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**“Globalizing with a Conscience:
The Implications of Privatization in Higher Education”**

The growing privatization of higher education will have a far more profound impact on postsecondary institutions—and the world—because of one trend in particular: globalization. At the moment, among US institutions the for-profits like Phoenix and Sylvan are driving the trend toward becoming true global institutions of higher learning. A number of foreign non-profits, such as Monash University and the British Open University, have firmly established themselves as being on the move globally. And following in their wake is a large group of “for-revenue” institutions, or “not-for-loss” institutions as Clark Kerr has called them—non-profit institutions that are seeking new revenue streams to cross-subsidize and support their growing array of activities. Helped in their quest by new technologies and the spread of globalization, institutions of all kinds are reaching out across the world in search of revenues and the prestige associated with being a “global university.”

Higher education is teetering on the brink of full-scale globalization. We have yet to see many higher education institutions that have “gone global” in the same manner as Coca-Cola or Exxon Mobil. At this point, the types of globalizing activities we see are more akin to “dipping a toe in the water”: a handful of branch campuses; alliances with foreign universities or corporations; global franchising; recruitment and exchange programs with foreign students or faculty; and global online consortia. But current trends portend a major change in the way that institutions—both for-profit and non-profit—will

operate over the next decade, and that change brings with it both great opportunities and great risks. What does this mean for higher education's role as a public good? What are the implications for the way that non-profits operate? Will globalization mean *progress for*, or merely the *purchase of*, the world's education?

Growing Enrollments and Growing Private Investment Create a Sterling Market

The allure of privatization is obvious: the global higher education market has great financial potential. Global trade in higher education services for 1999 was estimated to be \$30 billion.ⁱ Currently there are 88 million university students worldwide – a 300% increase from 30 years ago.ⁱⁱ Estimates from the investment community put the global demand for higher education at 160 million students by 2025 with the likelihood that 45 million students will be online.ⁱⁱⁱ Overall growth forecasts of this proportion are bound to push the growth of global trade in higher education even faster.

A significant portion of the growth in enrollments has occurred in the developing world, with student enrollments in higher education increasing from almost 28 million in 1980 to upwards of 47 million in 1995.^{iv} The number of tertiary students in Latin America and the Caribbean more than doubled between 1975 and 1995, and grew almost tenfold in that time period for Sub-Saharan Africa.^v

In Asia alone, one estimate is that the demand for postsecondary education will grow from 17 million in 2002 to 87 million in 2025.^{vi} For Malaysia to expand the proportion of 18-22 year olds in higher education from its current 14% to 40%, they will need to add 5.4 million seats in higher education. China aims to expand enrollments to 16 million students by 2005, up from just 3 million in 2002.^{vii} Thailand needs to build a

university each year to accommodate 20,000 students if it is to keep up with its increased demand.^{viii}

We have seen similar growth in Europe. Between 1995 and 1999, enrollments in higher education grew by more than 30% in Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Greece and Austria.^{ix}

At the same time that enrollments are growing, private investments in higher education are rising. Even countries with established higher education systems that could be stretched are turning to privatization to help accommodate increased enrollments. Private spending on higher education rose by more than 30% between 1995 and 1998 in Australia, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Turkey. Eighty-three percent of all higher education funding comes from private sources in South Korea.^x Roughly half of South African students are enrolled in private institutions.^{xi}

These market and enrollment estimates should be viewed with caution, but even if we believe that only a fraction of the forecasts are true, the point is the same. This demand simply cannot be met by governments building public, traditional brick and mortar institutions. Non-traditional higher education approaches (online, for-profit, privates in historically all-public systems, branch campuses in foreign countries) will have to be a part of the future.

The Global Rise of Private, For-Profit Colleges and Universities

As higher education has become a more intensely competitive and global market, a number of institutions have begun to aggressively pursue both revenues and prestige. Within this broader market, private, for-profit colleges and universities are involved in some of the most interesting—and visible—activity the world over.

American for-profit institutions are globalizing in ways that look a lot like the initial outreach of today's biggest multinational corporations. The University of Phoenix is extending operations into Brazil, India, the Netherlands and Mexico.^{xii} DeVry Inc., the nation's second-largest higher-education company with annual revenues of more than \$648-million, has diversified and globalized itself through the purchase of Ross University, which is a medical and veterinary school in the Caribbean (in Dominica and Saint Kitts and Nevis).^{xiii} Sylvan Learning, which is divesting itself of K-12 activities to focus on higher education, has been acquiring small private universities around the world. Sylvan now operates a total of eight campuses in Chile, France, Mexico, Spain, Switzerland and India.^{xiv}

The growth of private institutions in other countries has been impressive as well. Some of the new institutions are non-profits with philanthropic intent, others are for-profits established by entrepreneurs who see a profitable market, still others are branch campuses established by foreign institutions seeking a revenue stream. Though the exact breakdown of non-profit vs. for-profit in these private institutions is not known, the general consensus seems to be that they are primarily for-profit.

Prior to 1989, there were no private universities in Central and Eastern Europe. Private higher education in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Romania grew at an average annual rate of almost 60 percent between 1990, when less than 12,000 students were enrolled in the private sector, and 1997, when 320,000 students were enrolled.^{xv} By 2000-2001, Poland had 195 institutions enrolling 30% of the total student population, and Romania had 83 institutions enrolling 29% of students.^{xvi} Poland's largest for-profit institution, the Academy of Humanities and Economics, enrolls 20,000

students and is currently being reviewed for approval to offer Ph.D. programs.^{xvii} The same trends are evident around the globe:

- A recent study of private higher education in Brazil revealed that nearly 80% of its institutions are private, enrolling 60% of students.^{xviii}
- The number of authorized private higher education institutions in Benin jumped from zero in the early 1990s to 27 by 1998, capturing 16.72 percent of all higher education enrollments.^{xix}
- In Malaysia, private higher education institutions rose in number from 156 in 1992 to 564 in 1999, and experienced enrollment growth from about 15,000 students in 1985 to 127,594 by 1995.^{xx}
- The World Bank reports that there are now more than 1200 private institutions of higher education in Indonesia, enrolling approximately 60 percent of Indonesia's tertiary students.^{xxi}

Technology as a Key Driver

Academics have been largely dismissive of for-profit institutions (outside of policy circles especially), but as these examples reveal, the growth of private, for-profits is one of the most striking things happening in higher education around the world. Those who are dismissive are missing some key points. This stunning trend toward privatization on a global scale will be made all the more powerful by a number of converging trends, which over the next decade will affect all institutions—non-profit and for-profit alike.

First of all, technology makes the processes of privatization, and globalization, faster and easier. It is hard to imagine that we would have seen the concomitant spread of privatization and globalization at any comparable level without the aid of technology. Virtual education has, of course, played a significant role in the globalization of all types of educational providers. But there are other benefits as well.

For one, when for-profits use technology to expand, they have an advantage over traditional institutions that are still expanding in old ways. Technology will help

institutions to quickly, cheaply and easily customize and replicate other course materials, even if they are not technology-based. The costs for reusing course materials and curriculum are reduced by using technology, and can also be spread out across operations in several countries. This reduction in start-up costs gives these institutions an advantage over traditional institutions starting up new operations using the mode of a single faculty member in a classroom (the franchise advantage).

We are also moving toward a world in which all course work, including classroom-based, will rely to a significant extent upon technology modules. Those modules will be easier to replicate and “plug in” from country to country than traditional class materials—lecture notes, transparencies, paper-based exams—are now.

The hybrid virtual approach—some coursework online, some classroom-based—substantially expands the reach of a university (and, some would argue, the effectiveness). Institutions that only require students to be on campus once per month, maintaining online contact in-between, will minimize travel for students in distant locations, making the program all the more appealing.

Just as technology has made it easier for people across the globe to communicate with almost anyone, technology has made it easier for institutions to communicate with potential students and to raise their profiles in other countries (e.g., word-of-mouth spreads quickly via email, web-based advertising, etc.). It will be much easier for an institution to spread to new countries if people have already heard of it, seen some course materials, and maybe even taken a course or two virtually.

As the for-profits take advantage of technology more and more, they will propel themselves into the global arena in ways that leave others behind. In this we see how technology, privatization and globalization are intertwined and driving each other.

Governments Have Invited the For-Profits to the Party

Privatization and globalization are not just driven by the aggressive behavior of the for-profits. A number of governments are paving the way, opening up their borders and encouraging for-profits to enter to meet a demand for higher education that far exceeds the capacity of their present higher education systems. For example, China's public higher education system enrolls less than 7 percent of high school graduates.^{xxii} Only 15 percent of qualified students are admitted to Malaysia's system.^{xxiii} Similarly, 66 percent of Kenya's high school graduates—who qualified for admission via a national examination—were not admitted to one of its six state universities in 1999.^{xxiv}

As a result, in recent years we have seen governments encouraging the growth of private and foreign institutions to meet the demand for postsecondary education while minimizing the public investment. This trend is evident in countries such as Egypt, Chile, Uruguay, Oman, India, China, Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia.^{xxv} Even the Iranian Parliament has approved the entry of both private and foreign universities—a first since the Islamic Revolution.^{xxvi} Jane Knight, an expert on GATS, has commented that “Congo, Lesotho, Jamaica and Sierra Leone have made full unconditional commitments in higher education [to GATS], perhaps with the intent of encouraging foreign providers to help develop their educational systems.”^{xxvii}

In a ground-breaking statement in June of 1999, China's Premier Jiang Zemin proclaimed that it was time for private schools to enter the market, an announcement that was eagerly-awaited by private investors.^{xxviii} That announcement has been followed by a law to permit foreign providers to offer joint degrees with local universities, and a law that gave private colleges "the same privileges as publicly supported institutions, including the opportunity to make a 'reasonable' profit." Other privileges include "the same preferential tax exemptions, loans, and discounted land-purchase rates that public institutions get." Before this, it was illegal to make a profit.^{xxix} Of the estimated 1,000 *min ban* institutions currently in existence, 100 have been accredited by the government.^{xxx} The number of students attending higher education in China has grown from 1.08 million in 1998 to 3 million in 2002. This growth is attributed to the rise in private schools to accommodate more students.^{xxxi}

Singapore plans to increase its participation rate from 21 percent now to 25 percent in 2010, plus the government intends to keep more domestic students at home and to recruit more foreign students. At the same time, the plan is to hold the number of public universities at the present three institutions. Therefore, the government is encouraging private providers, especially foreign institutions, to enter the market.^{xxxii}

In 1996 the Malaysian government changed its educational policy to actively recruit international branch campuses to its shores.^{xxxiii} To limit brain drain, Malaysia has initiated an aggressive campaign to keep students in-country, partially by inviting Western universities to import international branch campuses, management and information technology instruction centers and individual courses to be taught in Malaysian institutions.^{xxxiv} The Malaysian government has placed no restrictions on the

number of private colleges, citing a willingness—echoed around the world—“to let free market forces play out in the arena of private education.”^{xxxv}

The Quest for Cash Does Not End with the For-Profits

The for-profits are not just important because of their own activities—they are important because they are driving a market that influences the behavior of a significant group of non-profits. As for-profits have gained a foothold, non-profit colleges and universities, public and private alike, have started behaving more like competitors in a market—vying with the for-profits and with one another for students, prestige, and sources of external funding. There is a new breed of “for-revenue” / “not-for-loss” institutions that are aggressively pursuing revenue streams by establishing branch campuses and joining global consortia.

US institutions of all kinds have set up international branch campuses.

- The University of Chicago has business schools in Spain and Singapore.^{xxxvi}
- The University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School of Business has a presence in France and Singapore through an alliance with INSEAD.^{xxxvii}
- Southern Illinois University–Carbondale is in Japan, and the University of Mobile is in Nicaragua.
- Georgetown has two masters programs in Latin America.^{xxxviii}
- The Central European University in Budapest is chartered by the Board of Regents of the State of New York.^{xxxix}
- The American University in Bulgaria was set up in cooperation with the University of Maine.^{xl}
- Florida International University has just established the Madrid Center for Education, Research and Development, a partnership with San Pablo CEU and local governments.^{xli}

U.S. institutions are by no means alone in the arena of global expansions.

- Monash University of Australia now has campuses, centers or partnerships for the delivery of programs in Malaysia, South Africa, Italy, the UK, Germany, Singapore, Indonesia, China, and Hong Kong.^{xlii}

- The British Open University serves over 200,000 students throughout Europe and in more than 30 non-EU countries.^{xliii}
- The R.M.I.T. University of Australia was the first foreign-owned institution to receive approval to establish a presence in Vietnam.^{xliv}
- Scottish Knowledge is a partnership of Scotland's 14 colleges and universities offering online and distance courses to students around the world, with physical offices in the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, US and Scotland.^{xlv}
- The Teikyo University Group of Japan owns or has links with institutions ranging from kindergartens to universities in the US, UK, Netherlands, Germany, Hong Kong and Malaysia.^{xlvi}
- Australia's La Trobe University and the UK's Oxford Brookes University are offering joint degrees through a public-private partnership with Australian Campus Networks (ACN).^{xlvii}

These expansions receive mixed reviews, and are not immune to criticism. One journalist described the Australian Campus Networks as, “convenience-store style campuses run by a private provider to mop up excess demand for business degrees.”^{xlviii}

Moving From the Physical to the Virtual...

Higher education is going global virtually as well, with online consortia, curricular joint ventures between institutions, and individual institutions setting up shop on their own, sometimes as for-profit subsidiaries. The drive to join the world of virtual education stems from origins similar to those discussed earlier: revenues; the prestige of being embedded in global, innovative networks of institutions; a push from governments to increase access without building physical campuses; plus the added benefit of efficiency through sharing course offerings and generating costs savings.^{xlix}

We have now lived through the hype surrounding for-profit consortia such as Universitas 21, Cardean, and the Global Education Network (GEN). These consortia were, typically, non-profit traditional institutions joining forces with for-profit corporations. While all have experienced growing pains, and some have gone out of

business, others have now evened out and adjusted their business plans. For the most part, their success has not yet been stellar. Cardean University, an online consortium comprising Columbia Business School, Stanford, University of Chicago Graduate School of Business, Carnegie Mellon and the London School of Economics has “taught thousands of students from more than 90 countries” through its corporate customers, but only enrolls about 200 students in its MBA program.¹ Universitas 21 Global, an online university partnership between sixteen international universities (from the Universitas 21 network) and Thomson Learning, will begin offering graduate degrees in business administration and management information systems in 2003.ⁱⁱ

A number of non-profits created for-profit subsidiaries to manage their explorations into virtual courses. They have found the going tough. Some have been forced to close, and have done so while under the scrutiny of an unforgiving public eye (e.g., NYU Online, Harcourt University, Fathom, and Virtual Temple). The real disappointment is that an entity like Fathom, which never ironed out a workable business plan and received extensive media coverage throughout its troubled existence, became the poster child for “virtual failure,” despite the success of other ventures. While some in higher education have seen the difficulties faced by some of these new ventures as a sure sign that there is no market for online courses, it is more likely that they were really just a natural shakeout of the market. Some of the for-profit subsidiaries still exist (Duke, Babson), and for those that folded many of the online courses are still offered by the parent institution (e.g., NYU, University of Maryland University College).

Despite the difficulties faced by these consortia and subsidiaries, virtual education—offered by individual institutions or consortia and curricular joint ventures—continues to flourish. Several US-based initiatives are growing at extraordinary rates.

- Javier Miyares, Vice President for Planning & Accountability at University of Maryland University College, reported that UMUC had a total of 87,423 online enrollments in 2002. Online enrollments now make up 37 percent of all UMUC enrollments.^{lii}
- The United States army's virtual learning network, eArmyU, currently enrolls more than 30,000 soldiers, and it recently expanded to twelve new campuses.^{liii}
- UmassOnline, the online-education division of the University of Massachusetts, is growing at over 56 percent annually.^{liv}
- As of October 2002, enrollment in the University of Phoenix Online had grown to 49,400 students worldwide, or thirty-seven percent of their total, representing a growth rate of seventy percent.^{lv} The University of Phoenix Online now offers four online doctoral programs in business administration, education, health-care administration and management in organizational leadership.^{lvi}

A student with an Internet connection in any part of the globe has access to seemingly limitless opportunities. Many of these initiatives are government-sponsored to open access. Others create prestigious networks, give niche institutions a chance to shine, or target a new type of access for historically underrepresented groups of students.

- South Korea's Ewha Womans University and eight other local colleges have formed an "international cyberuniversity" to offer courses in women's and Korean studies to 30 institutions around the world.^{lvii}
- The UK's University of Durham is partnering with the British Council to deliver an MA in Management through a distance learning facility in New Delhi.^{lviii}
- Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University (India) offers only distance-education courses with less-stringent entrance requirements than traditional institutions, allowing Muslim women, in particular, a chance to gain a degree.^{lix}
- The UK's University of Dundee is creating an International Virtual Medical School, which will offer medical school lectures typically offered during the first two years of study.^{lx} This initiative will greatly reduce the cost of delivery for medical education.
- Nationally-sponsored virtual universities have been announced by South Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Syria, the UK, Norway, and the list goes on.^{lxi}

As these lists make clear, despite the high-profile rise and fall of a number of virtual initiatives, online education is growing and it is a critical part of the future growth of both globalization and privatization.

The Government For-Revenue Perspective: Higher Education as an Export

This is the first time that a government has seen higher education as an industry to be exported. The for-revenue orientation of non-profits has been encouraged by a number of governments. Just as some governments have tried to “pull” private and foreign institutions to their shores (i.e., to save money by allowing them to meet the demand for postsecondary skills), others have “pushed” their institutions to venture out to sea (i.e., to make money via marketing higher education).

The UK has launched a “100 per cent commercial” venture with its UK e-Universities (UKeU). Starting in February and March of 2003, UKeU will offer three Masters to the overseas market. They have opened offices in Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong, Dubai and Sao Paulo, with more to come.^{lxii}

Australia is one of the most determined exporters of higher education, a policy that grew out of the Labor Party’s desire to increase export income.^{lxiii} A 1987 Green Paper on higher education pointed out, in a not-so-subtle manner, that “full-fee paying overseas students provide another important source of potential revenue growth.”^{lxiv} Australia’s policy has resulted in both an increase in foreign students studying in Australia and an increase in the delivery of educational services to students in their home countries (a.k.a., offshore). Between 1996 and 2001, the percentage of international students enrolled in Australian universities that were offshore increased from 24% to

37%.^{lxv} In Australia, the “education export industry is now contributing more than \$4 billion to [the] economy and is the third largest services export sector.”^{lxvi}

The American government’s approach to marketing higher education, based on the idea that having the best universities will encourage foreign students to come to the US, is still focused on the modes of the past. Though the US remains the largest provider of education to foreign students in numbers (followed by the UK, Australia, France, Germany and Canada), it is losing ground, especially when viewed as a percentage of total enrollments. The US has 582,996 foreign students this year, an increase of 6.4% over last year, equaling about 4.3 percent of all students. In contrast, Australia has approximately 188,000 foreign students, making up close to 20% of total enrollments.^{lxvii}

Singapore has released a new governmental report on the future of higher education. By 2012, the government hopes that education will be 5 percent of GDP and that 75,000 international students will study in Singapore (about the same as the campus-based numbers in Australia now).^{lxviii} New Zealand has 17 institutions offering 63 offshore programs, and the government is planning to introduce a levy on institutions that will fund the country’s education marketing efforts.^{lxix}

Canada has begun marketing itself to lure foreign students across its borders. Canadian institutions are positioning themselves to US students as safe, close, English-speaking, cheaper alternatives for study abroad. To reach students from other countries, they market themselves as far cheaper than the US. The government ministries and universities have formed a non-profit entity focused on marketing strategies, and 84 percent of universities report that “internationalization” is included in their institutional strategies.^{lxx}

These aggressive governmental policies have been successful. Between 1989 and 2000, “export earnings from foreign students rose from \$US584 million to \$US2.2 billion in Australia, from \$US2.2 billion to \$US3.8 billion in the United Kingdom and from \$US4.6 billion to \$US10.3 billion in the United States.”^{lxxi}

Governmental initiatives such as these raise a troubling specter. There are powerful interests that are looking to make trade in higher education easier by including all of higher education in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), which would eliminate most restrictions on global trade in education—even those that protect access and educational quality: “The idea behind GATS and, for that matter, the concept of globalization is that knowledge is a commodity like any other and should be freely traded around the world.”^{lxxii} The American delegation to the World Trade Organization has proposed that all of higher education be included in GATS.^{lxxiii} The implications of free trade in education—which down the line could give the WTO the power to override national regulations—should not be brushed aside.

In It for the Education

While these examples conjure up an image of revenue-hungry institutions spreading across the globe, there are some initiatives that are paying attention to the broader educational and public good questions. Institutions not driven by the allure of profit are pursuing international activities for benefits such as improving quality and access, providing students with new experiences and opportunities, or sharing resources and generating cost savings.^{lxxiv}

MIT's OpenCourseWare project (<http://www.ocw.mit.edu>), for example, makes MIT's course materials available for free for noncommercial use. One of the intentions is that educators and institutions with less resources can benefit from the expertise found at MIT. Educators around the globe are already tapping into the resource. At least 30% of the web site's traffic comes from international visitors. The project is estimated to cost close to \$100 million, will involve about 2000 courses, and should be finished in September 2007. Carnegie Mellon and Princeton are also experimenting with the idea of making courses materials available to the public on the web.^{lxxv}

Other US institutions have pursued partnerships of the kind promoted by the Association Liaison Office (ALO) for University Cooperation in Development (a USAID program). These partnerships aim to take advantage of the expertise and resources found in US higher education to promote international development and to partner with higher education institutions in developing countries.^{lxxvi} The University of Georgia (UGA) and Universidad Veracruzana (UV) have created faculty development programs to increase the number of "bilingual and culturally competent social workers, education professionals and students in Georgia and Veracruz."^{lxxvii} Ohio State University (OSU) has partnered with Makerere University (MU) in Uganda to provide agribusiness management training.^{lxxviii}

A different approach to non-profit globalization is exemplified by the African Virtual University (AVU). Originally established by the World Bank and now operating as an independent intergovernmental organization, the AVU is a global network of African universities with other leading universities from around the world, designed to open access to a world-class education through learning centers all over the continent.

The University has trained 23,000 students at 34 learning centers based in 17 countries.^{lxxix} The University currently offers certificates of completion for courses, but plans to offer them as degree courses by the end of 2003 at about 140 learning centers. The University hopes to be able to serve 500,000 students some day.^{lxxx}

The not-for-profit orientation of these activities should not be overestimated, however. All of this globalizing activity is reflective of the increasing competition in higher education. Even those institutions that appear to be pursuing global activities for purely educational reasons are still competing. There is an undeniable prestige associated with global partnerships, and a strong appeal to donors and alumni. Although MIT, for example, does not intend to reap the benefits of revenues through this project, the Institute has received accolades for its intellectual leadership and it certainly is reaping the benefits of prestige and global media coverage, another way of competing and positioning itself for prominence in the 21st Century.

The Risks of Globalization

It is true that globalization has opened the world to new markets and promoted peaceful diplomatic relationships between old enemies. Similarly, a globalized university system could benefit everyone by bringing more postsecondary education to places where it is seriously lacking, and helping to forge global understanding and tolerance. But the chance for greater gains is matched by the chance of high risk.

What we have before us is just the cutting edge of the spear. If, a decade from now, students around the world accept for-profit, or for-revenue, foreign suppliers as an acceptable—or an even better—replacement for their home country's best universities,

that is a profound change. Such a sea change is not unprecedented. There was a time in this country when American car companies were “what made America great”—similar rhetoric to what we in higher education like to spout about our universities. What do changes of this proportion mean for higher education’s role as a public good?

Threats to the Developing World

Joseph Stiglitz, 2001 Nobel Prize Winner in Economics, has pointed out that globalization has left the poorest people in the developing world poorer still.^{lxxxii} Large, multinational corporations—especially American corporations—have been accused of exploiting the human and natural resources of other countries, with devastating results. The policies of the IMF and the World Bank have been too focused on leaving development to the market, often forcing developing countries to pursue strategies antithetical to progress. Against this backdrop, the impact of for-revenue higher education ventures in the developing world should be a key concern for all.

As the higher education expert Phil Altbach has pointed out, globalization “proceeds largely from North to South.”^{lxxxiii} Many countries in the developing world promise huge markets of students, and as many countries have learned the hard way, appropriate regulations in the areas of access and quality are lagging behind the growth in demand. Prior experience has shown that regulations are needed to keep institutions of the North—from the IMF to multinational corporations to universities—from manipulating their power to the detriment of the South. For-profit markets do not always benefit society, and to quote Stiglitz again, “Recent advances in economic theory have shown that whenever information is imperfect and markets incomplete, which is to say

always, *and especially in developing countries*, then the invisible hand works most imperfectly.”^{lxxxiii}

GATS has already been mentioned, but it has particular relevance for developing nations. Many believe that developing nations would be the most adversely affected for they would become the target of low-quality money-making ventures.^{lxxxiv} Others worry that GATS would not be administered fairly, as is the case with so many multinational treaties and trade agreements. The World Bank believes that a \$40 billion / year transfer from developing countries to companies from developed nations will occur because of WTO intellectual property agreements (TRIPS).^{lxxxv} Philip Altbach has expressed the concern that GATS and WTO activities will be “designed to serve the interests of the most powerful academic systems and corporate educational providers.”^{lxxxvi} As Jane Knight so eloquently stated: “The perceived injustice that poor nations are expected to remove trade barriers while rich nations retain barriers on certain goods, contributes to the strong reactions of some developing countries about the impact of GATS in general.”^{lxxxvii}

Threats to Established, In-Country Systems

Another downside to guard against is that the universities of the home country might suffer by losing students to new providers, and especially by losing students in disciplines that are more profitable and generate revenue for cross-subsidization. Madeleine Green has voiced concern that new foreign providers might lure students away from “still-developing higher education systems.” The better prepared and wealthier students might be attracted by the caché of the foreign institutions, and tuition revenues to public institutions would be diminished.^{lxxxviii}

These fears have already played out in a number of countries. A study of private institutions in Malaysia, most of which are for-profit,^{lxxxix} discovered that “private colleges have left some of the more difficult and expensive tasks to the public sector such as advanced technical training or setting up colleges in less developed regions in the country.”^{xc} The Ukraine’s public and private spheres clashed “over a narrow circle of the most profitable Ukraine specialties—e.g., law, economics, or management.”^{xc}

Similarly, the rapid growth of private and foreign institutions in South Africa was seen as such a threat to the viability of the public institutions that South Africa wrote new laws to regulate both the growth and quality of these new institutions.^{xcii} The number of private providers has dropped from 202 in 2000 to less than 100; the number of foreign providers has fallen from 38 to 4.^{xciii} Professor Nasima Badsha, South Africa’s deputy director-general of higher education, asserted:

Foreign institutions posed a particular threat to public universities. They mostly operate in a narrow range of areas, especially IT, business and commerce, ‘cherry picking’ financially lucrative courses without the obligation of offering the full range of disciplines. Public universities found themselves losing income-earning courses they use to cross-subsidize expensive disciplines such as music and art, medicine and engineering, which are critical to South Africa’s cultural, social and economic development.^{xciv}

Threats to Quality

A further concern is that the quality of the new for-revenue ventures will be sub par. Many of these entities offer a high-quality educational experience, but the fact remains that many do not. And many have entered the market with the intention of delivering as little as possible, while receiving as much revenue as possible.

The British minister for higher education’s public castigation of the University of Derby for exporting low quality operations to Israel is one example that focused attention

on this issue.^{xcv} In Israel, 7 foreign institutions closed during the first half of 2000 due to new quality regulations put in place by the government that the institutions could not meet. The issues found with foreign branches in Israel included lack of facilities, poor qualifications of professors, and hastened time-to-degree requirements.^{xcvi} Japan, once seen as a great new market for US institutions, has dried up: “Almost all of the institutions seeking to enter the Japanese market were ‘low end’ American institutions interested mainly in boosting enrollments and earning a profit. Once it became clear that little money was to be made, almost all of the U.S. institutions disappeared.”^{xcvii}

An article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* declared that the “development of private higher education in [Eastern Europe and the former Soviet states] has been unplanned and, for the most part, unregulated.”^{xcviii} As a result, when a survey in the fall of 1997 collected data from 69 private institutions in Poland and Hungary, two-thirds of those 69 institutions received low marks for “viability and legitimacy.”^{xcix} In Romania, following the initial evaluations conducted by its new accreditation system in 1997, only 36 of the country’s 250 private institutions were awarded temporary accreditation for at least one degree program.^c The students of those schools found themselves holding degrees of questionable value, and enrollments in private higher education were significantly decreased.

Simon Marginson, a higher education expert from Australia, has issued a warning to US institutions to keep their educational objectives at the core. Marginson argues that the quality of Australian higher education has suffered because it recruited foreign students in profitable fields—business and IT—at the expense of foreign graduate students in research fields. He warns that, “If Americans develop a more commercial

take on internationalization, and this plays out at the expense of the cultural and educational objectives that dominate foreign-student education in the United States today, there will be a price to pay. It will be necessary to reinvent those objectives later.’^{ci}

Threats to Access

An interesting contradiction is that while many of the new, for-revenue ventures are touted as solutions to access crunches—indeed are encouraged by governments for just that reason—they still raise fundamental issues about access. A primary concern is, access for who?

In many countries, prestigious public institutions have historically educated the elite class. The entry of new, tuition-charging private institutions creates a three-tiered system that gives a free (or greatly subsidized) elite education to the well-prepared wealthy; allows less-prepared students with enough money to pay tuition to attend private universities; and excludes low- and middle-income students or saddles them with the burden, and debt, of private tuition.

In Israel, students denied access to the public higher education institutions pay tuitions to foreign branches that are almost double that of the public institutions.^{cii} In Brazil, a for-profit educational enterprise called Objetivo has 400 schools and a university. Dermeval Saviani, a professor at the State University of Campinas, criticizes Objetivo for its high tuition, saying that although Objetivo could afford lower tuitions due to its high profits, it “ignores the poorest people.”^{ciii}

The concerns are endless. Over the protests of many (especially the French), globalization and the spread of the Internet have increased the dominance of the English language. Experts who have carefully followed the higher education market in several

countries have concluded that “market competition in a deregulated higher education environment does not necessarily result in diversity. Convergence and institutional imitation may be the outcome.”^{civ} China’s market-oriented education reforms are being blamed for opening “the floodgates to corruption” which have “shaken the integrity of the system and the myth of meritocracy.”^{cv} Foreign nations have frequently criticized Western universities for cultural imperialism. Monash University of Australia, which has aggressively expanded throughout Asia, has been given the nickname “McMonash.”^{evi} And how will Cornell and Virginia Commonwealth Universities—both of which now offer programs in Qatar—navigate the anti-Semitism and restrictions on women found there?^{evii}

Time to Stop and Think

Each of these concerns deserves a great deal of attention. One can look at this in a number of ways. As globally conscious citizens, and especially as educators, we must be concerned with the long-term consequences of globalization that runs rampant in pursuit of revenues. The host countries have valuable resources to protect—their students, their universities, their scholarship, their cultures. The export countries should be concerned about the image their education providers are projecting in foreign countries, especially for Americans whose national reputation is already suspect. As we have learned the hard way, it only takes one good “American gaff” to create a problem of international proportion.

Anti-globalization protests against governments and corporations in Seattle, Genoa and Davos have grabbed all the headlines and made plain the depth of concern

about the drawbacks of globalization. Meanwhile, universities have quietly entered foreign markets, many with the intention of turning a profit, all in pursuit of prestige.

If current trends continue, higher education could accelerate the transfer of wealth from developing to developed countries and the stratification of the world into the affluent and the desperately poor. Higher education has the opportunity to stop and think about how to globalize with a conscience, avoiding many of the pitfalls and the loss of public purpose that have created the resentment and cynicism that have erupted into violent protests the world over. Before academia plants another flag on foreign soil, its leaders should step back and reaffirm higher education's mission of serving the public good. Given the enormous public subsidies that most universities and colleges enjoy (public and private alike—financial aid, tax exemptions, etc.), it is higher education's responsibility to recognize that just as commercial interests now transcend borders, so do social interests.

ⁱ Madeleine Green, "An Overview of Higher Education and GATS," sent via email to Frank Newman, 24 Sept. 2002. For estimates coming out of the investment community, see Michael T. Moe, "Emerging Trends in Post-Secondary Education—The View to 2012," Presentation Delivered at the Education Industry Finance and Investment Summit (St. Regis, Washington, DC: December 9-10, 2002) Slide 5.

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