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## Higher Education Reform: Signs From the End of the Century International Debate

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### Abstract

During the last ten years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there has been an extensive debate on the worldwide problem of higher education. This article aims at identifying some of the outstanding speakers who have greater impact; as well as briefly summarizing the lines of discussion present in the debate. The text is divided into two sections. The first one deals with the role of different international organizations in defining the public policies on higher education, particularly in Mexico and the Latin American region. The second one includes a commented description of three national cases, where some pronouncements emerged after the constitution of special commissions for the study of higher education: The French case, the United Kingdom's and the United States' case.

*Key words:* University reform, higher education. International organizations, The Attali Report, The Dearing Report, The Boyer Report.

### Introduction

Over the course of the last ten years of the twentieth century a widespread debate has opened up regarding the problems of higher education in the world. This has been happening everywhere: in the most highly developed countries as in the most underdeveloped ones; in environments of well-defined national public policies and on the turf of international organizations, corporations and the multilateral bank. It has to do with a phenomenon in the evolutionary process, in which a multiplicity of voices has arisen to confront postures, models and solutions leading toward a revolution in the university system.

This article aims at identifying some of the speakers having greatest visibility and impact, as well as briefly summarizing the lines of discussion present in the debates. The question of academic reform has been left out of this review, since it merits a deeper look, with different objectives from those found in this work. Also, as the title of this paper suggests, the reader will more properly find here a guide for exploring the debate, rather than a balanced view of the themes and proposals derived from it.

The text is divided into two sections. The first deals with the role of various international organizations in defining public policies on higher education. While the article takes a look at the whole panorama, the major emphasis is on Latin America, and on Mexico in particular. The second section contains an annotated description of three national situations that have produced statements proceeding from the work of special commissions set up to study higher education; the case of France, based on the Report of the Attali Commission; the case of the United Kingdom, on the Dearing Report; and last, the case of the United States, on that of the Boyer Commission Report.

## **1. The international organizations for promotion of education and university reform**

In this section four cases are reviewed: a) international consensus agencies related to educational policy (UNESCO, OEI); b) international organizations for university collaboration (AIU, UDUAL, IUO); c) the multilateral bank (World Bank and IDB); and d) international assistance organizations (ECLAC, OECD).

### **a) UNESCO and other international consensus agencies related to educational policy**

On October 24, 1945, at the end of the Second World War, the United Nations (UN) was established through a treaty signed by 51 countries committed to preserving peace through international cooperation and collective security.<sup>1</sup> The UN is organized into six agencies: the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Administration Council, the Secretariat and the International Court of Justice; each one of these carries out specific duties having to do with the UN's general purposes.

In addition, affiliated with the UN are several "specialized agencies" with special purposes and operational modes. Among these are: The International Labor Organization, ILO (1919); the Food and Agriculture Organization, FAO (1945); the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO (1946); The World Health Organization, WHO (1948); the World Bank Group (1944); the International Monetary Fund (1944), and others.<sup>2</sup> Of special importance is the fact that these agencies are autonomous organizations linked with the UN through special treaties, and that the agreements each of them signs constitute a commitment to the member countries.

This is the case with UNESCO, formed in November of 1946<sup>3</sup> by 37 charter-member countries, rapidly joined by others. One hundred eighty-eight countries belong to UNESCO at present. Its main purpose is to “promote universal education, cultural development, environmental protection, cultural heritage, scientific collaboration, together with freedom of the press and communication.” In UNESCO’s constitution, the member countries assumed the ideology of procuring “unlimited and equal educational opportunities” together with the unrestricted quest for “objective truth and free interchange of ideas and knowledge”. Some countries have chosen to pull out of the alliance; the United States did so in 1984, the United Kingdom and Singapore in 1985.

At various stages of its history UNESCO has emphasized different aspects of the educational problem. In the eighties, therefore, the organization concentrated on the theme of universal primary education. In the nineties, especially during the second half of the decade, the predominating theme was higher education.

The World Conference on Education was held in October of 1998. It was the culmination of a process begun by UNESCO in 1995 with the publication of the document *Change and Development in Higher Education*. Between 1996 and 1998 there were regional conferences in many parts of the world. The purpose of these was to collect the opinions and points of view of academic communities, leaders, civic groups, government agencies and others regarding four key themes: relevance; quality; financing and administration; and collaboration. These themes formed the basic agenda for the following conferences: Havana (November, 1996), Dakar (April, 1997), Tokyo (July, 1997), Palermo (September, 1997) and Beirut (March, 1998). In addition to these conferences, two more meetings of experts were organized on a regional level: that of the European Council (Strasbourg, July, 1998), and that of the congress of the North American States in Toronto (April, 1998). Canada and the United States participated, and representatives from Mexico and Puerto Rico were present.

At the World Conference, there were presented several documents defining the posture of UNESCO on the state of higher education, both at the present time, and with a view to the future.<sup>4</sup> Among the themes addressed was the role of universities in the generation and transmission of relevant knowledge; the training of useful and responsible professionals and technicians; the shaping of identity and the transmission of universal values; the promotion of social mobility and the generation of coequal social opportunities. Moreover, there was discussion on the subject of the social and cultural responsibility of institutions of higher learning in the face of national problems.

The theme of access to higher education is central in the documentary body of the Conference. Regarding this, there was an emphasis on governmental responsibility for extending access opportunities to the different social groups which make up each country. As to financing, it was stated that the institutions of higher learning should have sufficient resources for teaching and carrying on

research, and that the State has prime responsibility for financing public higher education, although other social agencies should also assume a commitment.<sup>5</sup>

Another organization with purposes similar to those of UNESCO, and with a similar sort of identity as an inter-governmental educational consensus agency, is the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture, the OEI. This international organization was founded in 1949 as the Office of Iberoamerican Education. It has achieved greater status during the nineties, through its function as the “educational arm” of summit meetings in the Iberoamerican region. These summits have taken place yearly since 1991. Since the First Iberoamerican Conference of Government and Heads of State (Guadalajara, 1991), the OEI has in effect set up and promoted Conferences of Ministers of Education, as a means of preparing for these summit meetings. It has also been in charge of carrying out those educational, scientific and cultural programs delegated to it.

#### **b) International organizations for university collaboration**

UNESCO has affiliated organizations that share its ideals and mission. It counts on these for the development of programs by region, sector, modality, or educational level. In the area of higher education, the International Association of Universities, founded in 1950, occupies this position. One hundred fifty countries currently belong to it. Although the AIU's *raison d'être* is the promotion of connections between institutions of higher learning, throughout its history it has functioned as an important forum for the discussion of problems of higher education, above all, the diffusion of ideas regarding university reform.<sup>6</sup> The Eleventh General Conference of the Association will take place in Durban, South Africa in August of this year. The Conference is called “Universities, pathway to the future”: The role of the university in values formation and the transmission of knowledge will be discussed, as well as the institutions' forms of government and their relationship to society and the State.

In the Latin American region the most important participating international organization is the Union of Latin American Universities (UDUAL), created on September 22, 1949 by an agreement at the First Congress of Latin American Universities at San Carlos University in Guatemala. Since 1962 Mexico City has been the permanent seat of its Secretary General on the UNAM campus. Outstanding among UDUAL's objectives are these: to promote the interchange of knowledge through professional meetings, seminars, encounters and assemblies, and to participate in the debate on university reform.<sup>7</sup> UDUAL has had political relevance at times when the affiliated universities have been pressured by authoritarian governments, and at the junctures of institutional crises it has come out in defense of academic values and university self-government.

Another international organization linking institutions of higher learning for the purpose of cooperation and interchange is the Interamerican University Organization (IUO), founded in 1980 within the framework of US intrahemispheric cooperation policy. Affiliated with it at present are 390 institutions in Canada, the US, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Between 1980 and 1999, IUO has held eleven general conferences and established a series of instruments for cooperation. These include the Institute of University Management Leadership (IGLU), the Distance Education Consortium, the Interamerican Water Resources Network, the IGLU Magazine, the Interamerican Network for Environmental Quality and the College of the Americas.

### **c) The Multilateral Bank**

Today it is impossible to avoid the presence of diagnoses and recommendations issued by the international, multilateral bank regarding aspects of the political, economic and social conduct of its members and creditors. Institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have actively participated in promoting programs for social adjustment and national reform which have been implemented in underdeveloped countries. This began in the seventies, and became more intense during the eighties and nineties. The World Bank (WB),<sup>8</sup> founded in 1944, has played a major role in prefiguring policies and developmental strategies every time their implementation and follow-up has represented a condition favoring favored the affluence of specific credits regarding programs of development. Unlike the International Monetary Fund, which recommends achieving certain goals and macroeconomic levels, the World Bank's promotion policies are presently defined by the priorities of specific economic and social policies: human development and education, environmental protection, promotion of private sector growth, promotion of economic reform, investment multiplication and poverty reduction. The WB defines itself as "the principal investor in social sectors".

In spite of this, as stated in its own words, the WB promotes the objectives of teaching literacy skills, combating educational backwardness, and financing elementary education. In the last decade this credit institution has been interested in the promotion of projects having to do with higher education. It therefore published, in 1993-1994, a basic document demonstrating the WB's focus on the theme *Higher Education: The Lessons of Experience*, an obligatory point of reference in the international debate over the evolution of higher educational systems. The document's extensive diagnostic section underscores social inequalities as well as the detrimental effect of the lower quality levels and loss of relevance that accompanied gearing the concept of a university education to a mass market—a process which took place in the seventies and eighties. It argues that this process of educational mass-production, which became established under public subsidy, depleted resources the States might have used for expansion and advancement in excellence. In its section on recommendations and conclusions the document points out the consequent need to support forms of growth and development that can be sustained economically, are politically viable, and are academically differentiated and diversified.

In Latin America, besides the conspicuous presence of the World Bank, there has been a significant amount of participation by the Inter-American Development Bank. This bank was established in December of 1959 with the purpose of

“promot(ing) economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean”. During the decades of the sixties and seventies, the Bank was a key organization in the financing of social projects having to do with health and education, in the context of expanding international credit for developing countries, and conforming to international policies such as those of the USA’s “Alliance for Progress”.

We should remember that from the end of the seventies and continuing throughout the following decade, the participation of the IDB was very conspicuous in Latin-American university expansion, at a time when both UNESCO and the World Bank were recommending and supporting literacy projects and plans for elementary education. In recent years the IDB has revived this priority, and has provided loans and financing for projects supporting university research and technological development. One example is the loan granted to the National University in 1997 through the UNAM-IDB agreement.

In addition to its promoting its objectives through financial instruments, the IDB functions as an agency for recommending economic and social policies. On the subject of higher education, we can cite a recent document showing the Bank’s position in regard to this material. This paper is called “Strategy of higher education”. It was published at the beginning of 1997, and was formally considered by the Executive Board and the Administration of the IDB in November of the same year. The document describes the criteria used by the IDB when considering higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean, and proposes a strategy for action which the Bank itself could implement for the purpose of promoting educational improvement. Furthermore, it analyzes the thematic tendencies of prevailing policy in the various nations, and presents the Bank’s posture toward those results obtained up to now, as well as toward whatever reform it considers suitable. The last section touches aspects of the reform which are possible objects of direct assistance from the Bank; these are, among others, the thrust toward advanced technical teaching, the development of instrumentality for distance instruction; projects for quality improvement, support for those institutions which develop basic and applied research, and aid for higher education in the private sector.

#### **d) International advisory organizations**

Deserving of mention in this last group are the organizations whose purpose is to carry out studies, design diagnostic programs and data bases, etc., as well as to make general and specific recommendations relevant to the reform of higher education. Of special importance among these organizations, are the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

The first of these, ECLAC, was established in 1948 as one of the five regional commissions of the United Nations. During the seventies, the era of developmentalism in Latin America, ECLAC played a part in shaping ideology and in designing economic and social strategies of prime importance in generating

theories, models and strategies consonant with the principles of endogenous industrial development and the social distribution of wealth. With the decline of the developmentalist regimes and the consequent irruption of the Latin-American authoritarianism of the seventies and eighties, ECLAC 's leadership in this field declined. Nonetheless, ECLAC was, and continues to be a relevant part of the milieu of Latin American social and economic thought.

Since the sixties ECLAC has provided, in the field of education, a forum for groups and projects that formulate analyses and develop strategies impacting the region's public policies. We should mention, by way of example, the "*Proyecto Desarrollo y Educación en América Latina y el Caribe*" ("Project for Development and Education in Latin America and the Caribbean"), led by Germán Rama and Juan Carlos Tedesco in the seventies. From this came a fertile collection of documents, books and reports on the theme, notable among are which the collections "*Educación y Sociedad en América Latina y el Caribe*" ("Education and Society in Latin America and the Caribbean") (1980) and "*Desarrollo y Educación en América Latina y el Caribe*" ("Development and Education in Latin America and the Caribbean") (1987). The texts produced by this group were pivotal in the Latin-American educational debate of the seventies and eighties.

At the beginning of the nineties, ECLAC published the volume "*Educación y conocimiento: eje de la transformación productiva con equidad*" ("Education and Knowledge: the Crux of Productive Transformation with Equity") (1992), which expresses the Commission's new point of view and proposes the necessity for supporting and promoting general and technological higher education as an essential strategy for encouraging autonomous economic and social development.

In the nineties, around the middle of the decade, Mexico was admitted as a member of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, founded in 1960 as part of the policy framework when the developed European nations were forming the European Economic Community. Today OECD contains 29 countries; first, a few European countries came together, after which the USA, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Finland, Mexico, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and Korea joined. The forecast was that other countries from the old soviet bloc, from Asia and from Latin American would join soon.

OECD may be defined as a forum for the discussion, development and perfecting of economic and social policies, by means of which the member states can compare experiences, search for answers to common problems and work together in a coordinated and cooperative manner on projects of national and international scope. Through the organization's meetings the states can arrive at formal accords. More frequently, however, these meetings serve for the discussion and clarification of development strategies which each country can choose to put into practice or to modify according to its own interests.

In addition to functioning as a forum for debate, OECD offers its associates professional advisory services, counsel on the development of means and models

and on diagnoses and critical evaluation of the state of some key sectors of their political, social and economic organization. The governments contract the organization's services, and groups of international experts carry out the respective diagnostic tasks, gathering on-site information, interviewing key informants and proposing discussion sessions and seminars. Based on this material, reports are produced containing, usually, a diagnostic section and a group of recommendations for change.

Using this methodology, OECD made a broad diagnosis of higher education in Mexico which was published in 1997 under the title "*Exámenes de las políticas nacionales de educación. Mexico, Educación Superior*" ("Examinations of National Education Policies: Mexico, Higher Education"), and which is composed of two parts. The first contains the study carried out by a group of Mexican experts, and the second is the report of the OECD examiners. Among other recommendations they propose: distinguish clearly the modalities composing the cycle of higher learning in the Mexican educational system; support the processes under way for diversification and institutional differentiation; support the processes under way for the de-concentration and decentralization of the system; promote the existence of a stable body of teachers and full-time researchers; foster the training and ongoing education of academic and research personnel; foster the forward movement of the disciplines of basic, applied and technological science; support the establishment of institutions of intermediate professional learning; promote postgraduate work; promote the diversification of public financing, support curricular innovation and the use of new means of open and distance learning.

## **2. National perspectives on the reform in higher education: France, the United Kingdom, and the United States of North America**

In addition to the lines of debate and proposals derived from the action of international organizations promoting education, it is important to consider perspectives arising from the formation of groups whose task is to make diagnoses and recommendations concerning systems of national higher education. There are many such groups, but some of the most relevant, because they have concentrated discussion in the areas of policy definition for higher education as well as the academic world, are: France's Attali Report, the United Kingdom's Dearing Report, and the United States of North America's Boyer report.

Clearly, these are not documents of "public policy"; rather, in all three cases, reports are made by independent State academic bodies, who make recommendations to the government and to the institutions. Some of these recommendations are being adopted. Others will be, and still others will surely not be carried out. But it seems important to me to emphasize not so much the tendencies toward implementation, as the possibilities opened by means of a work method which differs from external recommendations or the design of policies born in government agencies.

### **a) France. The Jacques Attali Report**

In July of 1997 the Minister of National Education, Science and Technology gave Jacques Attali, as a counselor of the State, the task of forming an independent group of intellectuals<sup>9</sup> (the majority from the academic sector, among them Alain Touraine, Georges Charpak and Julia Dristeva, although some are also from the business sector) for the purpose of discussing the following questions and giving an informed answer to them. The questions are:

1. The missions of the French system of higher education (in universities and high schools) are the education of students, the training of future professionals, the development of research potential, and participation in ongoing education. What should be the operational hierarchy among these missions?
2. How should the present system of French higher education develop? Should the relationships between the universities and high schools be modified?
3. How can social mobility be improved by means of the French system of higher education? Is it necessary to reduce or to augment the proportion occupied by the high schools, to open specific options for graduates of technological schools, establish quotas, etc.?
4. What should be the result of an examination of the quality of the university system, as well as that of the high schools?
5. What concrete means will permit the creation of a greater harmonization of the French system of higher education with the rest of the European systems so as to permit the interchange of students?

The result of this consultation was disclosed in a document of approximately 100 pages titled "For a European Model of Higher Education" (*"Pour un Modèle Européen d'Enseignement Supérieur"*). The first part of the report offers a diagnosis of higher education in France, and emphasizes the challenges imposed by technological competition and global exchange. Next, it approaches the question of functional hierarchy, to which the Commission gives the following answer:

1. Permit every student to reach his/her own level of excellence (no student entering the university should leave it without a diploma).
2. Advance in knowledge (Research-Teaching).
3. Adapt the professions to the demands of the future and to the spirit of enterprise.
4. Maintain permanent knowledge.
5. Foment the progress of social justice.
6. Accelerate the opening of the world.
7. [Work] toward a European model.

The report continues with three principles for the reorganization of the system:

1. A homogenous and diversified system.
2. A decentralized and contractual system (new form of government, democratic administration).
3. Efficient and transparent evaluation.

The third part is dedicated to a restatement of the cycles of higher education with the following program: a) Bachelors (Bac + 3) of three years' duration, general training and professional specialization; b) New Masters (Bac + 5) two years: six months of studies, six of practice, and one year of research or complementary studies; c) Doctorate (Bac + 8): first year: multi-disciplinary training; second: specialized training and beginning research (right to a Masters); third: research and thesis.

Of course the report insists on harmonizing the French system with tendencies of higher education in Europe, for the promotion of student and teacher interchange and for scientific cooperation.

In its concluding section the report insists that for viability, such a reform must have State recognition as a priority and even of national necessity, and that consequently the nation must channel increasing resources to higher education through State apportionments, as well as through contributions from regional communities and the business sector.

#### **b) The United Kingdom: The Dearing Report**

The report was made in 1997 by a commission (National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education) headed by Sir Ron Dearing, with the task of "making concrete recommendations for enabling the British educational system to satisfy the necessities of the United Kingdom during the next 20 years".

The Committee was composed of 17 representatives of various sectors interested in higher education.<sup>10</sup> Among the members were several university chancellors, academic notables, businessmen, a bank president, and even a representative of a student council. The Committee had bipartisan financing, and was charged with examining questions related to the purposes, means, structure, size, financial sources, evaluation process, etc., of British higher education.

The final report is very long (over 1700 pages counting the central text, the thematic reports, plus annexes and appendices). It has a diagnostic section, a reflection on the university problem in the United Kingdom and England in particular, and a series of points considered and recommended for prompt action. There are almost a hundred of these last, and they include many different things: the university's mission, its organization, forms of government, evaluation and quality control, student matriculation, financing, distributive aspects, links, etc.

To illustrate the type of recommendations expressed by the Commission I will take time to mention some which are of particular relevance:

Recommendation 1. "We recommend to the Government that it should have a long term strategic aim of responding to increased demand for higher education, much of which we expect to be at sub-degree level."

Recommendation 8: “We recommend that, with immediate effect, all institutions of higher education give high priority to developing and implementing learning and teaching strategies which focus on the promotion of students’ learning.”

Recommendation 16: “We recommend that all institutions of higher education should, over the medium term, review the programmes they offer:

- with a view to securing a better balance between breadth and depth across programmes than currently exists;
- so that all undergraduate programmes include sufficient breadth to enable specialists to understand their specialism within its context.”

Recommendation 21: “We recommend that institutions of higher education begin immediately to develop, for each programme they offer, a ‘programme specification’ which identifies potential stopping-off points and gives the intended outcomes of the programme in terms of:

- the knowledge and understanding that a student will be expected to have upon completion;
- key skills: communication, numeracy, the use of information technology and learning how to learn;
- cognitive skills, such as an understanding of methodologies or ability in critical analysis;
- subject specific skills, such as laboratory skills.”

Recommendation 35: “We recommend to the Government that it should establish, as soon as possible, a high level independent body to advise the Government on the direction of national policies for the public funding of research in higher education, on the distribution and level of such funding, and on the performance of the public bodies responsible for distributing it.”

Recommendation 46: “We recommend that by 2000/01 higher education institutions should ensure that all students have open access to a Networked Desktop Computer, and expect that by 2005/06 all students will be required to have access to their own portable computer.”

Recommendation 71: “We recommend to the Government that, over the long term, public spending on higher education should increase with the growth in Gross Domestic Product.”

Recommendation 88: “We recommend to the Government that, in five years’ time and subsequently every ten years, it constitutes a UK-wide independent advisory committee with the task of assessing the state of higher education; advising the Government on its financing and on ways in which, in future years, it can best respond to national needs; on any action that may be needed to safeguard the

character and autonomy of institutions; and, in particular, on any changes required in the level of student support and contributions from graduates in employment.”

### **c) The United States of North America: the Boyer Report**

In 1995, under the patronage of the Carnegie Foundation for Educational Advancement, the National Commission on Undergraduate Education in Research Universities was created in the US. The Commission was headed by Ernest L. Boyer, president of the Foundation, and was made up of a dozen academics, intellectuals and distinguished scientists,<sup>11</sup> among them two Nobel prize winners, the president of the National Academy of Sciences and several presidents of public and private universities.

The result of the Commission's labors, published in 1998, is titled *The Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University. Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America's Research Universities*. This, translated freely and approximately to our system of higher education, would be something like “re-inventing the Bachelor's Degree in research universities.”

In this case, as in the previous ones, the starting point is a critical diagnosis of the state of higher education in the country. By and large it indicates that a review of the strengths of the North American higher education system, in particular the education of postgraduate students in research universities, shows that the undergraduate level is little less than a disaster. The university graduate who does not go on with postgraduate studies is deficient in professional competencies, has little creativity, and has few tools for continuing his/her training outside the university framework.

Although the Boyer report, which is shorter than the reports previously cited, devotes little time to immediate solutions and specific recommendations, it does sketch an ideal scenario toward which those concerned with the education of undergraduates, particularly in research universities, ought to strive. Regarding this, it points out: “By admitting a student, any college or university commits itself to provide maximal opportunities for intellectual and creative development. These should include” (p. 12) according to the Commission:

- Opportunities to learn through inquiry rather than simple transmission of knowledge.
- Training in the skills necessary for oral and written communication at a level that will serve the student both within the university and in postgraduate professional and personal life.
- Appreciation of arts, humanities, sciences, and social sciences, and the opportunity to experience them at any intensity and depth the student can accommodate.
- Careful and comprehensive preparation for whatever may lie beyond graduation, whether it be graduate school, professional school, or first professional position (p. 12).

The report adds that research universities ought to assure the following additional rights:

- Expectation of and opportunity for work with talented senior researchers to help and guide the student's efforts.
- Access to first-class facilities in which to pursue research—laboratories, libraries, studios, computer systems, and concert halls.
- Many options among fields of study and directions to move within those fields, including areas and choices not found in other kinds of institutions.
- Opportunities to interact with people of backgrounds, cultures, and experiences different from the student's own and with pursuers of knowledge at every level of accomplishment, from freshmen students to senior research faculty (pp. 12-13).

In sum, concludes the Report

The research university must facilitate inquiry in such contexts as the library, the laboratory, the computer, and the studio, with the expectation that senior learners, that is, professors, will be students' companions and guides. The research university owes every student an integrated educational experience in which the totality is deeper and more comprehensive than can be measured by earned credits (p. 13).

The Commission says, "The research university's ability to create such an integrated education will produce a particular kind of individual, one equipped with a spirit of inquiry and a zest for problem solving; one possessed of the skill in communication that is the hallmark of clear thinking as well as mastery of language; one informed by a rich and diverse experience. It is that kind of individual that will provide the scientific, technological, academic, political, and creative leadership for the next century" (p. 13).

## **Conclusion**

We have tried throughout this report to present some of the contributing principles which nourish the contemporary debate over university reform on an international level. Surely the readers' interest will help to complete this necessarily elementary and fragmentary panorama.

In conclusion, I would simply like to note the conspicuous emphasis given to higher education as a decisive developmental factor in the various documents we have examined. Belonging to this same movement are the new attitudes of organizations like the World Bank regarding systems of higher education in the developing world (see the document "Higher Education in Developing Countries: Peril and Promise"), published by the WB in March of 2000.

It is important then to take notice of this world movement in order to evaluate the proposals for university reform which in our country are formulated with an eye to

the approaching change of government. We can say in passing that the ANUIES has begun to propose reform as an objective for Mexico's higher education in its recent document "Higher Education in the Twenty-first Century: Strategic Lines of Development" (ANUIES, March 2000). In a following contribution, which we propose as a second part of this article, we will examine that document in the context of the proposals for change which are taking place on the international scene.

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## References and links

### 1. Some books and articles on the theme:

Allende, C. M. de, Díaz, G. y Gallardo, C. (1999). *La educación superior en México y en los países en vías de desarrollo desde la óptica de los organismos internacionales*. México: ANUIES (Serie Documentos).

**Comment.** This has an analysis of the proposals regarding higher education by the International Council for Educational Development (CIDE); the Organization for Cooperation and Economic Development (OECD); the World Bank (WB); the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC); and the Regional Center for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (CRESALC).

URL: <http://www.anui.es.mx/anui.es/libros98/lib30/0.htm>

Kent, R. (1996). *The World Bank and UNESCO on Higher Education*, International Higher Education, en:  
[http://www.bc.edu/bc\\_org/avp/soe/cihe/direct1/News4/text2.html](http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/soe/cihe/direct1/News4/text2.html)

**Comment:** The author systematically analyzes the content of UNESCO and the World Bank's proposals regarding higher education. He compares them, describing the proposals as relating to a series of themes they have in common.

## 2. UNESCO

2.1. UNESCO's website is located at: <http://www-unesco.org/>

2.2. The site which contains all the documents of the World Conference on Higher Education (UNESCO, Paris, 1998).

URL: <http://www.unesco.org/education/educprog/wche/index.html>

### 3. Organization of Iberoamerican States

3.1. The website for OEI is found at: <http://www.oei.es>

**4. Attali Report** [Rapport de la Commission Jacques Attali: “Pour un modèle européen d'enseignement supérieur”].

4.1. The complete document is found at the online address of the *Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de la Recherche et de la Technologie*; at: <http://education.gouv.fr/forum/attali.htm>

4.2. A synopsis of the document with observations on the case of Latin America is found in Helio Trinidad's article, “Por un modelo europeo de ensino superior: comentários ao 'Rapport Jacques Attali' sobre a reforma do ensino superior francês”, *Revista cipedes*, núm. 1, June 1998, at: <http://www.ilea.ufrgs.br/cipedes/n1/trinidad2.html>

4.3. An interesting site to visit with regard to this Report is the one called “Site de lutte des étudiants contre le rapport Attali”, at: <http://www.mygale.org/attali/>

**5. Dearing Report** [Dearing Report. The National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education: Higher Education in the Learning Society].

5.1. The complete document is found on a page of the University of Leeds, United Kingdom, at: <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/ncihe/>

5.2. The government's answer to the report was published under the title “Higher Education for the 21st Century”, and is found at: <http://www.lifelonglearning.co.uk/dearing/index.htm>

5.3. The British Open University put up a website for public debate on the report. It can be visited at: <http://d3e.open.ac.uk/Dearing/>

5.4. The University of Central Lancashire offers a page which contains the parliamentary debate on the report along with ample press coverage. See: <http://www.uclan.ac.uk/other/uso/plan/dearing.htm>

5.5. A commentary on the report with a Latin-American focus may be seen in Valdemar Sguissardi's article “O Dearing Report: Mudanças na educação superior britânica?”; “pre-print” version published by RISEU at:

<http://www.unam.mx/coordhum/riseu/Report.PDF>

**6. Boyer Report** [The Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America's Research Universities].

6.1. The complete report is on the website of the State University of New York, at: <http://notes.cc.sunysb.edu/Pres/boyer.nsf>

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<sup>1</sup> At the present time, 188 nations belong to the UN.

<sup>2</sup> The following agencies are affiliated with the UN under the statute of Specialized Agencies: the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the Universal Postal Union (UPU), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU); the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), The International Maritime Organisation (IMO), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and The International Atomic Energy Organization (IAEO).

<sup>3</sup> UNESCO's predecessors were the following organizations: the International Committee for Intellectual Cooperation (1922-1946), International Bureau of Education (1925-1968).

<sup>4</sup> These are: "Higher Education in the Twenty-first Century: Vision and Action, Summary"; "Towards and Agenda 21 for Higher Education (sic); " World Declaration on Higher Education for the twenty-first Century: Vision and Action", y "Higher Education in the Twenty-first Century: Vision and Action: Working Document".

<sup>5</sup> A report of the Conference was prepared by the author of this article and Publisher in 1997 in the *Revista Mexicana de Investigación Educativa*, vol. 1, number 4.

<sup>6</sup> Especially through its magazine *Higher Education Policy*, a quarterly publication having as its purpose the dissemination of the principal lines of academic debate on higher education in the world.

<sup>7</sup> UDUAL publishes, for this purpose, the magazine *Universidades*, which has wide distribution through the libraries of the institutions of higher learning affiliated with the Union.

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<sup>8</sup> The World Banking Group is composed of the following institutions: the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development (IBRD); the International Development Association (IDA); the International Finance Corporation (IFC); the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA); and the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID).

<sup>9</sup> Pascal Brandys (P.D.G. GENSET); Georges Charpak (Professeur); Serge Feneuille (Conseiller du Président de LA FARGE); Axel Kahn (Professeur); Julia Kristeva (Professeur Paris VII); Michel Lazduski (Professeur Institut Universitaire de France); Michel-Edouard Leclerc (Président Société GALEC); Nicole Le Douarin (Professeur Collège de France); Colette Lewiner (P.D.G.); Christiane Marchello Nizia (Professeur ENS); Francis Mer (P.D.G. USINOR); Jérôme Monod (Président du Conseil de surveillance Suez-Lyonnaise des Eaux); René Pellat (Professeur École Polytechnique); Alain Touraine (Professeur E.H.E.S.S.).

<sup>10</sup> Professor John Arbuthnott (Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Strathclyde); Baroness Dean of Thornton-le-Fylde (formerly Brenda Dean); Sir Ron Dearing (Chairman); Ms Judith Evans Departmental (Director of Personnel Policy, Sainsbury's); Sir Ron Garrick (Managing Director and Chief Executive of Weir Group); Sir Geoffrey Holland (Vice-Chancellor of the University of Exeter); Professor Diana Laurillard (Pro Vice-Chancellor /Technology Development/ of the Open University); Mrs Pamela Morris (Headteacher, The Blue School, Wells); Sir Ronald Oxburgh (Rector of Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine); Dr. David Potter (Chairman of Psion plc); Sir George Quigley (Chairman of Ulster Bank); Sir William Stubbs (Rector of the London Institute); Sir Richard Sykes (Chairman and Chief Executive of Glaxo Wellcome plc); Professor David Watson (Director of the University of Brighton); Professor Sir David Weatherall (Regius Professor of Medicine at the University of Oxford); Professor Adrian Webb (Vice-Chancellor of the University of Glamorgan); Mr Simon Wright (Education and Welfare Officer, Students Union, the University of Wales College of Cardiff).

<sup>11</sup> Shirley Strum Kenny (President, State University of New York at Stony Brook); Bruce Alberts (President, National Academy of Sciences); Wayne C. Booth (Professor Emeritus of English and Rhetoric, University of Chicago); Milton Glaser (Designer, illustrator, and graphic artist); Charles E. Glassick (Senior Associate, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.); Stanley O. Ikenberry (President, American Council on Education); Kathleen Hall Jamieson (Dean, Annenberg School of Communication, University of Pennsylvania); Robert M. O'Neil (Director, The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression, and Professor of Law, University of Virginia); Carolynn Reid-Wallace (Senior Vice President for Education and Programming, Corporation for Public Broadcasting); Chang-Lin Tien (Chancellor Emeritus and N.E.C. Distinguished Professor of Engineering, University of California at Berkeley); Chen Ning Yang (Director, Institute for Theoretical Physics and Albert Einstein Professor of Physics, State University of New York at Stony Brook).