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**UNESCO-CEPES
EUROPEAN CENTRE
FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Higher
Education
in Europe**

In this issue:
Thematic Reflections on Higher Education

Vol. XXIX, No. 1, 2004

Higher Education in Europe

Volume XXIX Number 1 2004

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From the Chairman of the Editorial Board

This issue of **Higher Education in Europe**, that marks the start of a New Year, is rather special in two senses. On the one hand, it is not as strictly themed as is usually the case. It is devoted to a series of articles that evoke selected themes of previous issues of the review as well as activities of UNESCO-CEPES. On the other hand, owing to the upcoming retirement of Senior Editor, Leland Barrows, it may be the last issue of the review to be produced under his editorial supervision. Over two decades, specifically since September 1983, as the readers of this publication have certainly observed, Leland Barrows has stamped **Higher Education in Europe** and the other publications produced by UNESCO-CEPES with his ebullient personality, hard work, erudition, and devotion to the problematic of higher education. He piloted the evolution of **Higher Education in Europe** along the way that led it from being a locally printed news bulletin to becoming a world-class scholarly periodical on higher education, one that publishes the results of original research.

Now is the time, also, for me to state that one thing that has always impressed me about Leland Barrows is his willingness to devote far more than forty hours per week to his tasks – he does not stop until the job – his UNESCO-CEPES work - is done. But at that point, he remembers his professional and intellectual background as a historian. He reads and does research particularly in African and French Empire History, turning out articles and book reviews. It was our good fortune that he was available to make major contributions to three UNESCO-CEPES projects strongly linked to the field of history*.

Thus, Volume 29, Number 1, 2004, of **Higher Education in Europe**, that we are dedicating to our colleague, Leland Barrows, reflects themes that have been evoked in past issues of the review. At various times over the last decade, and even earlier, **Higher Education in Europe** has featured articles and whole topics that confront the paradigm changes that have been occurring as higher education systems and individual institutions have had to cope with democratization, diversification, and massification, the advent of globalization, the shrinking of the per capita resources allocated to higher education linked to the corresponding need to diversify sources of funding, and the increasing use of the techniques of “New Public Management” to State higher education systems. All of these phenomena are being influenced, facilitated, and modified by the increasingly important role being played by the New Information Technologies in both teaching and research. Indeed, a new phenomenon has come into existence, the virtual university, which is bringing new types of providers of educational programmes in addition to the traditional bricks and mortar institution.

This issue opens with an article by John Milliken of the United Kingdom who bemoans the fact that the post-modern university, that is, the massified, diversified, and underfunded higher education institution, that, increasingly, is being administered according to the principles of “New Public Management”, is weakening collegiality while deprofessionalizing, even proletarianizing, its teaching/research staff.

It is worth mentioning that Dr. Milliken is not a disgruntled traditional liberal arts academic unhappy about the demise of “Donnish Dominion”; rather he is a former

* Three books were the outcome: Razvan Theodorescu and Leland Conley Barrows, **Politics and Culture in Southeastern Europe** (Bucharest: UNESCO-CEPES, 2001); Razvan Theodorescu and Leland Conley Barrows, **South East Europe - The Ambiguous Definitions of a Space/L’Europe du Sud-Est – les définitions ambiguës d’un espace** (Bucharest: UNESCO-CEPES, 2002); and Leland Conley Barrows, Cezara Mucenic, and Oliver Octavian Velescu, **The Kretzulescu Palace and Its Surroundings: Yesterday and Today** (Bucharest: UNESCO-CEPES, 2002).

businessman turned academic, currently a lecturer in the School of Commerce and International Business Studies at the University of Ulster, who considers, despite his background and specialization, that higher education should *not* be run like a business. Given Milliken's background, his critique carries added weight.

The American scholars, J. Bruce Burke, Professor *Emeritus* at Michigan State University, and Michelle Johnstone, Dean of the College of Education and Human Services at Ferris State University in Michigan, continue the critique of post-modern higher education, evoking, in particular, the decline, for a number of reasons, in the quality of the American public school system leading to its failure to prepare students, particularly minority group students from less well-off families, for university admission. Here, indeed, the authors reflect the themes of previous issues of **Higher Education in Europe** and of various authors who have dealt with the broad question of access and admission to higher education, the diversification of students, and in particular, the admission of students from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Moreover, argue Burke and Johnstone, the universities, too, are suffering, increasingly less able to provide the education in the liberal arts necessary to ground young people in the culture and ethics of a democratic society. They decry the fact that in American universities credentialing is considered to be more important than educating.

The Portuguese scholar, Professor Belmiro Gil Cabrito of the University of Lisbon in Portugal, whose article follows, is hardly less pessimistic, so far as his country is concerned, about democratic access to higher education and the role of higher education in democratizing society as a whole. Examining recent statistics on the social background of entrants to higher education, including entrants to the new private universities in Portugal, he concludes that higher education, particularly university education, is reserved, primarily because of the costs involved, to the traditional élites of the country and that the new private institutions, with their high fees, serve only to absorb the less qualified but financially well-off students who are unable to pass the entrance examinations for the State faculties. The working class is still relatively excluded from Portuguese higher education.

Turning to a different country, the Netherlands, the Dutch scholars, S. Beekhoven of the University of Nijmegen, and U. de Jong and H. Van Hout, of the University of Amsterdam, who examine the presence of ethnic minority students in Dutch higher education, are optimistic about the rate of recruitment of such students into higher education and their success as students.

Moving on to the theme of evaluation and assessment of higher education, we have selected a comparative study by the Finnish professor, Jussi Välimaa, of the University of Jyväskylä, and the Argentine professor, Marcela Mollis, of the University of Buenos Aires, of the social functions of the evaluation of higher education in their respective countries. They conclude that, although both countries created national systems of evaluation in response to international trends and forces, the resulting evaluation bodies and their functioning, although reflecting general international ideas on the subject as well as models, are not applications of a global model. Rather, the social and political roles of evaluation in both countries reflect local conditions and institutional traditions, eliciting varying degrees of trust on the part of the higher education institutions in the two countries in regard to their respective central authorities.

Questions of higher education governance and applications of the "New Public Management" are discussed by an international team composed of three Norwegian scholars: Åse Gornitzka and Bjørn Stensaker of the Norwegian Institute for Studies In Higher Education and Research, Jens-Christian Smeby, of the Center for the Studies of Professions of the University of Oslo, and one Dutch scholar, Harry de Boer, of the

Center for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) of the University of Twente. They offer a comparative study of ministerial steering of higher education by means of contracts linking the respective ministries of education with the individual higher education institutions in Finland, Sweden, and Denmark and the ways by which the contracts have led to decentralized accountability. They conclude with the remark that what pushed governments into promoting contractual relationships with higher education institutions was lack of trust in the preceding forms of governance and steering; however, a contractual system, in order to function well, requires a very high level of principal/agent trust.

Another Norwegian scholar, Terje Naess, a Researcher at the Norwegian Institute for Studies in Higher Education and Research, takes up the question of the labour market for the graduates of higher education institutions. Naess, who examines the market for higher education graduates in Norway and has measured the increase in unemployment among graduates throughout the 1990s as the number of graduates, per capita, has increased, presents several explanations for this phenomenon and a rather pessimistic conclusion that the situation will improve only slightly in the future.

Finally, we reach the theme of the role and, rapidly increasing, importance of the New Information Technologies in all aspects of higher education and research. Given that traditional higher education and virtual higher education will both continue to exist and to mutually reinforce each other, the French specialists, Philippe C. Trigano and Ecaterina Giacomini-Pacurar, both of the University of Technology of Compiègne in France, have contributed a discussion of a method that they have developed to evaluate pedagogical hypermedia for use in university-level teaching. They point out that, if not developed so as to be very user-friendly as well as sophisticated, such media will be rejected by learners. The ideal is for learners to profit from both traditional and virtual teaching and learning methods.

We bring our thematic reflections to a close with an article by the Swedish scholar, Frederik Bondestam, of the University of Uppsala. It deals with a theme that is completely new to the pages of **Higher Education in Europe**, that of sexual harassment in higher education. Specifically, Bondestam adopts a semiological perspective to explore the effects of discourse as it relates to sexual harassment in a Swedish higher education setting. According to him, the problem is more widespread than is suggested by the numbers of incidents of sexual harassment formally chronicled in official reports generated by the Swedish Equal Opportunities Ombudsman. He blames this discrepancy on bureaucratic and linguistic obfuscation and the unwillingness to view the matter as more than a question of “bodily sensations” to the exclusion of such manifestations as “discomfort, uneasiness, invisibility, ridicule, and the like”.

Given the nature of this issue of the review, we have not included a “Tribune” section; however, we end in the usual way with a well-garnished “Book Reviews and Studies” section. The first study is by Eric Gilder, our Reviews Editor, who is also a Professor at the Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu in Romania. The other is by Peter Wells, a Programme Specialist who joined the UNESCO-CEPES international staff in March 2003.

The next issue of **Higher Education in Europe**, no. 2, 2004, will deal with “Entrepreneurial Studies in Higher Education”.

Jan Sadlak
Director of UNESCO-CEPES