduate schools and academic departments to protect what he calls the highly vulnerable autonomous functions of liberal education and basic research and scholarship from the direct impact of the larger society.

Trow also observes that the autonomous functions of the university are being threatened.

Constituencies, he argues, have become much wider, more heterogenous, and less familiar.

- o Governing bodies must now negotiate conflicting values,
- o and they are inclined to respond to the fear and anger of the many publics. The fit between an expanding university and the tradition of scholarship is very awkward.

o o o

Trow's analysis is as usual absolutely valid. The tensions he describes are real and this is precisely the reason institutional diversity to accomodate student diversity is so crucial.

There is, however, another side to all of this. Jencks and Riesman in The Academic Revolution argue that the vastly expanded undergraduate enrollments of the 1960s actually increased the power of a minority of faculty to choose the conditions of and the clients for their teaching.

They contend that this increasing faculty power has helped make that country the world leader in research and universities patrons of high culture. Graduate schools have been expanded, which in turn has made it possible to increase the proportion of students attending undergraduate colleges.

o o o

My own observations in New York also would sustain this point. it was through increased enrollments that new facilities were built -- laboratories and research facilities unheard of 20 years ago.

Mass education expanded undergraduate enrollments in science and gave researchers more teaching fellows. I happen to believe that in some states at least traditional research functions in fact flourished during the days of great expansion.

One other point. Because of the Federal Research support this function is extremely sustained. Professor Joseph Ben-David, in his excellent book on American Higher Education, carefully traces the emergence of mission oriented research noting that the Federal role is absolutely crucial.

o Since 1940 the Federal support of university research and development has increased from \$8 million to an estimated \$5.4 billion in 1977. That \$5.4 billion is in current, inflated dollars. Federal R&D support has had its ups and downs but I believe it will hold its own and even rise since the urgent social problems persist and grow increasingly complex.

V

Dr. Lewis Thomas -- author of Lives of a Cell, and a trustee of the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center -- said recently at a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science that these are not the best times for the human mind.

"All sorts of things seem to be turning out wrong," he said . . .

and the century seems to be slipping
through our fingers here at the end, with
almost all promises unfilled. I cannot
begin to guess at all the causes of our
cultural sadness, not even the most important
ones, but I can think of one thing that is
wrong with us and eats away at us: We do not
know enough about ourselves.

We are ignorant about how we work, about
where we fit in, and most of all about the
enormous, imponderable system of life in
which we are embedded as working parts....
it is a new experience for all of us. It's
unfamiliar ground.

As the agenda of interdependence grows more urgent, whether
on matters of fuel or environment or population or food or
health, I believe we will continue to turn to the research
capacity of the university to search for plausible answers
to our problems and hopefully sustain free inquiry wherever
it may lead.

Conclusion

What are we to conclude from all this?

Well, in spite of all prior rather optimistic speculation, higher education in America faces stress and the pressures of the 1980's will be even more intense. Enrollments will decline, budget will be hit and the university will compete with other social needs.

At the sametime, we've gone through a traumatic period and survived, and several lessons might be learned.

First -- Increasing access to higher education

is I suspect inevitable. Educational demands and social progress have increased and any higher education policy that seeks arbitrarily to limit education beyond high school will not be sustained.

Second -- Universal higher education does in fact

have limits. A significant percentage of students for a variety of reasons will not go on to traditional higher education institutions.

Third -- As higher education become more open than

selective, the focus will be on the performance of the institution ^{as well as on} ~~rather than~~ the capacity of the student.