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When agreements for academic cooperation are signed by university presidents, the setting and formalities have all the trappings of an international agreement. The signing, as with all treaties, represents significant groundwork laid by institutional representatives. The celebratory moment is not always followed by sustainable relationships, and expectations are sometimes met with deep disappointment. The result can have a negative impact on institutional as well as national relations, although the latter may be an unintended consequence.

While colleges and universities must adhere to national laws and are wise to be well-aware of local customs, they operate mainly on their own reconnaissance when agreements are signed. In this dimension, they are moving beyond sovereignty but they may still be regarded as national representatives. For this vein of public diplomacy, it is extremely important, just as in official diplomatic negotiations, so that institutions develop protocols that recognize all the details, promises, and expectations that are critical to both parties before signing. And when unexpected developments cause tensions, it will be equally important to have ways to adjudicate these issues.

In the practice of diplomacy as well as domination, countries have extended their national interests through education.

SOUND DIPLOMACY FOR STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

It would be safe to say that in most educational diplomacy there are mixed motives for seeking engagement. The search for fee-paying students is a leading reason for greater cross-border activity. Institutions and governments in countries with well-developed higher education are creating initiatives to receive students from many developing countries. Some universities in spite of less well-developed higher education seek relationships with other institutions they view as more prestigious to increase their chances of a higher degree in global rankings.

Countering these more narrow motivations for engagement, many institutions are developing broader internationalization strategies, to seek cooperative agreements that define themselves as global institutions. They may want to pursue a variety of goals through engagement—to enrich their academic programs, enlarge the knowledge and experience base for their students, host a more internationally diverse student body and faculty, provide more opportunities for their faculty to join international research networks,

and ultimately to develop a wide spectrum of joint activity that will benefit both partners. As with all sustainable relationships, the character of the parties and the ethical framework in which they operate are all important. Countries and institutions engaging in educational diplomacy have an obligation to consider the benefits—not merely to themselves but also to their partners. This will be in the best spirit of international relations and internationalization of higher education. If done well, it will be a rising tide that lifts all ships. ■

How Corruption Puts Higher Education at Risk

STEPHEN P. HEYNEMAN

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Competition for resources and fame place pressures on higher education institutions. Weaker institutions are more prone to corruption. In some instances, corruption has invaded university systems and threatens the reputation of research products and diplomas. Where this has occurred, corruption has reduced the individual and social economic rate of return on higher education investments. Some countries have acquired a reputation for academic dishonesty, raising questions about all graduates and doubts about all institutions.

Corruption can arise at the early stage of recruitment and admission. Students may feel they have to pay a shadow price, to be admitted to a particular university program. Some students pay bribes as an insurance policy, because they do not want to be left behind for not paying a bribe.

Financial fraud remains a major challenge. Reductions in public finance have affected systems of internal control to prevent fraud. Because each faculty may have separate cost centers, financial monitoring may be difficult. Nor is it easy to monitor student associations that handle money separately from the university administration.

Directly related to the global internet, access is an avalanche of so-called “degree mills”—thousands of them, located in all regions. There is a Wikipedia page that lists house pets that have earned degrees. How might one recognize a degree mill? They often promise a degree within a short amount of time and with low costs; they give credit for nonacademic experience; their Web sites often list their addresses as being a postbox. Equally, problematic are fake

accreditation agencies, promising quick assessments and permanent accreditation.

Cross-border educational programs raise questions in three areas: the recognition of degrees, the use of recruitment agents to encourage international students, and the establishment of programs abroad by institutions of dubious reputation. Though cross-border provision raises new risks of corruption, it may also be a conduit for cross-border integrity. Cross-border provision of excellence in higher education can offer a rare opportunity for local students and institutions to observe how a corrupt-free institution operates.

To attract students, institutions may exaggerate the success of their graduates. This may be a particular problem with the for-profit institutions and with particular low-quality programs in the vocations. Academic integrity consists of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, and responsibility and is fundamental to the reputation of academic institutions. A lack of integrity includes the practice of plagiarism, cheating, unauthorized use of others' work, paying for assignments claimed as one's own, the falsification of data,

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downloading assignments from the internet, the misrepresentation of records, and fraudulent publishing. It also includes paying for grades with gifts, money, or sexual favors.

AREAS NEEDING CAREFUL DISCUSSION

Definitional limits. When universities are not managed well, some suggest that it is a sign of corruption. Inefficiency, a concentration of power, slowness in making decisions, and a reluctance to share confidential information are not signs of corruption. When educational institutions seek nontraditional sources of income, some may confuse that with corruption—although wherever legal, it is not.

Differences in corruption levels. There are instances of corruption in every country, but this does not mean that corruption is distributed identically. In some circumstances it is endemic, affecting the entire system; in other cases it is occasional. In some circumstances it is monetary in nature;

in others it tends to center on professional transgressions, such as plagiarism. Where international students intend to study is relevant. In general, students act to leave places where corruption is rampant and prefer to study where it is minor.

Differences between institutional and individual corruption. Causes and solutions need to be differentiated. Institutional corruption—financial fraud, the illegal procurement of goods and services, and tax avoidance—are problems that can be handled through the enforcement of legislation. Individual corruption—including faculty misbehavior, cheating on examinations, plagiarism, the falsification of research results—constitutes transgressions of codes of professional conduct. In the first, the main control is through legislation and enforcement in court. In the second, control is internal to the university. Legislation should not attempt to include infractions of individual corruption, on behalf of individual students and faculty.

THE ENVIRONMENT AND CORRUPTION

Though competition for revenues places pressures on faculty, it is insufficient to use such pressures as an excuse to engage in corrupt practices. Nor, is it sufficient to suggest that, because corrupt behavior is common, one's own participation can be excused. Even in environments in which corruption is virtually universal there are "resisters" to corruption.

ARE ANTICORRUPTION MEASURES INTERNATIONAL?

Some individuals suggest that anticorruption measures should be based on domestic values and laws. Although numerous instances seem correct, there appear to be some instances in which universal measures are already the norm. For instance, in the case of universities ranked by the *Times Higher Education* magazine across 40 countries, 98 percent ethical infrastructure elements—on their Web sites—codes of conduct for faculty, students, and administrators honors councils.

FUTURE WORK

International agencies have an important role. Finding ways to combat higher education corruption is a viable candidate for the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's attention and extrabudgetary support. UNESCO could assist countries to establish strategies covering examination procedures, accountability and transparency codes, and adjudication structures, such as student and faculty courts of conduct.

The Council of Europe and the European Union have important roles. To participate in the Bologna process, universities and the countries seek to be recognized. The recognition procedure could include mechanisms to com-

bat corruption. Development assistance agencies also have important roles. Among criteria for project, approval might be the corruption infrastructure noted above. In addition, countries might be held accountable for their anticorruption performance, based on the evidence that corruption had declined, that the level of transparency had increased, and that the public perception of corruption had shifted downward.

In regular surveys, Transparency International has assisted the understanding of general corruption by gauging the degree to which a nation's business and government are believed to be corrupt. A similar set of indicators could be used on higher education. It could be a matter of pride, to find that the level of participation and the public perception of corruption are on the decline. If governments encourage such surveys, it is a healthy sign; if governments forbid such surveys, it is a sign that they have not yet understood the level of risk involved by being passive.

Perception is all-important. It is common to deny wrongdoing. "Where is the evidence?" one might ask. This is the wrong approach. When an institution is perceived to be corrupt, the damage is already done. Perception is the only evidence needed for harmful effects to occur. This is one reason why all world-class universities post anticorruption efforts on their Web sites. This implies that any university, in any culture, that has ambitions to become world class is required to erect a similar ethical infrastructure. This may require a change of attitude on the part of many rectors and university administrators. It may require them to shift from a mode of self-protection and denial to a mode of transparency and active engagement, even when the evidence may be disturbing and/or painful. If the best universities in the world submit themselves to such ethical inspections, then the others can too. ■

MOOCs as Neocolonialism: Who Controls Knowledge?

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Massive open online courses, or MOOCs, are the latest effort to harness information technology for higher education. The concept takes advantage of the significant

advancements in technology that permits much more interactive pedagogy as well as more sophisticated delivery of content. While MOOCs are still in a nascent stage of development, their sponsors as well as many commentators and policymakers are enthusiastic, and see them as an inexpensive and innovative way of delivering content to vast audiences, while others see potential for profits.

One aspect of the MOOC movement has not been fully analyzed—who controls the knowledge. Considering where the content and the technology that support MOOCs originate, the answer is clear. MOOCs are largely an American-led effort and the majority of the courses available so far come from universities in the United States or other Western countries. The main providers are also in the technologically advanced countries. The technology in use was developed in Silicon Valley, Kendall Square in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and other hubs of information technology innovation. Early adopters have a significant advantage in this arena. While globalization has increased the sway of the academic centers in economically powerful countries, MOOCs promise to enhance this higher education hegemony by harnessing technology to the existing knowledge network.

Others, in diverse and less-developed regions of the world, are joining the MOOC bandwagon, but it is likely that they will be using technology, pedagogical ideas, and much of the content developed elsewhere. In this way, the online courses threaten to exacerbate the worldwide influence of Western academe, bolstering its higher education hegemony.

Two of the original MOOC sponsors, Coursera and EdX, are American initiatives—the first founded by Stanford professors and based in Silicon Valley in California and the second established by Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Many other top universities, mainly in the United States, have joined these efforts. Coursera offers 535 courses in many fields of study—24 percent of the courses originate from outside the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia; EdX provides 91 courses—19 of which are from outside North America and the United Kingdom. Some of these courses enroll as many as 300,000 students, with average enrollments of approximately 20,000. The large majority of students come from outside the United States. Completion rates seem to be low—most less than 13 percent. Many in the MOOC movement are seeking to earn profits from MOOCs—a goal so far unmet.

WHO CONTROLS KNOWLEDGE AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

The large majority of MOOCs are created and taught by professors in the United States. Companies and universi-

