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Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

Kathy Cawsey's article ("Blame Facebook," April-May 2008) makes a lot of sense. I found myself agreeing with her reasonable efforts to find reasonable causes for the plague of plagiarism and other forms of cheating infesting institutions of tertiary education in Canada and elsewhere. Then I had a little chat with my 12-year old son, Nick. He's at the local public school. He was browsing the NASA website for a school project on planets.

"You shouldn't just copy that out, Nick," I started. "I know," says Nick, before his all-knowing pater can explain the ethics of plagiarism, proper attribution and so on. "I should put it in my own words and say where I got the ideas from, otherwise it's like cheating," Nick continues. "That's great, Nick. Absolutely. Where'd you learn that?" "Our librarian told us last year, when she was showing how to use the web."

If my grade-sixer knows what's cheating, what's not, I'm sure most students at college and university do, too. I think they know and cheat anyway, and will go on doing so till the penalties make it too costly. Or perhaps they just forgot what their grade six librarians told them.

JAMIE S. SCOTT, DIRECTOR, GRADUATE PROGRAMME IN INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES & PROFESSOR, DIVISION OF HUMANITIES, YORK UNIVERSITY

Dear Editor:

In "Blame Facebook," (April-May 2008) the author attempts to make a point about the double standard that is sometimes present with regards to how academics handle citations amongst themselves.

When the author throws around the term "schizophrenia" in attempt to illustrate her point (cultural schizophrenia, fundamentally schizophrenic, hampered by this schizophrenia) she is not being insightful, sly, witty, or humourous; rather she is demonstrating her complete lack of understanding of the term and the nature of the illness. It demonstrates a level of understanding and appropriateness to the points she wishes to make that is on par with that of a bad TV situation comedy or an intellectually lazy documentary.

Why stop at using schizophrenia as a way of contrasting ideas? Why not say university culture is fundamentally "diabetic" and that we have a Type 1 response and a Type 2 response to plagiarism? Why not use the BMI scale to describe the two positions and say university culture has a fundamentally underweight or obese response to plagiarism? Why not say university culture is fundamentally "cancerous" and that we have a benign or malignant response to plagiarism? They are all as equally weak as the author's current example.

RAYMOND LEDUC, LECTURER, UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO

Dear Editor:

Thanks once again for coming up with another uniquely different edition of *Academic Matters,* "The Green University" (April-May 2008). I appreciate the extensive coverage of this seemingly new topic from different angles. All the articles included in this issue by eminent scholars and leading environmentalists have an elegant style of reflecting a diverse array of thoughts in a popular story-telling fashion. The exquisitely designed front cover has been an unexpected bonus!

SAIKAT KUMAR BASU, PhD candidate, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Lethbridge

The world of higher education is undergoing fundamental changes—internationalization is one of the key drivers and shapers of this transformation. As with all transformations, there are consequences—both planned and unintended.
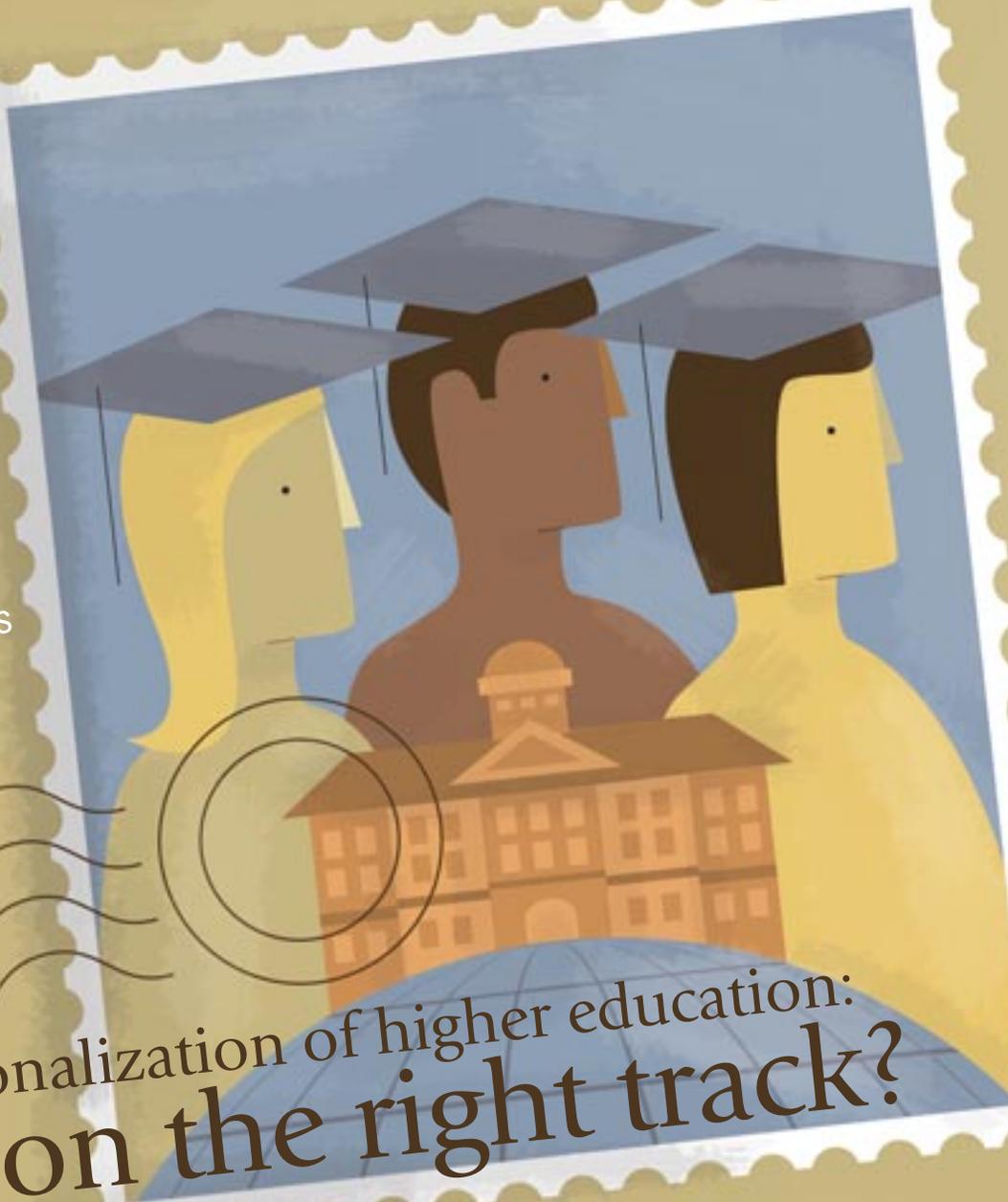
The internationalization of higher education:
Are we on the right track?

by Jane Knight

Headlines from recent higher education newspapers paint a colourful picture of some new developments in internationalization—"Ten universities in the United Kingdom, Ireland, New Zealand, and Australia begin sharing education content on iTunes U." "China could be vulnerable to 'education dumping' by overseas universities seeking to exploit the rapid expansion of higher education in the country." "European Higher Education Fairs 'conquer' Vietnam."

As we progress into the 21st century, the international dimension of higher education is becoming increasingly important and at the same time, more and more complex. There are new actors, new rationales, new programs, new regulations, and the new context of globalization. Internationalization has become a formidable force for change as evidenced by the following developments and initiatives:

- The creation of new international networks and consortia
- The growing numbers of students, professors, and researchers participating in academic mobility schemes
- The increase in the number of courses, programs, and qualifications that focus on comparative and international themes
- More emphasis on developing international/intercultural and global competencies
- Stronger interest in international themes and collaborative research
- Steep rise in the number of crossborder delivery of academic programs
- More interest and concern with international and regional rankings of universities
- An increase in campus-based extracurricular activities with an international or multicultural component

- The investment in recruiting foreign students and dependence on their income
- The rise in the number of joint or double degrees
- Growth in the numbers and types of for-profit crossborder education providers
- The expansion in partnerships, franchises, branch campuses
- The establishment of new national, regional, and international organizations focused on international education

As internationalization changes to meet new challenges it is important to examine the key concepts that inform and shape the internationalization process and some of the unexpected developments and results. The multiple and varied benefits attributed to internationalization are acknowledged, but the primary focus here is on the unintended consequences that need to be addressed and monitored.

CONFUSION AND COMPLEXITY IN WHAT INTERNATIONALIZATION MEANS

Internationalization is a term that means different things to different people. While it is encouraging to see the increased use and attention given to internationalization, there is a great deal of confusion about what it means.

For some people, it means a series of international activities such as: academic mobility for students and teachers; international networks, partnerships and projects; new international academic programs and research initiatives. For others it means the delivery of education to other countries through new arrangements such as branch campuses or franchises using a variety of face-to-face and distance techniques. To many, it means the inclusion of an international, intercultural and/or global dimension into the curriculum and teaching learning process. Still others see internationalization as a means to improve national or world rankings of their institution and to recruit the best and brightest of international students and scholars. International development projects have traditionally been perceived as part of internationalization, and, more recently, the increasing emphasis on trade in higher education is also seen as internationalization. Finally, there is frequent confusion about the relationship of internationalization and globalization. Is internationalization the same as globalization? If so, why, how, and to what end? If not, how is it different or what is the relationship between these two dynamic processes? Thus internationalization is interpreted and used in different ways in Canada and countries around the world.

A CHANGING AGENDA?

In addition to questions about what exactly does it mean, there are other important issues being raised about internationalization. Questions such as: What is the purpose for internationalization? What are the expected benefits or outcomes? What are the values that underpin it? What are, the positive consequences? What are the unintended results? What are the negative implications? What about new risks attached to internationalization? How are institutions and policy makers responding to the competing interests within the domain of internationalization? What are the funding implications? How are governments and non-governmental organizations addressing the issue and moving forward? Are for-profit and non-profit internationalization strategies compatible? Does internationalization have a role in the brain drain, homogenization/hybridization of culture, and international labour mobility? Clearly, there are important issues and questions to address. As the internationalization agenda changes, it requires close scrutiny.

DEFINING INTERNATIONALIZATION

Internationalization is not a new term, nor is the debate over its meaning. Internationalization has been used for years in political science and governmental relations, but its popularity in the education sector has soared only since the early 1980s. Prior to this time, "international education" and "international cooperation" were favoured terms and still are in some countries. In the 1990s, the discussion centred on differentiating "international education" from such overlapping terms as "comparative education," "global education," and "multi-cultural education." But today, the nuances of meaning among "crossborder," "transnational," "borderless," and "international" modes of education are more important and causing much confusion.

The challenging part of developing a definition is the need for it to be generic enough to apply to many different countries, cultures, and education systems. This is no easy task. While it is not the intention to develop a universal definition, it is imperative that it can be used in a broad range of contexts and for comparative purposes across countries and regions of the world. With this in mind, it is important to ensure that a definition does not specify the rationales, benefits, outcomes, actors, activities, and stakeholders of internationalization as they vary enormously across nations and from institution to institution. What is critical is that the international dimension relates to all aspects of education and the role that it plays in society. Internationalization at national/sector/ institutional levels is defined as "the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of higher education. "

This is intentionally a neutral definition of internationalization. Many would argue that the process of internationalization should be described in terms of improving quality and relevance of higher education, promoting cooperation and solidarity among nations, or advancing research on international issues. While these are noble intentions, and internationalization can contribute to these goals, a definition needs to be objective enough that it can be used to describe a phenomenon which is in fact, universal, but which has different purposes and outcomes, depending

on the actor or stakeholder.

A significant development in the conceptualization of internationalization in the last five years has been the introduction of the terms "internationalization at home" and "crossborder education". Campus-based strategies are most often referred to as internationalization "at home" and off-campus initiatives are called "crossborder education". As a result of a heightened emphasis on international academic mobility, the "at home" concept has been developed to give greater prominence to campus-based elements such as: the intercultural and international dimension in the teaching learning process, research; extra-curricular activities; relationships with local cultural and ethnic community groups;

The complexities and challenges related to academic and professional mobility should not be underestimated.

as well as the integration of foreign students and scholars into campus life and activities. It is important to point out that internationalization consists of these two separate but closely-linked and interdependent pillars. Crossborder education has significant implications for campus-based internationalization and vice versa. Interestingly enough, many of the new developments and unintended consequences are associated with the crossborder aspects of internationalization.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS AND UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

THE BRAIN TRAIN
Little did we know 25 years ago that the highly-valued and promoted international academic mobility for students, scholars, and professors would have the potential to grow into a highly-competitive international recruitment business. Several countries are investing in major marketing campaigns to attract the best and brightest talent to study and work in their institutions in order to supply the "brain power" for innovation and research agendas. The complexities and challenges related to academic and professional mobility should not be underestimated. Nor should the potential benefits. But it is impossible to ignore the latest race for attracting international students and academics for "brain power" and for "income generation". The original goal of helping students from developing countries study in another country to complete a degree and return home is fading fast as nations compete for retaining needed human resources.

While "brain drain and brain gain" are well known concepts, research is showing that international students and researchers are increasingly interested in taking a degree in country A, followed by a second degree or perhaps internship

in country B, leading to employment in country C and probably D, finally returning to their home country after eight to 12 years of international study and work experience. Hence, the emergence of the term "brain train". In the final analysis, whether one is dealing with brain gain, brain drain, brain train or even brain chain, this phenomenon is presenting benefits, risks, and new challenges for both sending and receiving countries. From a policy perspective, higher education is becoming a more important actor and is now working in closer collaboration with immigration, industry, and the science and technology sectors to build an integrated strategy for attracting and retaining knowledge workers. The convergence of an aging society, lower birth rates, the knowledge economy, and professional labour mobility is introducing new issues and opportunities for the higher education sector and producing some unanticipated results and challenges in terms of international mobility.

QUALITY, ACCREDITATION, AND CREDENTIAL RECOGNITION: WHITHER THOU GOEST?
It is forecast that by 2025 the demand for international education will grow to 7. 2 million students—a quantum leap from 1.2 million students in 2000. Some, but certainly not all of this demand, will be met by student mobility. Consequently, the number of new providers—commercial companies and non-governmental entities—delivering programs to students in their home countries is accelerating at an unprecedented rate. It is no longer just students, faculty, and researchers who are internationally mobile. Full academic degree/diploma programs are being delivered across borders, and branch campuses or new, stand alone institutions are being established in developing and developed countries around the world.

While these new developments are intended to increase access to higher education and meet the appetite for foreign credentials, there are serious issues related to the quality of the academic offer, the integrity of the new types of providers, and the recognition of credentials. The increase in the number of foreign degree mills (selling "parchment"-only degrees) and accreditation mills (selling bogus accreditations for programs or institutions), and rogue for-profit providers (not recognized by national authorities) are realities that students, parents, employers, and the academic community now need to aware of. Who would have guessed two decades ago that international education would be struggling to deal with fake degrees and accreditations; that is, academic credentials that are earned but not recognized and non-regulated "fly by night" institutions. Of course, it is equally important to acknowledge innovative developments by bona fide new providers and traditional
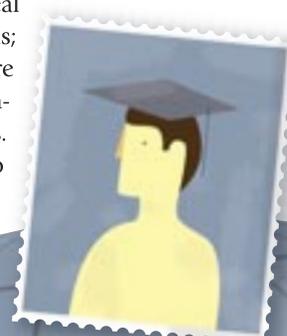
universities who are delivering high quality programs and legitimate degrees through new types of arrangements and partnerships (franchise, twinning, branch campuses). The perpetual issue of balancing cost, quality and access significantly challenges the benefits and risks of crossborder education.

DOUBLE AND JOINT DEGREES: TWICE THE BENEFIT OR DOUBLE COUNTING?

Improvement in the quality of research, the teaching/learning process, and curriculum has long been heralded as a positive outcome of international collaboration. Through exchange of good practice, shared curricular reform, close research cooperation, and mobility of professors/students, there is much to be gained through internationalization. A recent trend has been the establishment of joint programs between institutions in different countries that lead to double (or multiple degrees) and in some cases a joint degree, although the latter faces steep legal constraints. Joint programs are intended to provide a rich international and comparative academic experience for students and to improve their opportunities for employment. But with all new ideas, come questionable adaptations and unintended consequences. For instance, in some cases, double degrees can be nothing more than double counting one set of course credits. Situations exist where two or three credentials (one from each participating institution) are conferred for little more than the work load required for one degree. While it may be very attractive for students (and potential employees) to have two degrees from two institutions in two different countries, the situation can be described as academic fraud if course requirements for two full degrees are not completed or differentiated learning outcomes not achieved. It is important to point out that there are many excellent and innovative joint and double degree programs being offered—especially by European institutions given the priority they are given in the Bologna process. But one of the unanticipated consequences has been the misuse or abuse of this new internationalization initiative. More work on the quality assurance and credential recognition of double degrees is necessary because they span two or more jurisdictions and can be exempt from any national regulations.

COMMODIFICATION AND COMMERCIALIZATION: FOR-PROFIT INTERNATIONALIZATION

While the process of internationalization affords many benefits to higher education, it is clear that there are serious risks associated with this complex and growing phenomenon. According to the results of the 2005 International Association of Universities (IAU) Internationalization Survey, there is overwhelming agreement (96 per cent of responding institutions from 95 countries) that internationalization brings benefits to higher education. Yet, this consensus is qualified by the fact that 70 per cent also believe there are substantial risks associated with the international dimension of higher education.

Overall, the number one risk identified in the survey was the commodification and commercialization of education programs. Of interest is that both developing and developed countries identified commercialization as the number one risk, convincing testimony of its importance. A regional level analysis showed that four regions (Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe, and North America) ranked commercialization as the top risk. Latin America placed brain drain as number one, and the Middle East ranked loss of cultural identify in first place.

The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) has been a wake-up call for higher education around the world. Higher education has traditionally been seen as a "public good" and a "social responsibility." But with the advent of this new international trade agreement, higher education has become a tradable commodity, or, more precisely in GATS terms, an internationally tradable service. Many see GATS as presenting new opportunities and benefits, while others see it as introducing serious risks. In addition, there are many who question why the trade sector needs to impose regulations at all, given that the education sector has been using its own agreements and conventions for decades.

At the heart of the debate for many educators is the impact of increased commercial crossborder education on the purpose, role, and values of higher education. The growth in new commercial and private providers, the commodification and market orientation of education, and the prospect of new trade policy frameworks are catalysts for stimulating serious reflection on the role, social commitment, and funding of public higher education institutions in society. The trinity of teaching, research, and service to society has traditionally guided the evolution of the university and its contribution to the social, cultural, human, scientific, and economic development of a nation and its people. Is the combination of these roles still valid, or can they be disaggregated and rendered by different providers?

Finally, an unknown consequence is the impact of commercialization on the motivation for institutions to internationalize. One of the leading rationales at the institutional level for internationalization is preparing graduates to be internationally knowledgeable and interculturally skilled to live and work in more culturally diverse communities both at home and abroad. An important question to ask is how an increased emphasis on the "buying and selling" of education across borders will affect the nature and priority given to academic, social, and cultural rationales of non-profit international education activities.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY OR HOMOGENIZATION?

The impact of new forms and types of international academic mobility on the recognition and promotion of indigenous and diverse cultures is a subject that evokes strong positions and sentiments. Many believe that modern information and

communication technologies and the movement of people, ideas, and culture across national boundaries present new opportunities to promote one's culture to other countries and to provide more chances for the fusion and hybridization of culture. Supporting this position is the assumption that this flow of culture across borders is not new at all, although its speed has been accelerated and its modes broadened.

Others see both the movement and the speed as alarming. They contend that these same forces are eroding national cultural identities and that instead of creating new, hybrid cultures, they are homogenizing native cultures—by which, in most cases, they mean Westernized. Because education has traditionally been seen as a vehicle of acculturation, these arguments focus on the specifics of curriculum content, language of instruction (particularly the increase in English) and the teaching/learning process in international education. The impact of colonization on education has long been a subject of research, but internationalization as a tool for neo-colonization, especially in terms of culture, requires for further study.

Internationalization of higher education was originally conceived in terms of exchange and sharing of ideas, cultures, knowledge, values, etc. Formalized academic relations between countries were normally expressed in bilateral cultural and scientific agreements. Today, the agreements are often based on trade, economics, and politics, showing a significant shift from the original idea of academic exchange. Thus, there are two factors at play. One is the potential, and for many, threat of cultural homogenization, and the second is the weakening of cultural exchange in favour of more economically and politically-oriented relationships.

STATUS AND PROFILE: WORLD RANKINGS

International and regional rankings of universities have become more popular and problematic in the last five years. The heated debate about their validity, reliability, and value continues. But at the same time university presidents declare in their strategic plans that a measurable outcome of internationalization will be the achievement of a specific position in one or more of the global ranking instruments. Internationalization is perceived by some institutions as a means to gaining worldwide profile and prestige. The intense competition for world rankings would have been impossible to imagine a mere 20 years ago, when international collabo-

ration among universities through academic exchanges and development cooperation projects were the norm. Of course, these types of activities still take place, but the factors driving internationalization are becoming increasingly varied, complex, and competitive. Is international cooperation becoming overshadowed by competition for status, bright students, talented faculty, research grants, and membership in global networks?

WHAT NEXT?

With innovation come new opportunities, successes, and also threats. It is imperative that the international, intercultural, and global dimensions of higher education continue to be proactive, responsive, and innovative, while keeping a close watch on unanticipated spin-offs and implications. As internationalization matures through its ages and stages of growth, a critical eye and strong will are needed to monitor intended and unintended results -for this year and twenty-five years hence. AM

Jane Knight is a globally-recognized expert on the internationalization of higher education. She is adjunct professor at OISE/University of Toronto and a Fulbright New Century Scholar 2007-2008.

The recruitment and education of medical professionals from the developing world raises a number of important ethical concerns. Canada Research Chair and Director of the University of Toronto's Joint Centre for Bioethics Ross Upshur reflects on the dilemmas involved and the implications for the global health care workforce.

Ethics and the training of
international medical graduates

by Ross Upshur

Consider the following headlines—"Ontario continues to open more doors for internationally trained doctors," "Recruiting African health workers: A crime", "4 million Canadians lack access to a family doctors," "International medical graduates complain of inability to use skills." These headlines encapsulate complex issues that are part of current public discourse. They reflect a world in which health care providers are in critical short supply. They also underscore the importance of an open dialogue and full consideration of the role developed countries like Canada play in the global economy of health care providers.

I think it is essential that I situate myself with respect to these issues. I bring three related but independent perspectives to this situation. First, I am an academic physician and part of my professional responsibilities entail the clinical training of medical students and postgraduate trainees in family medicine. Our training site has been home to and has successfully trained several international medical graduates. Secondly, I am the director of a bioethics centre at a Canadian university. One of our major activities over the past decade has

been to build capacity for bioethics, particularly research ethics in developing world contexts. To this end we have received funding from the National Institutes of Health in the United States to train mid-career professionals in research ethics and bioethics in order to return to their home environment and create strong, robust local programmes. Thirdly, I am a founding Board Member of Dignitas International, the humanitarian medical organization pledged to address issues with respect to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Here I have witnessed first hand how a critical shortage of health care professionals hampers the ability of impoverished nations to respond to a devastating epidemic.

With respect to the first consideration, it has been a great privilege participating in the training of many international medical graduates. Like graduates from Canadian medical schools, they are a heterogeneous group—some possessing impeccable judgment and medical skills with whom I would be more than happy to have myself and my family cared for, while others are comparatively weak and perhaps irredeemable.

The need to fast track international medical graduates stems from the need to provide opportunities for internationally trained physicians to help offset shortages created by changes in policies in the recent past for training domestic physicians, which have resulted in the current supply/ demand mismatch, particularly for primary care providers. One way of managing the shortfall of human resources in the Canadian context is to provide opportunities or put policies in place to ensure physicians who have had medical training or have been practising in another comparable system are eligible for registration and licensure. The other component of the recently released report on international medical graduates in the province of Ontario indicates the need to help internationally trained physicians enter medical practice with transitional licenses and to provide more efficient assessment of clinical skills to allow integration into the system. Attention will be paid to provide support to international graduates that is culturally and linguistically appropriate and to develop "individualized assistance for those who need to transfer their international medical skills and knowledge into another area of the health profession or a related career." While much of this seems to be sensible and be an acknowledgement of the skills and practices of health care professionals trained elsewhere, it is important that the global health situation be considered.

The Global Crisis of Health Care Workers

Removing barriers to practice and increasing the number of international medical graduates available to provide care to Canadians without physicians seems like an ideal solution to a recurring problem. However, such solutions need to be considered in terms of the current state of global health. In terms of global health, there is a set of interdependent considerations that have resulted in some of the world's poorest countries showing regression in terms of

life expectancy and worsening of health indicators. Increasingly, in the developing world, health systems are faltering and failing to provide a minimal standard of health care. Much of this has to do with the ravages of HIV/AIDS, particularly in the sub-Saharan African context. HIV/AIDS is devastating health workers and health systems and increasing workloads for health workers and reducing morale. Current data from the World Health Organization indicates that many states lack the capacity to provide a workforce trained to shore up these faltering health systems. For example, there is an estimated shortage of more than 4,000,000 health care workers globally. There is a large skill imbalance with a too heavy reliance in many sectors on physicians and specialists. More to the point, though, is the global maldistribution which is noted to have been worsened by unplanned migration.

The Global Distribution of Physicians

Globally, there are within individual countries issues involving urban/rural maldistribution, similar to what occurs in Canada. Highly qualified professionals concentrate in urban areas leading to difficulties in service provision for rural communities. This type of maldistribution is even more pointed when we look at comparisons between countries. This issue is recognized as a significant threat to global health equity. For example, in a recent commentary in the journal *The Lancet*, Francis Omaswa notes, "Over several decades a global health workforce crisis has developed before our eyes. The crisis is characterized by widespread global shortages, maldistribution of personnel within and between countries, migration of local health workers, and poor working conditions." He notes factors such as increasing demand for care in developed countries where the demographic transition results in aging populations with complex health needs and the inability to provide sustainable health resources within their own system.

It is interesting to reflect on the dynamics of the problem. In 2005, Fitzhugh Mullan published an article in the *New England Journal of Medicine* called "The Metrics of Physician Brain Drain." In this article, he meticulously presented data on the countries of origin and migration and emigration factors of the global physician workforce. His results demonstrate that in developed countries—such as the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia—23-28 per cent of physicians are international medical graduates and that lower-income countries supply between 40 and 75 per cent of these international medical graduates. There is variability in terms of which low-income countries are supplying developed world contexts. For example, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia rely heavily on physicians from South Africa. Furthermore, he found that nine of the 20 countries that have the highest outflow of physicians are in sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean.

In the Canadian context, in terms of country of origin, the United Kingdom, South Africa, India, and Ireland

are the four most common source countries for international medical graduates. According to Mullan's data, in 2002 there were 15,701 international medical graduates practising in Canada, representing 23 per cent of the physician workforce of which 43.4 per cent arise from lower-income countries. The great net beneficiary of the international flow of the physician workforce is the United States, which is the only country with a total net inflow of physician workforce.

What Mullan's data shows is an extensive cycling of physicians amongst the four largest recipient countries. Interestingly enough, Canada still has a net outflow of physician workforce relative to its inflow. According to the 2002 data presented in this article, there were 68,906 physicians practising in Canada with an inflow of 3,501 and an outflow of 9,105, 8,990 of whom left for the United States. In terms of the US physician workforce, there are 836,036 physicians estimated to be working with a net inflow of 13,573 and an an outflow of only 671,519 of whom returned to Canada. Thus, we have strange dynamic of forces. The developed world is increasingly reliant on attracting health care workers trained elsewhere, and the United States is the greatest global magnet for highly qualified health care professionals.

Is it a crime?

The response to this situation has been varied and perhaps the most strongly worded response is a viewpoint article published in *The Lancet* in February of 2008. Ed Mills, a scientist with the British Columbia Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS at the University of British Columbia, along with other colleagues from Canada, Ireland, and South African, published an article entitled "Should Active Recruitment of Health Workers from sub-Saharan Africa be Viewed as a Crime?" The polemical title was intentional. The authors argue that shortages of health care providers, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, have reached such critically low levels that it may rise to the level of a crime to continue to advertise and recruit health care professionals from the developing world. They point out dramatic reductions in numbers of nurses, physicians, and pharmacists and also document the marked global disparities within and between nations. For example, in Malawi, the country where the NGO I am associated with is operating, it was estimated in 2004 that there were 0.02 physicians per 1,000 population and 0.59 nurses for 1,000 population as opposed to Canada, where there were 2.14 physicians per 1,000 population and 9.95 nurses per

1,000 population. The Malawi rates are amongst the lowest in the world, in a nation with a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and infant mortality.

Mills and colleagues take issue with the efforts of recruitment agencies establishing offices in South Africa to facilitate recruitment, as well as castigating the behaviour of corporations that directly and actively recruit from South Africa by using the method of touring recruitment workshops. They write

[A]LTHOUGH THE ACTIVE RECRUITMENT OF HEALTH WORKERS FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES MAY LACK THE HEINOUS INTENT OF OTHER CRIMES COVERED UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW, THE RESULTING DILAPIDATION OF HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE CONTRIBUTES TO A MEASUREABLE AND FORESEEABLE PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS. THERE IS NOW SUBSTANTIAL EVIDENCE OF STATE AND ORGANIZATIONAL INVOLVEMENT IN ACTIVE RECRUITMENT OF HEALTH WORKERS FROM THE DEVELOPING TO DEVELOPED NATIONS.

They further go on to argue that this is an important violation of human rights of the people in Africa and that using the mechanism of international crime would strengthen accountability of health systems to international standards.

What to do?

These are no doubt difficult issues and many Canadians who are supportive of the fast tracking and integration of internationally-trained health providers, such as physicians and nurses, are no doubt more concerned with ensuring accessibility of care for themselves and their families. However, it must be recognized that current policies are indeed contributing to worsening health crisis globally. Serving our own needs contributes to further disadvantaging some of the worst off countries and populations in the world.

The issues also speak to the clash between universal human rights and the need for certain sectors and health systems to be functional. In terms of international rights statutes, there is a right to health, but, similarly, health workers also have rights to mobility and the right to freely choose where they wish to live and work. As well, many physicians seeking licensure in Canada come from areas experiencing significant political instability and civil strife and are rightly seeking a place of refuge where they can practise without threat to themselves or their family.

Are there progressive ways of thinking through these dilemmas whereby the policy choices made by health systems in Canada are not responsible for worsening health inequities? It must be recognized that every physician that leaves South Africa to work in Canada provides an opportunity for physicians in other African countries such as Malawi, Botswana, and Zimbabwe to seek employment in South Africa's a better health system and with higher remuneration.

Certain countries in sub-Saharan Africa, such as Malawi, are the final ground of evacuation. That is, when physicians leave these contexts, there is no feeder country that is providing them with the necessary health professionals to provide care in replacement for those lost.

Mills and his colleagues have some suggestions for an appropriate way forward. They argue that governments, nation states and policy makers should provide incentives to address some of the core reasons for migration, including inadequate remuneration, insufficient resources, heavy workloads, and lack of career paths, as well as risks to the individuals health from providing care. They also point out the need for finding ways to compensate nation states that have lost or contributed health workers to other systems. For example, they quote a report showing that Ghana lost £35,000,000 of its training investment in health care professionals who went to the United Kingdom, whereas the United Kingdom saved £65,000,000 in training costs and was

and proactive role in clinical training, health care worker exchanges. Policy makers should consider bilateral aid such as cash payments and support for retention programmes, thus ensuring mutual benefits for both countries.

Concluding Thoughts

The issues raised by the global shortage of health care workers are important and require public reflection and discussion on our role and responsibility in global health. Are we content to be contributing to worsening health inequities in countries from which we have helped decimate the health system? It is imperative that we invest in our own academic institutions to ensure an adequate workforce. What about fast tracking and paying for health care workers to work in underserviced areas?

It is clear that this is an issue that will not soon be resolved. It also provides us with a time to reflect upon our investments in health systems and how best to secure the

Shortages of health care providers, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa,
may make it a crime to recruit healthcare professionals from the developing world.

granted £39,000,000 in service provision by virtue of this asymmetrical relationship.

Larry Gostin, a leading expert in global health law at Georgetown University, in a recent commentary in the *Journal of the American Medical Association,* points out that there is a need to discuss responsible recruiting that would address equity in national and global circumstances. He suggests there needs to be much closer surveillance of migration patterns of health care professionals and, furthermore, there should be documentation of the impact of these immigration patterns on health systems. He argues for increasing attention to human resource investment and planning. Destination countries need to build a supply of skilled workers through education and training leading to national self-sustainability and limiting the need for active recruitment from developing world.

The issue of incentives is an important one. Gostin argues that a basic principle should be to take no more than a fair share. Wealthy states should restrict active recruitment in low-income countries that have severe nurse and physician shortages. He also states, and this is a compelling point, that there should be an element of giving back. That is, wealthy developed nations such as Canada should be helping to build capacity in countries from which they recruit. There is a variety of means by which this could be facilitated. Academic institutions such as universities with professional training programmes in medicine, nursing, dentistry, pharmacy, and occupation and physical therapy, could play a much greater

conditions of health. It is interesting to note that the country that receives the most highly qualified professionals in the international global economy is one that does not have the best health outcomes. This illustrates the point that the health care system is only one dimension of securing healthy populations. It seems adequate human resources cannot be secured in even the most developed nations. Investments in other determinants of health such as ensuring potable water and a safe food supply; providing adequate educational opportunity and a secure, stable and peaceful environment and more equitable distribution of economic resources may do as much to ensure a healthy population as a functional and well-staffed health care system. AM

Resources
For those interested to explore the data on the global health care work force, the World Health Organization has an interactive atlas: http://www.who.int/globalatlas/default.asp.

They also have extensive data on the global crisis in health care workers: http://www.who.int/hrh/en/index.html

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Ross Upshur is a physician, Director of the University of Toronto's Joint Centre for Bioethics and Canada Research Chair in Primary Care Research. At the University of Toronto, he is also an Associate Professor in the Departments of Family and Community Medicine and Public Health Sciences.

Based on her new research, Fengying Xu explores the complex dynamics involved in education of international graduate students and offers a prescription for the future.

Cross-cultural Challenges in Teaching International Graduate Students

by Fengying Xu

Globalization has embraced the university, as it has sectors, owing largely to easy travel and a digital infrastructure that provides information instantly. Many academics appreciate the benefits that cross-cultural exchange allows as the ivory tower turns global. Knowledge now belongs to a world-wide arena in which we are all connected. While students and tutors have travelled since the time of Marco Polo, today an unprecedented number of international students study at Western universities and, indeed, unprecedented numbers of Western academics teach abroad.

There are enormous challenges for teaching, studying and research inside this globally-interdependent context. In the case of international graduate students, the language of instruction is not the only issue. They must learn different research methodologies and understand a new set of complex cultural dynamics both in their living situations and in their new university workplaces. Very often their adaptation takes place in a context of very little appreciation or understanding of the challenges of trying to perform according to the high academic standards of a new language, culture, and workplace. And there are often the unconscious assumptions of the "international faculty club" that promotes ideas and even behaviors largely dominated by Western (predominantly American) intellectuals.

How are the challenges of teaching international graduate students being met? To find out, between 2007 and 2008 I conducted a year-long investigation that began with a survey. The survey was initially distributed on-line to a few potential

participants personally known to me. These people were invited to forward it to others interested in the study. Participants willingly responded to the survey with anonymity. In total, 126 volunteers from America, Australia, Britain, Canada, Hong Kong, Macao, Mainland China, New Zealand, Singapore and Taiwan completed the survey and returned it to me. Of them, 71 per cent were international graduate students and 29 per cent professors. The collected data revealed four significant challenges in teaching international graduate students: definition of a dissertation, research readiness, departmental advising, and English writing skills.

All professor respondents considered a graduate program design to be the most important element in facilitating a student's transition from student to independent researcher. This transition usually contains four distinctive stages: a) facilitation, in which students are hesitant in their new role and their productivity is minimal; b) early confidence stage, during which student has the self-confidence to undertake research but lacks a base of knowledge which results in low productivity; c) independent stage, when the student's productivity is good and ever improving; and d) advanced professional stage, when the student produces an independent project, including successful writing of a lengthy, formal treatise—a dissertation for a doctoral degree.

One American professor respondent commented: "A well-defined scope of the thesis will be a sufficient and guaranteed factor for success."

Surprisingly, 70 per cent of student respondents felt that undergraduate learning and graduate studies appeared to be the same. One student wrote: "I always get A's for most of my courses, you know. I see no problems in completing my graduate studies."

These respondents failed to see that undergraduate course work is different from the reading assignments, tests and papers assigned to graduate students. They did not recognize that any thesis, and a doctoral dissertation in particular, is a completely different academic project, with different expectations, than work at the undergraduate level.

They did not understand that thesis writing (in a Western university) is considered to be the first step toward research whose findings will be available to other scholars and benefit scholarship at a professional level. This is a real challenge to all graduate students, domestic and international alike, if they are to compete with success, globally.

The next challenge was students' research readiness. Sixty-two percent of professors and 89 per cent of students reported that international graduate students were in general ill-prepared for conducting independent research projects. Since the numbers so clearly indicate that graduate students do not understand foreign research expectations, a few anecdotes

illustrate the ways in which this is the case.

One student submitted a 20-word title for a doctoral dissertation completed in North America. It was easily edited down to eight words without its meaning being changed. When the title failed to meet the basic criterion for its discipline (maximum 16 words), we can imagine the difficulties of reading the dissertation itself.

In one two-year, full-time Masters program run at an Eastern university and coordinated by a professor from a well-respected North American university, there was no research training component. Nevertheless, students were required to conduct an empirical study and to write a thesis in English. In four years, only 6 (22 per cent) students out of 27 completed their studies. Their attempts (without support or training) consumed a tremendous amount of their energy and time, and they were unsuccessful. The leadership in this program was sorely deficient as the coordinator became embroiled in cross-cultural differences and unprofessional hiring practices. The faculty dean said openly: "These foreign devils, they are here to have fun, enjoy life, make money," a remark that certainly does not set the tone for respectful, international academic exchange.

In another case, a North American born teacher was offered a position at an Eastern university after he had completed a doctoral degree there. One day he asked at a faculty meeting how to write a research proposal. His question invited much skepticism about his ability to research, as all adequately-trained Ph.Ds know how to write research proposals. A Western professor suggested respectfully: "Students should perhaps have to take more rigorous training in actual research methods and be better prepared for the type of research they are required to do."

The third area of challenge for international graduate students was the complementary relationship between how much support and independence international graduate students are expected to have. Seventy per cent of student respondents mentioned their disappointment at the unavailability of their supervisors and commented on the lack of departmental support, which, in their view, were vital factors for their success.

One student described her experience as terrifying because her thesis supervisor was always busy and impatient with her questions.

Another felt lonely: "The department where I'm based doesn't provide Ph.D students with a fixed workspace. I have to study at home. This makes me feel rather isolated from the department and lack a sense of community."

Still another reflected with bitterness: "One day, I was doing an experiment on fetus cells in a lab, my supervisor passed by and said to me, 'I will never let my children do this

kind of work.' This made me angry because she treated me as if I were inferior. She accepted me as a graduate student not for academic advancement but for her personal promotion."

On the faculty side, 60 per cent of professor respondents remarked that the greatest challenge of international students was their lack of independence. They noted that international graduate students rarely asked questions and needed a lot of guidance and specific instructions. In an Eastern context, students' dependence on their supervisors was found to be greater than that of those in a Western context. Such dependence sometimes created frustration and displeasure in thesis advisers.

One English literature professor shared his disappointment without any reticence: "So far, after six years in the Far East, it would be difficult to say that supervising graduate students has had any positive aspects. Students are usually ill prepared for graduate studies, so while their enthusiasm is obviously a plus, their cultural preparation, in areas of literature, is all too often wholly inadequate for the task they wish to approach."

Another vented her frustration with humour: "I came here to teach, but at the end of the semester, I realized that instead of 'teaching students,' I had been taking what I was teaching myself."

In early 2007, I witnessed a senior Western professor responsible for an Eastern graduate program who could not cope with his students' heavy dependence and saw no way to

Seventy per cent of professors felt that many of their international students did not have adequate writing skills for the graduate level.

guide the professors working under him. He was overwhelmed by the *inability to teach independence in* both writing and research. He wrote to his colleagues who were attempting to teach and supervise graduate students: "Dear All...I'm sorry if I sometimes seem to be standing there speechless with despair, since I don't really know what to do or suggest about it."

The final challenge is perhaps the most crucial: the writing needs of international graduate students. Seventy per cent of professors felt that many of their students did not have adequate skills to write effectively at a graduate level. A Canadian professor elaborated: "Generally they have limited academic writing ability in English, which makes it very difficult for them to clearly present their thoughts and ideas or argue for a particular point of view. Text organization is also often a great challenge for them. I spend a lot of time correcting the form and organization of my international students' papers and theses." The same professor also pointed out: "...due to again relatively limited English language proficiency, international students have a hard time handling heavy reading and synthesizing of the relevant points from the literature."

It is interesting that only 40 per cent of students acknowledged their writing difficulties, and many failed to realize its impact until they reached the independent stage of their research.

A Chinese student studying at a British university reported putting off her graduation deadline twice as a result of "my poor writing skills. I regret not taking seriously what my teacher[s] had told me earlier, 'it is the writing that is often the most challenging for non-native English-speaking students like you.'"

Another student currently pursuing a doctoral degree at a Canadian university felt ashamed of her writing difficulty: "At the beginning I was quite confident because I got A's for most of my courses. But now I am struggling with my writing. Once I wrote an abstract, and all the readers

said that the language reads 'awkward.' I was really embarrassed."

But worst was the case of a doctoral student who simply discontinued his studies in his fourth year and ending up being ABD, when he was bluntly told: "If you can't write, there will be no future for you at the university." He was not even able to construct an error-free short paragraph of 100 words.

Writing challenges are so important that students sometimes become desperate. One Ph.D holder, for instance, "confessed" to me that he had paid a native-speaker of English to write his dissertation during the final stage of his graduate studies. Another Ph.D recipient told me that his thesis had been written up to the finish by his supervisor (called a "gun hand" by the Chinese). Perhaps most disturbing was an MA thesis completed at a well-known European university that was a translation from Chinese into English, and the "translator" later became a full professor at a Chinese university.

In *The Besieged*, Qian offered an interpretation of this unethical writing behaviour: obtaining a degree means writing a thesis capable of fooling the supervisor; later lesson plans will surely be capable of fooling the students, and such individuals with empty souls but big egos will end up in the classroom, teaching.

To help international graduate students cope with their writing difficulties, it is important to ensure that they understand how English words are adapted and arranged to form sentences and why words have to be subjected to adaptation and arrangement in a certain way. Equally important, they should be familiarized with the guidelines and requirements that govern academic and, professional writing.

These two areas are complementary, with each mutually supporting the other. The first one shows how clear communication can be achieved by analysis, and the second shows how efficiency in the formation of meaning of their knowledge can be achieved by synthesis. Taken together, they can contribute to success in disseminating research findings.

When we step back to examine these elements as a single phenomenon, we will realize that the challenges we face are great. They require time, mentoring, and great patience. If hundreds of international programs continue to be created without clear anticipation of these challenges, international graduate students are bound to fail in acquiring the skills essential to functioning as independent scholars. In consequence, many international campuses will be littered with pilot programs that fail to fly.

A case in point is Stanford University, which has recently launched a DARE Project (Diversifying Academia Recruiting Excellence) because the number of doctoral students has decreased from 13 per cent to 8 per cent in the current year. No school can afford to ignore student enrollment. Particularly in the era of globalization, there is intense competition among universities in recruiting international students. Moreover, it has been a tradition in many Western universities that international graduate students are seen as valuable members of the academic environment, teaching undergraduates and collaborating with their supervisors in research across national boundaries.

Where should we go from here? The challenges we have seen are faced by both faculty advisors and international graduate students. To ensure success in graduate education in a world-wide academic context, teachers and students must create and share a dynamic, respectful, mutually equal and rewarding relationship.

International graduate students' advisers should be aware of their advisees' needs and assist them in their integration into Western academic culture and expectations. In this regard, a Canadian professor suggested: "They should be put in touch with some more 'senior' students for mentorship, or an association for support and networking so that the process of acculturation is smoother for these students. This will allow them to focus more on the academic challenges at hand."

Likewise, international graduate students should be fully aware that the secret of their success in graduate education lies in their ability to conquer two major challenges.

One is how to conduct a scientific inquiry. They have to understand that what uniquely sets science (seeking truth) apart from enterprise (e.g., in politics, compromise is part of the game and in business, profit is the primary concern) is a method based on logic. Research explores a body of substantive knowledge, and the scientific method is a way of assessing the validity of that knowledge. When trained properly and adequately in research methodology, they will have a method that embodies a variety of assumptions regarding the nature of knowledge and the methods through which they can discover knowledge and apply assumptions about the nature of the phenomena they are to investigate.

The other is how to write effectively. International graduate students should remember that writing a thesis or dissertation is not only something new but also a very large and very independent project. It is by definition a self-directed process, during which there are no weekly deadlines from professors, no regular discussions with classmates, no reading assignments, no one telling them what to do—they are on their own, writing something longer than they've ever written, and doing it without a net. This independence seems intimidating, but it enables them to build

writing skills which they will use throughout their career. If they can't learn this or ignore this important part of their graduate studies, their whole education or future professional career will suffer. For some scholars, the essence of writing is style and structure; great ideas are immaterial. Thus, international graduate students must, at the outset, sharpen their English writing skills systematically, for writing is an earned skill acquired through a slow process and there is no quick fix for writing difficulty. Otherwise, time will disillusion them as with the above ABD, first flattered for talent and the passion of being good at school until reaching the stage of "putting your research findings in writing."

Some of my own experiences as an international graduate student from China over a decade ago are illustrative of the direction that could be taken. I was fortunate to study in a program much better designed than many existing ones. I received a rigid training under the guidance of a committee comprising five highly professional and competent scholars, who were also culturally sensitive and caring. For research methodology alone, I took six courses, well over half the number of courses required of many current students for their entire graduate study program. I would not have been able to complete my dissertation of nearly 400 pages without the availability and constant encouragement of my thesis supervisor, one of the national and international leading scholars in my discipline. I have learned from my experience that for non-native speakers of English the biggest challenge is, more often than not, how to succeed in academic written communication, which is also part of research process.

Writing makes us think better. Thinking better makes our writing better. Writing better helps us arrive at a better research product. If we are unable to share or disseminate our research findings with the scientific community, mostly in a written form, our research is incomplete, or perhaps even worthless. Therefore, writing should not be understood as a sub-skill nor treated as a service course at university. Only in this way is it possible that more international graduate students will grow into well-trained independent researchers, and fewer will turn out to be scholars who can't write, and hopefully, none will be an academic who feels forced to perform with deception and pretense, eking out a meager existence within the academic community. AM

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Professors as Public Intellectuals

by George Fallis

York University's George Fallis explains why the university's responsibility to contribute to democratic life is just as critical as its role in economic development.

The responsibility of professors is to carry forward the mission of the university. These responsibilities are often summarized as teaching, research, and service. In today's university, professors are engaged in undergraduate education, professional education, and graduate education; they are engaged in research both basic and applied; and they provide service to their institution by participating in its collegial self-governance.

To fully comprehend the mission of the modern university, we also need to understand its relationship to the society that supports it. Our universities have certain tasks and in return are financially supported by government operating and capital grants, tuition fees, funds from research councils, contracts with corporations, and by private philanthropy. But to ensure the free inquiry necessary for their tasks, universities are autonomous institutions. Their professors and students have academic freedom. To protect this institutional autonomy and academic freedom, universities operate under a system of collegial self-governance.

The university, in its social contract with democratic society, has been granted autonomy in pursuing its mission. But this does not mean that the university can proceed without further consultation. The social contract implies an obligation on the university to reflect upon these tasks, to

dynamism of globalization, this new responsibility is legitimate: the university is a place to create human capital, to undertake research, and then to help commercialize it. However, we should add another responsibility to the university's mission: the university has a responsibility to contribute to democratic life. The needs of our democracy in a knowledge-based society are just as pressing as the needs of our economy.

Each component of the bundle which is the university—undergraduate education, the professional schools, graduate education and research—has a crucial role in the liberal democracy of post-industrial society. Most fundamentally, because equality of opportunity is essential for democracy, university education in all its forms must be accessible to all who are capable and willing. Also, undergraduate education is, in part, an education for democratic citizenship. The universities are the gateways to the professions. The practice of all professions involves an imbalance between the professional and the client; and virtually all professions have been granted self-regulation rather than being regulated by government. Therefore, in a democratic society, it is important that all professionals be attentive to issues of the client's interest and the public interest. The university shares the responsibility to educate professionals for this

> Usually social criticism is regarded as an indirect implication of academic freedom, not an explicit responsibility. It should be made explicit.

articulate their value in society, to defend them when they are threatened, but also to reconsider them in light of evolving social needs.

In recent years, the research mission of the university has been extended under the pressures of two trends. The first is the shift in government policy toward treating support for university research as part of economic policy. The second is the demand that commercialization of research become an explicit responsibility of the university.

We have entered a "new economy" in which the prosperity of a nation will depend upon how it generates and adopts new technologies: ideas will explain the wealth of nations. John Evans, former president of the University of Toronto, declared: "We now live in a world in which the organized ability to create and commercialize new ideas is the critical determinant of economic success." It is little wonder that democratic governments now ask universities—and their professors—to take on this task.

This responsibility to economic life will not, nor should it, go away. Given the nature of technological change and the

attentiveness, on behalf of our democracy. In our knowledge-based society, political choices require assessment of complex questions. The university can contribute the understandings from scientific, social scientific and humanistic research to political deliberation.

The democratic mission of the university requires that professors accept the role of public intellectual. This role derives from the responsibility (and opportunity) to conduct research, under the guarantees of autonomy and academic freedom. Unlike other democratic institutions such as political parties or the media, the university is committed to research; it is an institution which allows sustained critical reflection and analysis.

The concept of a "public intellectual" is elusive, if commonly invoked. Writers use the term to mean widely different things. Many writers use the term "intellectual" or "public intellectual" to refer to the role of social critic. Edward Said, in his 1993 BBC Reith Lectures published as *Representations of the Intellectual*, declares the true intellectual is "someone whose place it is to publicly raise embarrassing questions, to con-

front orthodoxy and dogma…to be someone who cannot be easily co-opted by governments or corporations. …. the principal intellectual duty is the search for relative independence from such pressures. …. to speak truth to power."

It has long been recognized that academic freedom allows social criticism without risk of losing your job; but usually social criticism is regarded as an indirect implication of academic freedom, not an explicit responsibility of the university to political life. It should be made explicit. In a knowledge-based society, sustained critical reflection and analysis are essential to the articulation and evaluation of alternatives which are needed in the electoral process.

Universities have always been an important source of social criticism. Indeed, social criticism is inherent in much of the research enterprise of the social sciences and branches of philosophy such as political, legal, or moral philosophy. The work by the scholar to describe and explain the world is often undertaken with the hope that this knowledge will allow society to replace what is with something better. And ultimately society's support for this research is given in the belief that the new knowledge will be of benefit. Certainly, the massive government support for social science research which helped create the postwar university had such a motivation.

Social criticism is not the sole purpose of the social scientist or political philosopher. Nor do social scientists and political philosophers always address issues of right and wrong, justice, and equity. Certainly, many social scientists in the university have been political radicals or ardent reformers. But many, indeed most, professors in these fields see themselves as impartial, neutral scientists providing objective documentation and analysis of social phenomena. Yet, it is difficult to separate entirely social science and social criticism. Not each professor must be critic, but the university as a whole must accept the role. However, it is neither an easy role, nor without risks.

Although some professors and students see themselves as "activists" and welcome the role of critic, most professors and students are uneasy. Boards of governors, presidents, and senior administrators would prefer social criticism remain an indirect implication of autonomy and academic freedom, rather than an explicit responsibility to society. The university requires the support of the centres political and economic power; the role of critic could bring it into conflict with the powerful.

The dangers to the university of this role are evident and many. Research and teaching, which should be founded upon curiosity and tolerance, might become advocacy and intolerance. It might be that social criticism, like participation in partisan politics, spoils the habits of good scholarship. On the other hand, some social theorists are quite explicit in embracing this role: they identify university intellectuals and students as fundamental actors in social change. But however much the activists want the university to be the primary agent of social change, this is surely not what society wants under the social contract. The university's obligation, as an institution, is to remain neutral; its autonomy is at risk when activists demand that the university as an institution take explicit political stands.

In accepting the role of critic, professors risk betraying the essential character of disinterested free inquiry, civil debate, and institutional autonomy. This risk is real, and universities must guard against it vigilantly. Critical ideas and alternatives must be advanced according to the scholarly canons of respectful, evidence-based exchange.

We should use the term "public intellectual" in its broadest interpretation, which includes the role of critic, of the outsider speaking truth to power, but much else. In one sense, all professors are public intellectuals. New knowledge is disseminated—publicly—in the classroom through the teaching of undergraduate and graduate students, through continuing education, and through the publication of research. But, dissemination must not end there. The public has financed this research and therefore professors have a responsibility to discuss their research with the public. A professor becomes a 'public' intellectual when their writing or speaking reaches outside the university.

A professor is a public intellectual if their academic writing, produced according to the canons of scholarship in their discipline and intended as a contribution to scholarly knowledge, is accessible to the educated public. Such writing is more and more rare, but can be found most often in the work of historians. It can also be found in the work of some literary and cultural critics, and some political scientists, sociologists and philosophers. Reviews of their scholarly books can be found in the book sections of newspapers in large metropolitan areas.

Alternatively, a professor is also a public intellectual if they write and speak to explain their discipline and their research to the public. The research need not be related to public or cultural affairs. The research might help us understand why the sky is blue, or be a new biography of Elizabeth I, or be an economic analysis of trade along the Silk Road in Han dynasty China. The new knowledge is valued for its own sake. While often described as "popularizing" academic research, this is too pejorative a characterization. It is better seen as inviting the public to join in the life of the mind, to join in the world of ideas. This life and these ideas are valued for their own sake. Such a public intellectual contributes to liberal learning, not in the classroom, but in the wider public. To be such a public intellectual is to contribute to lifelong liberal learning.

However, almost all publishing by professors is now through academic journals and academic presses; the intended audience is other professors, students, and specialists. Little writing is directed to the public. The professor's role as a public intellectual has diminished because of the disciplinary organization of universities and increasing

specialization in the search for new knowledge. The very success of the research enterprise has alienated it from the sponsoring public.

It is obviously in the interests of professors and the university to speak publicly about the research enterprise, to engage the public imagination with the process and to explain the findings in accessible language. When the public is engaged, they will be more likely to support universities. But the role of public intellectual cannot be motivated by this instrumental purpose; rather it must be recognized as an obligation to democratic society. In post-industrial society, theoretical knowledge and new knowledge are increasingly important. Society finances the research at universities. The university, with its enormous privileges, has an obligation to make this knowledge as accessible as possible, to disseminate it as a public intellectual.

Universities have not emphasized this responsibility. Professors enjoying a profile as public intellectual invariably say that most of their colleagues are wary (they say that it takes you away from real research, or that addressing the public requires too much dumbing-down); other colleagues are hostile (you have given up the pursuit of truth for the pursuit of celebrity); and some are simply envious (you are successful and I wish could be like you). The systems of evaluation in academic life are not equipped to evaluate the contributions of public intellectuals to public dialogue; promotion and tenure committees seldom give these contributions much attention. This needs to change. The first steps would be to recognize explicitly this mission of the university and then to develop means to evaluate public contributions. Evaluation will be difficult, but no more difficult than evaluation of teaching. Then public contributions can be given weight in tenure, promotion and merit decisions. The time spent as a public intellectual is time spent on the mission of the university in a democratic society.

Given this mission, we can ask that universities be judged and held accountable for their contributions to democratic life. Great universities should be judged not just by the quality of their research, the learning of their students, and the contributions of their graduates, but also by the contributions of their professors to democratic society as public intellectuals. AM

George Fallis is a professor in the Department of Economics and the Division of Social Science at York University and author of Multiversities, Ideas, and Democracy (University of Toronto Press, 2007).

In a wide-ranging article, Université de Montréal's Jean-Claude Guédon contemplates some of the spin-offs from the networked computer and the impact on scholarly communication.

Digitizing and the Meaning of Knowledge

by Jean-Claude Guédon

BACK TO ORIGEN, THE CODEX AND THE HEXAPLA

A recent book by Anthony Grafton and Megan Williams provides an interesting, if somewhat unepected, backdrop to the observations that follow. It recounts the extraordinary efforts undertaken by Origen in the first half of the 3rd century CE to put some order in the biblical tradition. It also ties this exegetical and critical effort to the innovative use of a contemporary technology: the codex. Instead of using the noble scroll, Origen decided to take advantage of the page structure of the humble codex. Dividing each of two facing pages into three columns each, he began placing six texts side by side to compare them word for word. This monumental undertaking ultimately required many codices and is known as the Hexapla. Nothing but late fragments of the Hexapla survive.

Origen wanted to fix the biblical text, but, by making his method transparently clear, he also wanted to convince potential critics. Technology and linguistic skills were thus tightly knit to produce a foundational text. Ultimately, it would form the basis for the Christian canon.

Origen also introduced a form of critical reading that was rather uncommon in the 3rd century. Until then, writing was little more than a way to externalize memory. Reading was really a way to help reciting. The reader read aloud and, so to speak, was inhabited by the text projected by his own voice. Critical reading, by contrast, seeks to scrutinize the text and engineers a psychological space, a sense of distance, where the reader has an opportunity to exert his critical faculties.

Whether a reader of the Hexapla read aloud or not is of secondary importance here, even though there are intriguing links between critical and silent reading, but more crucial is the fact that reading the Hexapla is an activity aiming at questioning the text by reading laterally between several versions. The Hexapla layout encourages a skeptical and critical attitude. Reading becomes an analytical tool that questions texts as much as it deciphers them.

There is a deep irony in Origen's heroic effort. His aim was to provide a stable scriptural foundation for the Christian Church, but he failed to see that the critical method he used could never come to closure. To this day, scripture specialists

> Changes in communication technologies shift our relations to documents and transform the meaning we ascribe to their existence.

continue to debate and question the authenticity of various elements of the canon. Critical attitudes foster dynamic dialogues, not static solidity. Much of the Western intellectual tradition constantly grapples with this profound dilemma. It has given rise to a phrase that is really a kind of oxymoron: a "critical edition". A critical edition, although it presents itself as definitive, can never be more than a step in a never-ending journey. A canon established according to the rules and procedures explored by Origen had to meet the same fate.

The point of recounting this somewhat obscure phase of Christian history is to show that making use of certain communication technologies can transform our relationship to documents, as well as their functional, and ultimately cultural, meaning. It also shows that our intellectual tradition is pulled into two opposite directions: a quest for stable knowledge through a never-ending critical scrutiny

Changes in Scholarly Communication after the Second World War

After decades of conquests, some silent, some less so, the digital context is coming close to forming the new cultural environment within which we must learn to live, create and think. Now that we are fully alerted to the fact that mixing technology and knowledge can bring about unexpected as well as unintended consequences, we should certainly try to spot some of these. In other words, what are some of the changes bound to affect academic life most in the next couple of decades?

As a way to explore this complex issue, let us examine rapidly the question of scholarly and scientific communication as it is being transformed by the advent of the networked computer. Before the computer made its presence felt, scientific publishing had already undergone a number of significant transformations. For example, a bibliographic crisis emerged after the Second World War. It led to various solutions, the most significant of which was Eugene Garfield's invention of the Science Citation Index (SCI). However, the design of SCI rested on a series of decisions concerning inclusion and exclusion rules that contributed to defining science as a two-tier system: "core journals" , once identified, were separated from the rest.

The success of SCI led to the recognition by some astute businessmen (e.g. Robert Maxwell) that "core journals" also formed an inelastic market. In an inelastic market, demand is

little affected by price. The reason was that many librarians were attempting to buy at least the particular set of titles defined as "core" by SCI. This perception triggered a spiral of rapidly increasing subscription prices. Ultimately, the rising costs of journals came to be known as the "serial pricing crisis". It continues to this day and explains many of the difficulties our libraries have been meeting in trying to provide decent access to the needed literature. If access to the needed literature is often less than satisfactory, the fault is not the librarians'; neither is it the university budget, however constrained it has been. The fault largely lies with big commercial publishers and some scientific associations that insist on making enormous profits by exploiting the market of scientific journals once it had become inelastic.

One consequence of this situation has been the decline in library purchases of monographs. This is due to shifting part of the acquisition budget to journals to keep up with the demand of scientists. As social sciences and humanities rely heavily on monographs, they have suffered most from this new economic context of scholarly publishing . Then university presses began to adapt by shifting their publishing strategies. When universities also stopped subsidizing their presses, the situation grew worse. University presses increasingly hesitated to publish works that, although excellent, were judged to be too esoteric. Marketability increasingly trumped excellence even as university presses began to behave more and more like commercial presses.

The first victims of this trend were the young professors who desperately needed a first monograph to ensure their promotion and their tenure. Nearly 10 years ago, Robert Darnton analyzed the growing difficulties of monographs and those of young scholars when they try to transform a dissertation into a book. In 2002, Stephen Greenblatt, then president of the Modern Language Association, issued a public letter that reiterates many of the same points. Both Darnton and Greenblatt reflected on the consequences of the serials pricing crisis.

The Digitization of Scholarly Communication and its Consequences

The developments just described were happening without the benefit of computers or networks. However, when their presence began to be felt, it changed the way in which access to scholarly literature was transacted. Taking a

leaf out of the software industry, commercial publishers decided that digital materials could not be sold, as books and journals traditionally were, but simply licensed for use.

Licensing provided commercial entities with new levels of control over their materials, while placing the libraries in a much reduced position: librarians could buy licences, but they also had to make sure that access was restricted to legitimate members of their communities. Building collections in the absence of ownership lost much of its meaning. Preservation responsibilities seemed to fall into the lap of publishers, despite their ambivalence. In short, the librarian appeared to be in a position not so different from that of a gas-station attendant placing the nozzle of the knowledge pump into some digital reservoir but only after having checked the credentials of the person making the request.

This very first phase in the transition to the digital world reminds us that in any communication system, it is important to look at who can produce documents, who can preserve them, who can organize them in order to facilitate retrieval, who has access, and what can be done with the accessed document. A number of rules long organized around copyright laws were suddenly superseded by licensing rules that are contractual in nature. Also, 10 years ago, the art of contracting licences was quite esoteric among librarians. Meanwhile, we academics were going on with our usual business, largely impervious to the sea change that was taking place under our noses. As authors, academics act largely like peacocks and want to be featured in the "best" journals, whatever the cost to the library; as readers, academics want access to everything and if it is not available, they view it either as the fault of the librarians or as the responsibility of the university administrators. Again, as readers, academics simply do not see publishers and pricing issues. The same is almost as true of academics as authors: how many know the publisher of a coveted journal title?

Librarians reacted remarkably fast to the new digital context. Within a few years, they had formed consortia and taught themselves to negotiate better terms. Publishers reacted in their turn and began playing the bundling game. You want x hundred titles from our set of journals. We will license them for y hundred thousand dollars. However, if you take the whole set, we shall increase the total bill by only z per cent (of the order of 10-15 per cent at most). The result of this tactic often called the "Big Deal" has been that library budgets have increasingly been been used to pay large commercial publishers (particularly Reed-Elsevier, Springer, Wiley, and Taylor and Francis). Concurrently, it led to a decrease in subscriptions to independent association journals and smaller presses that faced increasingly difficult financial conditions. This pressure led to further concentration in the publishing world. The end result is that we now face an oligopolistic publishing system. Very few firms dominate academic publishing, and they extract profits that can reach and even exceed 40 per cent before taxes. Let us remember that we are talking about research articles made possible by large

amounts of public money supporting research and universities. They are given away by their authors when they sign their rights away. These articles are peer reviewed for free by other researchers. The result is then sold to libraries, often supported by public money.

The trend toward concentration in the publishing industry has also meant that, increasingly, the initiative of creating new journals rests with publishers. With few exceptions, they are the only players with the financial resources to invest in a new publication. As a result, they also acquire a voice in the selection of suitable editors. Being an editor is a powerful position in any academic field and being selected for this role amounts to a kind of promotion that stands beyond a full professorship. These gatekeepers of knowledge are selected through a complex interactive process between commercial interests and intellectual developments. By their choices and decisions, they are then in a position to affect the careers of many of their peers.

Also, publishers can closely monitor how researchers make use of their collections of articles through their servers. As a result, they are in a position to see which universities are using what part of the literature. The potential for conducting intelligence on research efforts, although rarely discussed or even mentioned, is very real, and privacy clauses protect only individuals, not institutions. Very little is known about this question, but in an age that characterizes itself as a "knowledge economy", with competition taking on global proportions, and with concerns about a "war on terrorism", imagining that such possibilities exist does not require great intellectual effort.

Reacting to some of the Consequences of Digitization through Open Access

Digitization and global networks have placed much more control and power in the hands of publishers. However, it has also spurred reaction. The most important to date has been the "open access movement". Brought about by scientists' and scholars' attempts to develop new electronic journals of their own, the largely dispersed efforts in favour of open access finally coalesced into a loose association of scientists and a number of institutions. In February 2002, under the aegis of the Open Society Institute and its Information Programme, a manifesto was made public. Known as the Budapest Open Access Initiative, it recalled the tradition and necessity of open dialog in scholarship, and it proposed to achieve the open access objective through a combination of self-archiving efforts by authors themselves and through the creation of open access journals.

First ignored by publishers, the movement began to gain some traction when the first open access journals emerged. Both the commercial firm Biomed Central and the non-profit organization Public Library of Science (PloS) began to field open access journals with a financial strategy that essentially shifted the cost of publishing upstream, on the side of the

authors or their proxy (funding agency, covering institution, etc). Shortly afterwards, libraries developed institutional repositories where authors could deposit their articles and see them properly curated. Interoperability concerns were also addressed with the Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting (OAI-PMH) protocol.

The open access movement became even more credible when a large number of journals and publishers offered a confusing, yet real, opportunity for self-archiving. From one publisher to the next, the rules differ, but, as they are listed in a web site, self-archiving is facilitated. At the same time, some open access journals, particularly PloS journals, quickly acquired a very enviable level of prestige. The early canard that open access journals were little more than vanity presses had been clearly refuted.

For open access, the most essential step emerged when funding agencies began to realize that it was to everybody's benefit, including their own, to have open access to the literature they funded. The Wellcome trust in the UK, was a leader in this regard, but some American and European institutions followed quickly. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) in the United States became a battle ground between publishers and open access supporters. Ultimately, open access won despite the deep pockets and lobbying efforts of the publishers. In December 2007, the large omnibus law signed by President Bush contained a provision stating that all research papers financed by NIH had to be deposited in NIH's repository at most 12 months after publication. Other funding institutes began to follow suit, notably Canadian Institutes of Health Research in Canada.

More recently still a new trend has begun to emerge. Starting with the Faculty of Arts and Science at Harvard, university senates or councils in various universities are grappling with the open access issue. In the case of Harvard, it was unanimously decided that faculty had to deposit their articles in a suitable university repository. It now looks as if a growing number of faculties and universities are moving in the direction of mandating the deposit of research articles in open access repositories. Modalities change from one institution to the next, in particular time delays, but the trend is clear.

What the ultmate consequences of these transformations will be are unknown. Also, our present situation is highly conflictual. The battles waged in the governmental corridors in Washington, Brussels and, more locally, Ottawa, contribute

to this obscurity. Finally, we must not discount the fact that digital document are also very recent. "Digital Incunabula" — the production of scholarly works in digital form—is a phrase that Tufts University Professor of Classics and scholar of digital technology Gregory Crane has floated with some success, and indeed it fits the present situation.

OPEN ACCESS AND THE NEW POSSIBILITIES OFFERED BY DIGITIZATION

As open access takes on strength and visibility, new possibilities appear. The capacity to link documents together constantly grows in importance. Linking research articles with their underlying data is also being increasingly discussed. Researchers are not yet used to sharing data with others. But, with computers, new forms of exploitation of vast corpora of documents and data are becoming possible. Even a perfunctory use of Google makes this point clear. In the end, one may even wonder whether the venerable article and the mode of publishing it has generated for the last three and a half centuries will make sense much longer in the new environment.

In the end, exactly as Origen has taught us, the changes in communication technologies shift our relations to documents and transform the meaning we ascribe to their existence. If this is true, then it is time to go back to fundamentals. Fundamentally, science is open knowledge and its energy flashes out of the shock of ideas. The end result of this fundamentally agonistic activity is a critical edition of sorts, always striving to reach perfection, yet never ended or ending. Seen from on high, science is little more than an endless concatenation of texts that correct or refute each other, topic by topic, argument by argument, fact by fact. One might say, however scandalous this might sound at present, that science is a kind of Wikipedia, but a Wikipedia where attribution is closely monitored and where participation depends on credentials. If this characterization of science succeeds in capturing some of its essence, it becomes legitimate to ask whether the researcher will still be an "author" of "articles" 30 years from now. The author form is a child of print, and authorship is different from attribution. Whether authorship will still be needed in a few decades is a question well worth asking.

The answer is far from certain. But, in one way or another, the conversation between academic peacocks will go on, endlessly striving to reach the impossible Holy Grail through endless critical efforts. This Holy Grail is sometimes called the big TOE (Theory of Everything). It works somewhat like a canon as imagined by Origen. In fact, the new Hexapla is the complex hypertext of scientific knowledge made possible by the web. But a choice remains before us: will scientists and scholars finally recover the control over the tools needed for their great conversation, or will it increasingly be taken over by commercial interests? This is what open access is all about. AM

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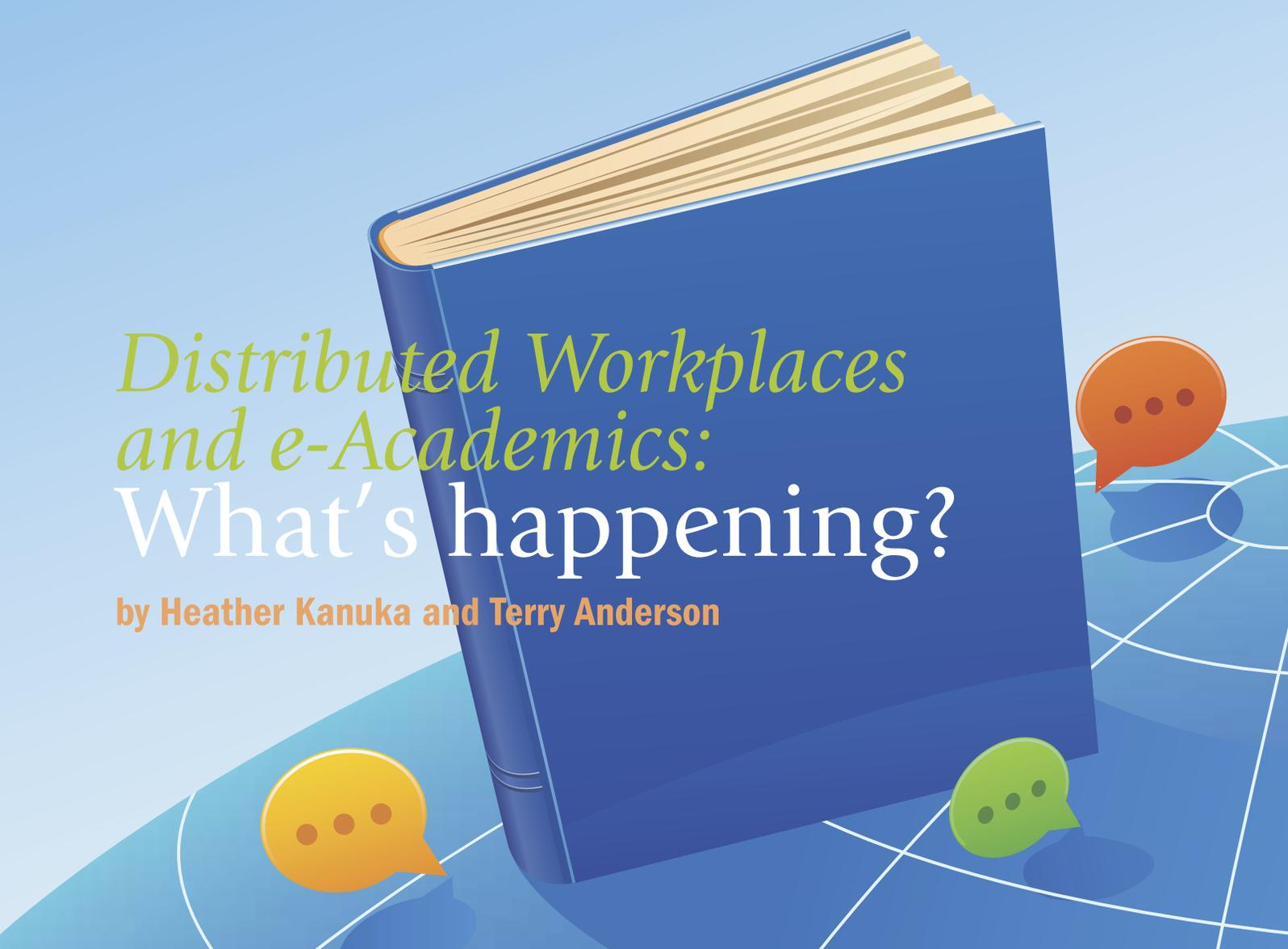
Distributed Workplaces and e-Academics:
What's happening?

by Heather Kanuka and Terry Anderson

University of Alberta's Heather Kanuka and Athabasca University's Terry Anderson investigate the challenges of creating academic workplaces and communities in cyberspace.

Over the last two decades we have witnessed dramatic changes in the nature of information and communication technologies and their application in higher education. Within academia, we see a growing imperative to integrate new and emerging information and communication technologies into all aspects of our workplace. There exists a large and diverse corpus of literature on the effects of technologies in the teaching and learning process, leadership and administration, globablization and internationalization, professional development, and policy. Noticeably absent in this body of literature are investigations into the effects of the technological communication innovations in the academic workplace.

In particular, web communication technologies are influencing the way academics are working. As most of us in the academy are beginning to notice, many of our colleagues are not in their on-campus offices. Not only are many academics teaching their courses off-campus, but much of their research and scholarly activities can also be conducted off campus. For example, data collection and library searches have given way to online searches, and many different kinds of data can be collected using communication tools—and in many cases very cost effectively. The result is the creation of (intentionally, or by accident) a distributed work environment.

At this point in time, we have little understanding of the effects of a distributed work environment in institutions of higher education. Are we abandoning our colleagues in cyberspace? Or is this trend resulting in the creation of virtual academic communities? And if so, are these communities enhancing, replacing or damaging academic culture?

Depending on who we talk to, the answers seem to be yes and no.

A number of institutions have noticed this trend and begun to offer teleworking options for their fulltime academics. In Canada, Athabasca University decided to pilot a teleworking policy for its academics. The pilot ran from 2005 to 2008. Like other universities in Canada and beyond, planning for succession and retention is a high priority. Administrators of post secondary institutions are implementing creative efforts to keep senior faculty from moving into early retirement as well as to recruit promising new scholars into academia—rather than to risk their opting for more lucrative jobs in the private sector or being attracted to larger or more prestigious universities.

Teleworking—which offers the freedom to work whenever and where ever—is being viewed as a promising option. Teleworking refers to the practice of employees working away from the conventional office (e.g., at a home office, satellite office or neighborhood work centre) and communicating with the organization through the use of telecommunication technologies. Requirements for attendance by teleworkers at the employers' premises range from "as needed," to weekly, monthly and, rarely, to "never." Attendance for teaching campus-based courses offers a compelling rationale for faculty attendance, but more universities are offering courses at a distance, using a variety of communication technologies. The reduction of compulsory attendance activity, coupled with time and place shifting technologies used to support administrative activities, reduces the need for academics to physically come to campus.

While relatively new to academia, the notion of teleworking is not new in the corporate sector. The effects have been studied, with well-documented benefits and drawbacks. This research shows that teleworking can, in many ways, be an attractive option for both the employer and the employee. Benefits cited in this literature include:
- flexibility in personal and family scheduling, especially dual-career couples
- more positive views about family and personal life than employees working in on-site offices
- increased productivity and work quality
- less distraction and fewer interruptions
- an ability to work during the most productive part of the day
- time saved from commuting
- an increase in perceived job satisfaction

Drawbacks cited in the literature are:
- increase in turnover intentions
- the lack of contact (e.g. being out of sight) limits opportunities for informal socialization, promotion and organizational rewards
- loneliness and a sense of isolation from the organization

The feeling of belonging to an academic community is incubated by face-to-face learning interactions.

At first glance, the list of benefits clearly outweighs the drawbacks. However, these drawbacks can easily translate into serious workplace problems in academic environments when not accommodated in some manner. For example, when universities function with central, integrated units (and most do) and faculty members are distributed, the balance of power between administration and individual faculty can become unhinged and top-heavy. Decisions on how the university functions tend to move to those in the central, integrated units located on-campus. This situation arises from the lack of contact between colleagues and a lack of identification with the institution by those academics choosing to be teleworkers. Additionally, research has shown that as identification with an institution and commitment decreases so does the contribution to the institution and job satisfaction. The result is erosion of institutional loyalty and an upsurge in turnover intentions. Ergo: it is questionable if teleworking policies are effective at achieving one of its main goals—retention—while at the same time resulting in the potential for unbalanced institutional power structures. In addition to reduced institutional attachment and identification, many employees in distributed work environments experience feelings of isolation. Though, it needs to be noted, research has shown that this can be easily decreased when there is regular, planned and regulated contact and collaboration amongst colleagues.

To determine if these same opportunities and challenges were evolving at Athabasca University we conducted an institutional survey (Kanuka, Heller, Jugdev & West, 2008). Perhaps not surprisingly, we found similar results. The data in this study revealed that the academics choosing to be teleworkers did so for many of the same benefits cited above; the data also showed that they experienced feelings of isolation, a disconnect with the institution and fewer opportunities to make meaningful contributions to the institution through committee work. Also consistent with prior literature, the data indicated contact with colleagues through continuous learning and research activities helped defray feelings of isolation. Other unresolved issues which tend to frustrate academics opting to be a teleworkers revolve around additional expenses incurred when working from an off-campus office: desks, printers, travel to campus, internet connectivity, etc.

Additional comments also revealed that a possible solution is the delivery of continuous learning activities via digitally-based web-spaces. Using, for example, Web 2.0 communication tools, teleworkers can participate and/or access information, attend functions and collaborate from their home office. The survey data also indicate there is a desire by teleworkers to attend face-to-face workshops, with the

assumption that time and travel to attend would be paid for by the institution. Given that a university's most valuable and expensive resource is its academics, and a university's future is dependent upon the success of its academics, providing funding for time and travel may be a wise investment.

Analyzing the results of our study, we concluded that academics who choose to be teleworkers at Athabasca University, and in particular new hires, want to be connected with like-minded colleagues in the development of innovative and nurturing interactions that support excellence in instruction, and research. They also want to contribute to the direction and growth of the institution.

But we also discovered that if left unattended, academics working in a distributed work environment are likely to experience a sense of isolation. Other research shows that the sense of isolation often progresses toward exasperation, disillusionment and eventual alienation. Educator and author Parker Palmer explains (in his seminal book *The Courage to Teach*, 1999) how collegial socialization is an essential aspect of continuous learning activities. Without collegial socialization, a privatization of work evolves which "creates more than individual pain; it creates institutional incompetence as well." He asserts, further, that the outcome of privatized teaching results in performance that is more conservative, rarely straying from what is "tried and true"—even when it does not work. Our institutional study reveals evidence of resistance to move from the "tried and true" and what Palmer refers to as the "silent consensus."

On the upside, our survey data also revealed, consistent with prior research, that institutional offerings for collegial and continuous learning activities could result in an increase in job satisfaction and work performance. Further, prior research has also confirmed that when continuous learning and involvement opportunities are offered, it can result in improving relationships between teleworkers and the institution. It would, therefore, seem reasonable to conclude the provision of continuous learning activities facilitates a culture that supports academic growth and development, while fostering connectedness between and among colleagues and the institution. While not a new concept, the creation of these kinds of collaborative learning activities is commonly referred to as learning communities or communities of practice.

For a variety of reasons, a "coming together", face-to-face, in distributed workplace environments is difficult—as is the case with Athabasca University. Working within these constraints, we explored the notion of creating a "virtual" academic learning community as an alternative. Our initial efforts began with a new listserv and an invitation email for our colleagues to join us in a collegial discussion on issues of importance in teaching and learning at Athabasca University. These discussions were facilitated using Elluminate (a web-based, synchronous audio system), with planned sessions once a month. From the start, participation by Athabasca University academics was uninspiring (5-10 participants,

including two moderators). After a few sessions, with dwindling participation numbers, we discontinued our efforts to to create a virtual learning community.

At this point in time, we had only explored the creation of a *managed* virtual academic community whereby we created and facilitated the virtual community toward our interests, and were consistent with our institution's aims. However,

despite our good intentions, we seemed to lack an informed understanding of the complexities of forming and supporting a virtual learning environment for academics in a manner that is both effective and sustainable.

We decided to conduct another study exploring whether academic support and development units were successful at fostering communities of practice through communication technologies, and if so, how. Of interest is how Internet digital communication tools (e.g., Web 2.0) might be reshaping possibilities for collaboration and the creation of virtual academic communities. One question we investigated is whether a community can be constructed for a group of people or whether it must emerge on its own.

The data from our second study revealed that we are not alone in our inability to sustain virtual academic learning communities—proving once again that it is easier to build an online environment than it is to populate that space. The participants interviewed in this study stated that it was the face-to-face contact and meetings that led to developing and sustaining an academic community. Virtual environments tended to be viewed as not having key mechanisms for initiating a learning community. The provision of physical learning spaces and opportunity appears to be necessary for fostering a sense of community. In particular, the feeling of belonging to an academic community is incubated by face-to-face learning interactions.

The results of this study also indicate that academic communities are more likely to emerge with structured learning or administration experiences than with the more emergent and ad hoc communities that might arise through the spontaneous use of web technologies. Participants were cognisant of the knowledge, skills and effort required to cultivate effective academic learning communities. Our findings suggest that it is a struggle to nurture and sustain virtual academic learning communities. Much of the literature concurs, suggesting that this process is not easy and that strategies for community support must be diverse, stimulating, and be perceived as adding value to academics' busy lives.

As we were analysing these data, we noticed that one approach, used by all participants in our study, is to begin the process of creating virtual academic learning communities through face-to-face events. This brings academics together initially, providing a place to connect with like-minded colleagues. Once connections are formed and established face-to-face (often through sustained activities, such as cohort-based certificate programs), virtual learning spaces tend to be more successful and sustainable. Most successful online communities depend upon a range of tools beginning with both real time and asynchronous communication using text, audio and video media—including of course the ubiquitous email list. Communities also need tools to support the collaborative construction of documents, including versioning and robust permissions for access and editing. Finally, notification and presence tools that provide members with awareness of the presence and contributions of their community help community members stay connected with each other. Many of us have noted (and some are shocked) at the time and effort millions of users devote to Facebook, MySpace and other social software mega sites, as well as the level of disclosure on these sites. However, academics seem less interested in expending limited time resources on purely social interaction. Thus, the community of practice must add value and not just consume time—pleasurable as that might be for some. Most academics are not early adopters of networked technologies and thus continuing efforts at support and exposure are usually key to developing effective virtual communities.

It was noted by our participants that community building is a labour intensive approach that requires resources, such as a community coordinator to moderate and to keep the dialogue going. Moderators are key to introducing new issues, summarizing, tying topics together, and moving the discussion to deeper levels. Effort, commitment and some charisma are required in order to cultivate and sustain virtual academic communities. A virtual learning community will not form without a champion, a purpose, and easy to use, yet powerful, tools.

The gap between the advantages of present communication tools, such a Web 2.0, and the way academics are using them is a catalyst for research on sustainable virtual academic communities. At present, we need a better understanding of the theoretical and practical approaches required to develop effective virtual learning communities. Drawing on the results of our data, initiatives should consider offering several approaches: combine formal and non-formal online learning programs; allow for both individual and collaborative activities; create online spaces that are easy to use and navigate; and provide opportunity for spontaneous interactions that embed virtual communities within the regular information space of the institution's web presence. Some virtual academic communities will likely evolve through more on-campus, less virtual activities; some will form resulting from a charismatic champion who manages and moderates the environment; and some will be emergent and organic, self-created by academics. Each of these possibilities provides avenues for the creation of virtual academic communities. Whatever the form or structure, with the increase in distributed workplaces, we need to continue to explore creative ways to build and sustain effective virtual academic communities. AM

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References cited and the research methodology can be found in the web-version of this article at www.academicmatters.ca

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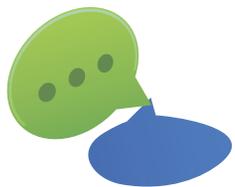
Steve Penfold

Internationalization and a mob from Manitoba

BY NOW, IT SEEMS PRETTY CLEAR that the staff at Academic Matters hate me. On the surface, they seem like a friendly enough bunch. They have been surprisingly patient with my somewhat postmodern notion of deadlines and, at some point, they took me out to lunch.

But over time, their deeper, more malevolent intentions have become all too clear. Exhibit A: the succession of topics – from religion through equity to environmentalism – about which they expect me to be funny. I realize these are important and interesting topics, but can you imagine anything less amusing than a fully-employed, middle-aged white guy waxing sarcastic about equity? How about the never-baptized son-of-a-Catholic cracking jokes about religion? I think it's obvious that my comedic standards are pretty low, but I don't want mobs forming outside my office.

Exhibit B: imagine my shock and awe when they phoned to announce "internationalization" as the theme of the next issue. I'll admit that I experienced an initial flush of enthusiasm. I mean, "internationalization" has got to be easy to make funny, since it already sounds like a punch line. How many vice-presidents laid end to end would it take to get to Davos? Why did the chicken cross the border? That sort of thing. And it scores so deliciously high on the Buzzwordiness Scale (BS) – it's being a concept impossible to oppose, like good health or personal ethics. "Good living will only prolong my suffering," my Uncle Ralph says, but even he wouldn't object to learning more about the world.

Are we supposed to think that "national" is the parochial status quo from which internationalization is going to save us? Here at the University of Toronto we like to think our civilizing light is projected to the very darkest corners of Canada, perhaps even as far as Winnipeg. But after a lifetime of local commutes and global migrations, my Canadian history students know an astonishing amount about Markham (a suburb of Toronto) and Milan (not a suburb of Toronto), but almost nothing about Manitoba. That sort of M-factor makes them much more worldly than me. My border-crossing experiences have been confined to childhood trips to visit my Aunt Doll in Cincinnati, a kind of cultural knowledge you won't find in many university Mission Statements. But it's over 2000 kilometres from Markham to Manitoba, so if we're supposed to be internationalizing our students to save them from the status quo of "national" parochialism, we're at least a three-day drive from the status quo. At that rate, reaching even it would take years of effort and buckets of public money.

In the end, though, I can't work up much energy for waxing sarcastic about buzzwords. When I was in grad school, breaking down the walls between the university and the local community was all the rage and, of course, the buzzwords buzzed: community outreach, public knowledge, shared authority, and so on. Few of these lived up to their transformative promise, but so what? Even if my stint making photocopies at the Bracebridge Museum of Acute Aeronautic Failure was not a utopian act of democratic knowledge production, it was infinitely preferable to publishing my grad papers in *Duh: The Journal of Obvious Research on Obscure Topics.*

So let the vice-presidents buzz. The worst that can happen is that I learn something about a place more interesting than Cincinnati. Besides, I have much bigger problems. A mob is gathering outside my office. They appear to be Manitobans, and I don't think they want to take me to lunch.

Steve Penfold is Academic Matters' humour columnist. He moonlights as an associate professor of history at the University of Toronto. His most recent book is The Donut: A Canadian History (University of Toronto Press, 2008).

Editorial Matters
Mark Rosenfeld

Going Global

DURING THE PAST DECADE, cross-border (or offshore) initiatives of Canadian universities have expanded, accompanied by more internationalization of our campuses. Degree and diploma programs, branch campuses, and stand-alone institutions with Canadian university involvement have been established or planned in countries around the globe.

Western's Ivey School of Business has a campus in Hong Kong. Carleton University's Sprott School of Business offers programs in India, China, and Iran. The University of Calgary has a nursing program in Qatar. Ahram Canadian University is a private institution in Cairo established with the cooperation of several Canadian universities.

How extensive is this activity? While some surveys and data are available, and we know that three-quarters of Canadian universities provide education and training outside the country, there are no comprehensive studies of these initiatives, particularly in comparison to the United Kingdom and Australia, whose offshore university ventures are more extensive than here.

The lack of comprehensive information about Canadian university offshore activity makes it difficult answer questions such as: How well regulated? What financial and quality control measures are there? What's the impact on the direction and mission of Canadian universities?

In her wide-ranging article in this issue on trends in the internationalization of higher education, Jane Knight raises critical questions about both the planned and unintended consequences of this activity. She ponders the impact of these cross-border initiatives on the role, purpose, and values of higher education. She asks "how an increased emphasis on the 'buying and selling' of education across borders will affect the nature and priority given to academic, social and cultural rationales of non-profit international education activities." Do Western universities provide opportunities to promote cross-cultural understanding and "the hybridization of culture", or are indigenous cultures being Westernized under a new form of colonialism?

Canadian faculty are pivotal to the internationalization enterprise. Faculty play a key role in the development of offshore courses. They teach in offshore campuses. They set quality standards for offshore programs. And they are ambassadors for their institutions.

We know, however, very little about the experience of Canadian faculty involved in offshore initiatives, but a few years ago the National Tertiary Education Union conducted extensive research into the experience of faculty teaching in offshore Australian university programs in the Asia-Pacific region. It is one of the few studies done on this subject, and its findings are sobering.

The study observed that Australian university policies and practices governing staff involvement in offshore operations were either largely unregulated, or very loosely regulated. Policies regarding, for example, staff consultation, offshore facilities for staff, intellectual property rights, and staff development and remuneration varied widely not only between universities but also within university faculties and departments.

There was insufficient consultation with faculty delivering offshore courses, especially concerning the impact of these courses on academic workloads, the willingness of staff to participate in offshore programs, and the preparation time and resources needed to deliver them.

Quality concerns were highlighted, such as inadequate teaching credentials of staff employed by an offshore partner of an Australian university, pressures to pass students, and limited monitoring of students' work. The report noted that while offshore work was often presented as voluntary, there were pressures on faculty to take on offshore assignments that resulted in greater workloads. Other issues included insufficient opportunities for staff training and development; health and safety strains on staff required to travel frequently; and inadequate arrangements for covering the domestic campus responsibilities of staff teaching offshore.

Canadian faculty's involvement in education abroad should raise similar questions and concerns to those identified in the Australian study. What protections exist for academic freedom? At what point does attention to cultural or political sensitivities undercut the academic integrity of an offshore program and the academic freedom of the instructor? What role, if any, is there for collegial governance? How is workload regulated?

As Canadian universities expand their global reach, and these issues become more pressing, faculty and faculty representatives will have to address them.

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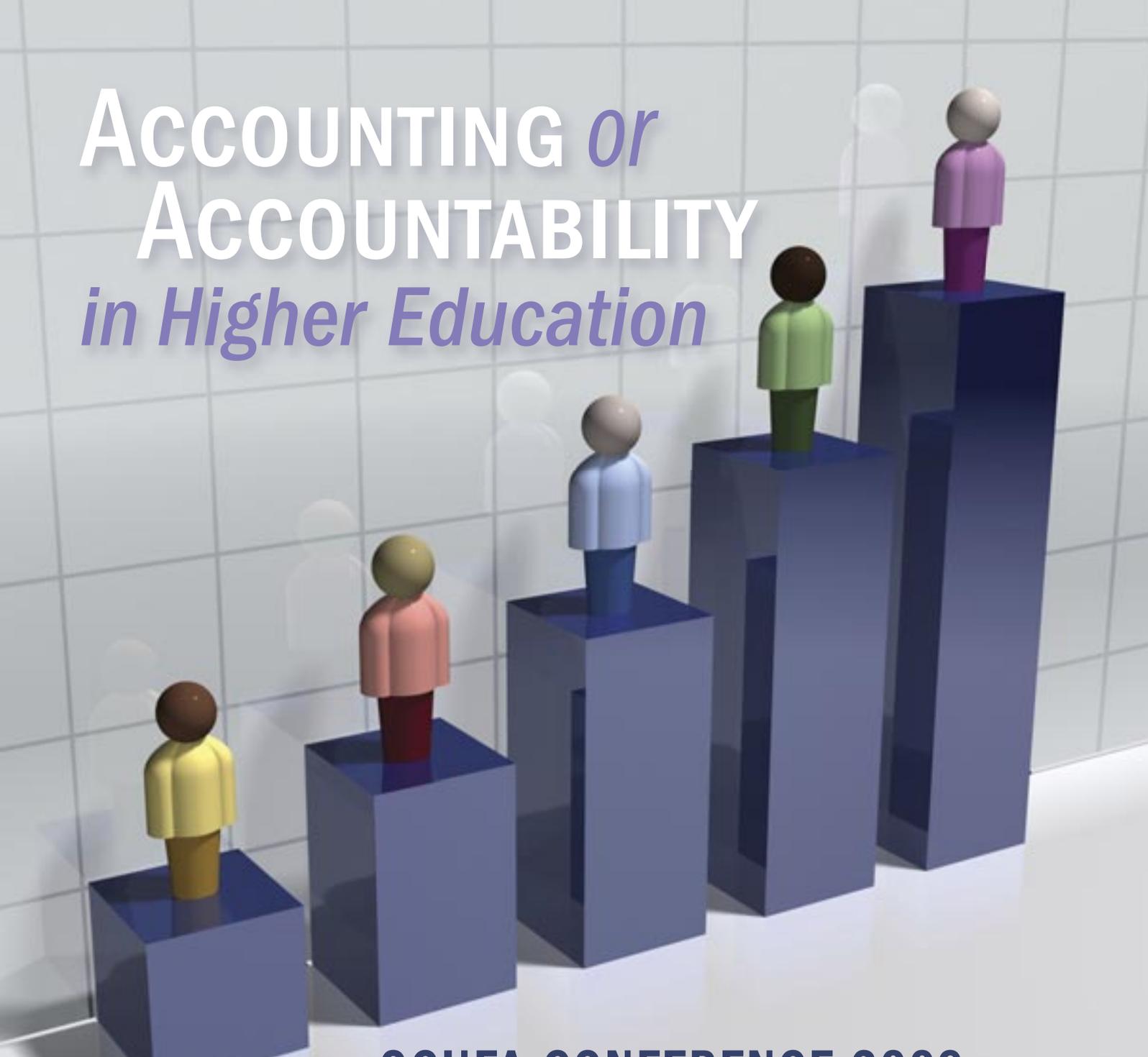
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Ellen Hazelkorn, Director, Higher Education Policy Research Unit (HEPRU), Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland
Glen Jones, Ontario Research Chair in Postsecondary Education Policy and Measurement, OISE/University of Toronto
Theresa Shanahan, Faculty of Education, York University
Amy Metcalfe, Department of Educational Studies, University of British Columbia
Tony Keller, Managing Editor, Maclean's magazine;
Alex Usher, Vice-President, Educational Policy Institute
Ken Steele, Senior Vice-President, Academica Group

SPEAKERS INCLUDE

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