NAFSA

The Changing Landscape of Higher Education (The World is Flat . . . What about Higher Education)

Kansas City MO June 4th 2010

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Objectives

• Focus on realities facing U.S. and higher education

• Overview of the Bologna Process
  • The most significant higher education transformation effort
  • Plus points and Minus points

• Implications and opportunities for U.S.

Realities

• Economy

• Demographics

• Technology

• Need to increase % Americans with high quality degrees

• How we define quality

• Workforce relevant – 21st Century Competencies
Expenditure Rates on Students
OECD Countries 2007

Why should American Higher Education be interested in the Bologna Process?

- Change process
- Student centered higher education system
- Global higher education, economy, competitiveness

What is the Bologna Process
- It involves 16 million students in 46 countries, with over 4000 institutions of higher education, some of which have been doing business the same way for 800 years.
- They have agreed to adopt common rules for degrees, credits, certification, communication of student outcomes.
- The song will at least be in the same key, though not necessarily the same tune.
- It is likely to be the global paradigm for higher education within 15 years (Latin America, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, China, India already taking serious note).
- It offers a model of accountability.
- It is the largest restructuring of higher education ever undertaken.

----------- It is not perfect or symmetrical -----------
What is the change in the Bologna Process

• Voluntary and outside traditional policy, legal and regulatory schemes
• Driven by shared objectives, norms, vocabulary, and interlocking, collaborative initiatives (Tuning, ECTS, qualifications frameworks, diploma supplement, quality, student centered)
• Implementation driven by peer pressure, periodic progress reports, and perceived benefits rather than by law or mandates
• Ongoing – 2010 is here, 2020 is the next goal point

The Substantive Agenda of the Bologna Process

• Promotion of mobility, quality assurance, degree cycles, widening participation (“the social dimension”), lifelong learning, and the “European dimension.”
• The common approach to these objectives is student-centered higher education based on flexible learning paths, common reference points, workload awareness, credit accumulation and transfer, and
• Learning outcomes (defining them and building programs and structures around them) are central to the entire process.

Defining and aligning learning outcomes
Why ................................?

Tuning USA
What is Tuning and where did it come from:
• Tuning has been said to be the faculty antidote to Bologna
• It is and always has been a faculty led project across many
disciplines that turned into a process
• It is not universally used or accepted in Europe but does have real
influence, and
• It is now adopted as a key part of Bologna [level learning
outcomes, workload, student assessment, learning, students, active
learning outcomes], and
• It is now used or in pilot process in Latin America, Mexico,
Australia, parts of the USA
• It is different from other learning outcome projects
• It is a living process and so changes, adapts, melds

**** “know, understand and be able to do” ****

Tuning USA Pilot
The Pilot Project (March-November 2009):
• 3 States – Utah, Minnesota, Indiana
• 6 disciplines
• 20+ institutions across the whole sector (2 Year, 4
Year, Flagship)
• Tuning methodology in use –
• 4 way survey – general competencies
  - subject competencies
• Faculty led at all stages
What do faculty say about Tuning?

Creates meaningful relationships between faculty members from different institutions

Increases focus on general competencies — existing approaches mainly focus only on subject matter mastery

Involves employers and alumni, as well as faculty and students, in thinking about what degrees represent

Shifts focus from what is taught to what students must learn

Makes explicit the implicit expectations of previous work

Ties academic to academic, workforce, and societal expectations

Led by faculty and a defense against accountability from above

What comes next?
National Approaches to Quality and Learning

Qualifications (degree) frameworks describe the levels and types of learning outcomes required to achieve a degree at a particular level ("ratchet up").

They provide a common framework, language, and methodology for defining learning outcomes.

Most countries and regions use qualification frameworks to define degree levels and learning outcomes — it is found to be a useful tool (that then needs attention, up-dating etc).

Gains from such a Degree Framework (df)
Approach include:

• Provides a framework for being explicit about quality

• Quality is defined in terms of student learning outcomes

• Df is a tool for framing:
  — Preparation
  — Success
  — Productivity

As well as the essential element of student learning outcomes
**Bologna is leading to ...**

- Reform of curricula and teaching methodologies
- Innovation in courses, degrees, learning, student assessment (all within a recognisable framework)
- Expansion of student services such as advising and information services and more attention to diverse student needs in Quality Assurance processes
- Improved student transitions between institutions and more opportunities to combine degrees of different orientations
- Greater institutional attention to employability at all levels (more external engagement)
- Expansion of recognition of prior learning and experience
- Greater institutional autonomy

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**Is any of this relevant to the US? We believe the answer is yes.**

- Increasing the number of degrees we award necessitates attention to their quality and a need to render their meaning more transparent
- It is time to redefine higher education quality in terms of student outcomes rather than institutional characteristics
- We must provide all students, but particularly those who have not participated in higher education in the past, clear indications of their pathways through higher education based on what they will learn and be able to do at each stage
- All stakeholders will benefit from making the implicit, explicit.

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**How can the U.S. Implement a significant higher education change process given the diverse and complex landscape**

- Federal/National/Regional/State
- Diversity of institutions (public (2 year, 4 year, doctoral), private (for profit, not for profit), religious affiliation etc
- Recommendation: National Accreditors Build on Accountability Debate
What does this mean to the people in this room?

FAQs
• What does a BA mean?
• How should higher education engage in the accountability debate?
• How do we create systems that focus on student learning?
• What can we learn from what is going on in other countries?
• How do we protect institutional autonomy and academic freedom?
• How do we create an urgency for change within the system?
• Where do we start?