

## Announcement

# Higher Education and its Principal Mission: Preparing Students for Life, Work, and Civic Engagement

**11th International Workshop on Higher Education Reforms  
August 25 to 27, 2014, Memorial University, St. John's, Newfoundland (Canada)**

As part of the ongoing discussion about changes in Higher Education (HE) and HE Reforms, the 11<sup>th</sup> International Workshop will focus on issues concerning the most important target group and resource of HE: students.

### Workshop Themes

Presentations are invited, and discussions will primarily focus, on themes related to reforms and innovations regarding accessibility and affordability of post-secondary studies, conditions and modes of learning, the transition from study to work, and, for adult students, the integration of higher education with other aspects of their professional, personal and civic life. As the relationships between HE and labor markets and employment systems are changing and the borders of HE expanding, there are now many new institutional innovations, programs, forms of learning, and transition mechanisms and routes both into HE, from HE to the world of work, and, for continuing lifelong learners, from employment and domestic and civic duties back into HE.

Among the recent changes in the direction of HE and its environment the following questions appear to be of particular importance:

- In spite of the massive growth and increasing differentiation of HE systems, which have led to 'massification' and universalization, there is still unsatisfied and growing demand for HE in many countries. In particular, as there are still significant differences between participation in HE by students from higher and lower income households, are there policies aimed at reducing these?

- In some countries, as participation especially from indigenous populations and other ethnic minorities is far below that of the ethnic majority, what are the policies in place as well as reform policies aiming at greater equality of participation?

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- Under the reign of increasing globalization of markets to what extent is higher education in danger of being reduced to a 'service' with expanding international competition, privatization, marketization and commercialization?

- As HE 'trade fairs', university 'branding', and major efforts at 'recruiting' international students have increased the flow of international students across national borders, mainly to developed countries, has this led to changes in the structures of studies with a view to international recognition and portability of degrees? Are there, or should there be, specific public policies and institutional practices in place aimed at improving the conditions of international students' learning and the quality of their experience of studying abroad?

- As tuition fees have massively increased in most countries while public budgets have been cut in the wake of the international financial crisis HE institutions, especially universities, have been forced to look for additional resources from students and their families - with concomitant shifts in the status of students from being 'learners' to 'consumers'. As a consequence of the rise in tuition fees, many graduates are deeply in debt when they graduate, so what are the impacts on potential students who may be discouraged from taking up studies, especially those from economically disadvantaged families?

- A growing number of highly ranked universities are offering "massive open online courses" (MOOCs), thereby increasing opportunities for online learning and private, individual study. This development is expected to have a massive impact on traditional campus- and classroom-based programs. To what extent will campus-based university education, until recently the norm, be reserved for a minority of students from well-to-do backgrounds whereas the majority will (have to) learn mostly or exclusively on-line, independently or in virtual classrooms and learning networks?

- As many politicians and employers request greater work-related competences and 'employability skills' of HE graduates, should there be changes in HE programs and curricula in response to these demands? What are the changes of this type that have already been made, or are presently being made?

- Are there innovations in curricula, teaching and learning modes, and graduation requirements that emphasize engagement with the local community (for example, through 'service learning')?

- Over the last decades, what has been the role of students and student unions in the reform and modernization of higher education?

As did the previous workshops, the 2014 workshop will give an opportunity for comparative analysis and discussion of these and related issues. Proceedings and a selection of papers and panel presentations will be published upon the completion of the Workshop.

## **The Organization of the Workshop**

The Workshop will be hosted by Memorial University at St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada. It will be organized by staff and students of the Fisheries and Marine Institute in conjunction with the Faculty of

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Education.

The Workshop is co-sponsored by the Higher Education Special Interest Group of the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES); the Canadian Society for the Study of Higher Education (CSSHE); and the Centre for Policy Studies in Higher Education and Training of the University of British Columbia at Vancouver, Canada.

This is the 11<sup>th</sup> International Workshop on University Reform bringing together researchers and policy analysts and policy makers. Previous workshops have taken place in Vancouver (University of British Columbia), Vienna (University of Klagenfurt), Tokyo (University of Tsukuba), Dublin (Dublin City University), Shanghai (East China Normal University), Mexico City (Center for Research and Advanced Studies - Department of Educational Research), Berlin (Humboldt University), Pittsburgh (University of Pittsburgh), and Ljubljana, Slovenia (University of Ljubljana).

## **CALL FOR PAPERS AND PANELS**

Papers and panels that address the above-mentioned and related themes will be invited shortly.

Details concerning communication, registration, accommodation, and the program will be found at the workshop website, to be established shortly.

## **Local Organization Committee**

Robert Shea, professor of HE and Director, Fisheries and Marine Institute, Memorial University, <https://www.mi.mun.ca/> (**Workshop Coordinator**).

## **International Workshop Advisory Committee**

- Germán Alvarez Mendiola, Centre of Educational Research and Studies, Mexico City, Mexico;
- Walter Archer, President of the Canadian Society of the Study of Higher Education, University of Alberta, Canada;
- Hans G. Schuetze, University of British Columbia at Vancouver, Canada;
- Maria Slowey, Higher Education Research Centre, Dublin City University, Ireland;
- Andrä Wolter, Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany;
- Shinichi Yamamoto, Graduate School of Higher Education Management, Oberlin University, Tokyo, Japan;
- Pavel Zgaga, Center for Educational Policy Studies, University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia.

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