

After a long hiatus, this issue of *Metropolitan Universities* once again carries a contribution from abroad. Professor Tony Dickson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Northumbria University at Newcastle, provides us with a description of recent changes in British higher education, where the statutory distinction between universities and polytechnics has been abolished. A note on nomenclature: in British universities, the Chancellor holds a purely honorific position. The operational head of the institution is called Vice-Chancellor, and a Pro-Vice-Chancellor is, therefore, at the second level of the administrative hierarchy.

A description of the polytechnics by Michael Lewis in the Spring 1992 issue of the journal indicated that these institutions share a number of characteristics with metropolitan universities in this country. The formal change of their status is therefore of some considerable interest because, as Professor Dickson explains, the unification of the British system could serve to strengthen the regional commitment of some of the former polytechnics but could also push others onto the treadmill of trying to be research universities.

The article illustrates that other industrialized countries face very similar issues as does this country with regard to the mission and priorities of their universities. I am writing this a few weeks before attending two international meetings, one the Annual Forum of the European Association for Institutional Research, the other the General Conference of the program on Institutional Management in Higher Education of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD.) Many of the topics to be discussed at both meetings are very similar to those on the agenda of any recent conference of AAHE or ACE: Changing Relationships between the State and Universities; The University of the Future; Quality Improvement versus Accountability; Less Administration, More Governance ?

It all sounds very familiar. Of course context and conditions vary from country to country, and the details of these issues vary accordingly. But it is in many ways precisely these variations which make it so instructive to obtain an international perspective on national issues. It highlights the differences between the challenges and concerns that are primarily local, and those that are generic to higher education at a time when all industrialized have brought about major increases in higher education enrollment and when a high level of usable skills and the effective dissemination of knowledge is everywhere crucial to economic and social health.

We are gearing up to make a concerted effort to attract more contributions to the journal from our colleagues in other countries. The full name of the journal is *Metropolitan Universities: An International Forum*, and take the second part of this title very seriously. We believe that contributions from abroad can be of considerable interest to our readers in the United States and that, by the same token, individuals in other countries would enjoy much of the content of the journal. Because of the very real commonality of interests, steps should be taken to open the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities to affiliation by foreign universities.

Metropolitan Universities and the Schools, the theme of the current issue, is actually one in which the differences among countries may be greater than any similarities. The strong central control of primary and secondary education in many industrialized countries creates a setting in which local collaboration between a university and the schools has far less potential impact than it can have here. But from

a national perspective, the theme is one of extraordinary importance, and I am very grateful to Nevin Brown for the work he has done as guest editor. This is the second time that *Metropolitan Universities* has devoted an entire issue to collaboration with the schools: it is not likely to be the last.

Call for Contributions

Metropolitan Universities continues to welcome the submission of unsolicited manuscripts on topics pertinent to our eponymous institutions. We seek contributions that analyze and discuss pertinent policy issues, innovative programs or projects, new organizational and procedural approaches, pedagogic developments, and other matters of importance to the mission of metropolitan universities.

Articles of approximately 4,000 words should be intellectually rigorous but need not be cast in the traditional scholarly format nor based on original research. They should be *useful* to their audience, providing better understanding as well as guidance for action. Descriptions of interesting innovations should point out the implications for other institutions and the pitfalls to be avoided. Discussions of broad issues should cite examples and suggest specific steps to be taken. We also welcome manuscripts that, in a reasoned and rigorous fashion, are *provocative*, challenging readers to re-examine traditional definitions, concepts, policies, and procedures.

We also welcome letters to the editor, as well as opinion pieces for our forum pages. Individuals interested in contributing an article pertaining to the thematic portion of a forthcoming issue, or writing on any of the many other possible subjects, are encouraged to send a brief outline to either the appropriate guest editor (addresses available from the executive editor) or to the executive editor. Letters and opinion pieces should be sent directly to the latter:

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Please share with the readers of *Metropolitan Universities* information about the interesting and innovative programs, projects, and policies on your campus from which other metropolitan universities can learn. We should once again like to carry a section on Interactive Strategies in each issue. The purpose of this section is to draw attention to new ideas at an early stage of development. Please send a brief description of up to 500 words, together with the name and address of an individual to be contacted for additional details, to Dean Karen A. White, College of Fine Arts, University of Nebraska-Omaha, Omaha, NE 68182; Telephone: (402) 554-2509; Fax: (402) 554-3436.