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**ON MASS HIGHER EDUCATION AND
INSTITUTIONAL DIVERSITY**

MARTIN TROW

3

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES

ON MASS HIGHER EDUCATION AND INSTITUTIONAL DIVERSITY*

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Introduction

It is an honor and pleasure to have been asked to speak to this conference, organized by Neal Sherman and the Israel-American Fulbright committee. I have had long and close ties with Israel, and I am delighted to have a chance to talk with you about your institutions of higher education in this way. It is not quite the same as being there, without the informal conversations over coffee or a meal that carry the real flavor of a meeting. But I will have to put off that pleasure for another occasion

Tonight, -- or this morning for you - I will be speaking of Israeli higher education from an American perspective. I need scarcely warn you that in what I say I will not be suggesting that your system and institutions are just like ours, or should be. There are many differences between our societies and their colleges and universities, and not only those that arise from the enormous difference in size of our two countries. We differ in some ways, and are similar in others. For example, we are both societies of immigrants; that gives a special significance to our colleges and universities. I want to explore some of those differences and similarities as the context for a discussion of the relevance of our arrangements to yours.

Nevertheless, the fundamental challenge to all of us who think about higher education is to think of our colleges and universities not as specialized institutions for creating and transmitting knowledge, i.e. for research and teaching, but rather as the institutions that lie at the heart of every modern society, with a broad range of functions for those societies.

* Professor Martin Trow is a member of the S. Neuman Institute Working Group on "Rethinking the Research University of the 21st Century and the Israeli Higher Education System". The paper was read through interactive video connection to a conference on Israeli Higher Education, in Tel Aviv, organized by the United States-Israel Educational Foundation, April 8, 2003, and reproduced with the author permission.

It is a cliché, but no less true, that all modern societies depend for their welfare and their protection – as we are seeing in Iraq as I speak – on information and skills of a high order, widely distributed in the society. We also depend on universities to a large degree for our capacities to create and transmit knowledge.

But beyond those familiar functions of higher education, in the US, as in some other countries, higher education is now the central institution which legitimates the social order, makes it seem broadly right and proper. It is at the heart of our promise to give all Americans a chance to fulfill their talents and to transform ambitions into achievements. It is a primary source of personal identity, as much as a source of skill, competence, and breadth or depth of knowledge.

So, higher education is no longer simply an ornament of the society, its universities' scholarship and science shaping and cultivating the minds and sensibilities of students, creating an intellectual elite who both embody and demonstrate the quality of its culture and civilization. Our colleges and universities still do that, but in addition, with its expansion and diversification, higher education has become the key social institution, one whose component institutions serve many functions. We should no longer ask, as many still do, what is the mission of the university; but rather, what are the missions of the university, the varied missions of the universities and of the colleges, yours and ours.

Just as our institutions serve many functions: for the economy, for government, for the military, and for the legitimation of the society to its citizens – especially through the socialization of its newest citizens -- it serves an increasingly diverse student body, who come to our institutions with many different motivations, talents and interests. The link between the diversification of our students and of the institutions is very close: Over time, higher education comes to be institutionally as diverse as its students.

Diversity emerges not only among its institutions, but also within each institution. Our colleges and universities increasingly educate and train different kinds of students within the same institution. And that complicates the governance of our institutions, and calls for a looser model of governance, which combines a strong central administration with the tendency to drive decisions down within the institution to the levels, which are affected by them and have the competence to make them. This challenge – to combine strong central authority with a marked devolution of decision-making within the institution – is among the central problems arising out of the emergence of mass higher education, the rapidity of change and the diversification of functions. Here modern

industry and the universities have taught one another.

Even the old elite research universities that have prided themselves on creating basic theoretical knowledge, pure knowledge, not knowledge for application to practical purposes in the larger society, are shedding that illusion. The distinction between basic and applied knowledge has become increasingly unclear as a consequence of the intense interest in business and industry, in government and the military, in finding useful and productive applications of any new knowledge, whether the creators imagined it to be useful or not. Business firms and governments now reach right into university laboratories for new knowledge and ideas; for both business and governments, the application of new knowledge is crucial to the survival of both.

In all these respects Israeli colleges and universities resemble their American counterparts:

In both societies, higher education has grown very rapidly over the past three decades. This growth, and especially the speed of growth in both systems, has had an enormous impact on the nature of higher education in both societies. In the US it extended access to some kind of college or university to very large parts of the whole society, solidifying a system of mass higher education and creating the basis for a system of universal access. In Israel, my sense is that it has transformed a system two or three decades ago still fundamentally based on a few institutions serving an academic elite to one increasingly having the characteristics of mass higher education. (For the numbers in Israel I am indebted to several very useful papers by Nissan Limor of the Planning and Budgeting Committee of the Council for Higher Education and for papers distributed by the S. Neaman Study Group.)

The rapid expansion and diversification of higher education in every modern society has created a series of strains and difficulties in institutions and systems that were not designed for rapid change, nor for taking on a multiplicity of functions. These problems are many and linked: problems of finance, governance, access, modes of instruction, -- and they all bear on one another. This evening I want to focus on one of these problems for higher education posed by the emergence of mass higher education: that is, how to create and sustain the diversity among its institutions that is required by the expansion and diversification of its functions, and its students.

The older research universities, with their international reputations and prestige, their high academic standards, their great libraries and

laboratories, their relatively favorable funding and provision for research, their links to government, and the high status of their staff and students everywhere exert a powerful pull on all other kinds of colleges and universities. Other newer institutions that have grown up in every modern society tend to look toward these elite institutions as models, and in many cases, hope to emulate them as closely as possible, and over time perhaps to be accepted into the charmed circle of those elite universities, to gain the prestige, and the levels of funding required to gain and hold prestigious and distinguished academic staff. Of course, many new institutions understand that achievement of those ambitions cannot be expected quickly, but for many, they remain as models for what a college ought to strive to be. Success as they conceive it is movement toward higher standards, more selective admissions, an academic staff who hold degrees from research universities and want to do research. These institutions feel they ought to be called universities, they ought to be empowered give degrees; even higher degrees; they ought to be able to initiate and support research.

I am not here talking about the US: what I am describing, with variations, are social and academic forces at work in the newer colleges and universities in many countries. Two-year institutions yearn to become four-year institutions granting the bachelors degree; four year colleges hope to add on masters degrees, and institutions permitted to teach beyond the first degree hope and petition to be allowed to grant the doctorate degrees, for which of course a research faculty will be required. This tendency, which the Dutch scholar Ant Elzinga has called “epistemic drift” is a natural and powerful force; it is not just a natural yearning for more institutional prestige and status. It also finds its sources in the deepest conceptions of the modern university, and not least in those societies like yours and mine whose research universities were strongly influenced in their origins by the German models of the 19th century which link teaching and learning closely together -- so closely that it still feels strange to some scholars and academics for there to be institutions which call themselves higher education in which teaching and research are not so closely linked.

So as I have suggested, a central problem for higher education policy in every modern society is how to sustain the diversity of institutions, including many which are primarily teaching institutions without a significant research capacity, against the pressure for institutional drift toward a common model of the research university. And the movement in that direction is as important as whether or not it is achieved; the effort alone shapes the character of a college or university which yearns to be something other than what it is, and which continuously assesses itself and its successes not against its own missions, or against other similar institutions, but against Cambridge, and Uppsala, and Harvard or MIT, or

the Hebrew University. That is a prescription for frustration and discontent.

These institutional and personal ambitions are often looked at as merely praiseworthy efforts to be better, stronger, bigger, with higher standards of every kind. The problem is faced in every society whose system of higher education has grown and become more varied. In some European countries, we find that these ambitions trigger off forces working toward the rationalization and standardization of institutions – that is to say, toward the loss of diversity in a convergence of institutions toward common characteristics – while at the same time we see in the same countries other forces working against that kind of convergence and homogeneity of institutions. And the outcome of these conflicting forces varies in each country.

What are some of the forces pressing toward the homogenization of the system, the tendency for all the institutions to take on similar missions and characteristics?

1. In many modern societies both governments and the society broadly hold strong egalitarian attitudes and values. There are broad groups and sectors in modern societies who hold that all differences among institutions, especially those supported by the state, are inequalities, and all inequalities are inequities. Such sentiments press toward common missions, forms of governance, and patterns of funding of different kinds of institutions of higher education.
2. Quite independent of these ideologies, there is almost everywhere in democratic societies a bureaucratic preference for treating all institutions under their authority equally. That is one of the norms of civil servants, but also the principle makes it easier for them to manage a growing and complex system with a common set of policies and formulas. A unitary system is, or appears to be, more easily and efficiently managed; that is one of its appeals.
3. New non-research institutions press government to treat them as it treats the older research institutions, to make equality of treatment a public policy, allow them to aspire to promotion to university status, and to orient their policies regarding mission, access, curriculum and funding in ways that would allow them to take on research and graduate teaching.

In the same societies in which those forces are at work, we can see another set of forces working against the tendency to unify all institutions of post-secondary education under the principle of equality. I am speaking of tendencies and not achievements. Among these are:

1. Powerful conservative forces of tradition that work to maintain the historical status distinctions associated first with the oldest research universities, distinctions then attaching themselves to later university establishments.
2. Alongside these traditional forces are the demands of the larger number and more diverse students coming into the new non-university institution being established to meet this new demand. Their varied interests and talents are drawn to new colleges with new missions; they not only find but create new missions for these institutions.
3. Some governments are reluctant to support the new institutions of mass higher education at the same high level of support that they provide to universities. Three decades ago I observed that no country in the world, even the United States, is rich enough to fund all the new institutions of higher education that come with expansion at the same levels that they provide to their elite research universities. And that fact works either to sustain the diversity of the system, or, as in the UK, it works to drive levels of state support for the universities down to the per capita levels that they provide to the non-university institutions. (Stevens).

The balance among these forces varies in different nations.

If we can agree that the homogenization of higher education is bad for education and the societies they serve, and that the pressures for homogenization increase with the growth of the system and its increase in cost, then we might ask how diversity can be sustained in the face of these pressures. In many countries the survival of diversity rests on the strength of traditional elite universities, which defend their own special qualities and costs while around them new systems of mass higher education are created, with different names, different funding arrangements and different relations to government. In the UK, an important exception, a powerful and determined government broke the power of the universities, substantially degraded their privileges and autonomy while cutting their costs, and finally, in 1992 merging them with the polytechnics – casually, without widespread discussion or debate or consideration of the effects of merging two quite different systems of institutions, with different missions, governance structures etc.

Almost everywhere after WW II when mass higher education emerged in modern societies, new university colleges developed, often through the expansion and upgrading of existing teachers colleges and technical institutes. These were put on a firmer basis, chartered to offer first

degrees, given new resources to deal with the large numbers of students who wanted postsecondary education but could not gain entry to the existing elite universities, or wanted a different, more practical kind of education that would prepare them and qualify them for entry to one of the new semi- or emerging professions needed to staff the growing welfare states and the rapidly growing demand for secondary school teachers.

But ironically, after these institutions had been in place for a few decades, and established their own identities, functions and forms of quality, they and their sympathizers in government began to ask about the historical and functional inequalities between the institutions of mass higher education and those of the older elite universities. These latter had also been growing and adding new functions, professional schools, and societal services, and oddly enough in their expanded forms had begun to resemble and even compete with the new colleges and university colleges by creating within their boundaries schools and departments of mass higher education. And again the issue arose: why the sharp distinctions between these institutions, not least in the ways they were treated by government, especially in their funding. And again the issue of equality, homogeneity versus diversity of form and function was raised -- often in the form of efforts by the best and most ambitious of the new institutions to be raised to the status of the older elite institutions.

And so almost everywhere we find the phenomenon of institutional drift.

One answer of a sort, as I have mentioned in the UK, was to explicitly merge two segments, create new universities, but through a complex system of external regulation governing funding preventing the new institutions from actually gaining significant research capability. In a sense, diversity has revived informally in the UK after the merger by the variable success that the new institutions have had in developing a research capacity. So far as I can see, none of the new universities has developed a significant research capacity. But they wasted a lot of time and energy trying to. And at the end they experienced an unnecessary failure.

Another answer in some countries to meet the demand for expansion of the university system has been to promote the biggest and most ambitious of the new colleges from time to time, making it possible in principle for all to rise, but managing this movement from the center by raising the criteria for promotion.

Another response was not to develop any policy on this score, but allow institutions to find their own functions over time, exercising some control

by withholding the power to grant higher degrees, in a sense, avoiding controversy by not having any very clear policy on the issue.

Different countries use these and other means to deal with the multiplicity of institutions that accompany the emergence of mass higher education, which more or less successfully preserve the diversity of institutions, while reflecting the diversity of functions and of students. But perhaps the most successful is California's Master Plan. For half a century scholars, academic administrators, civil servants and political leaders have been coming to California to learn how it has managed to create a system of mass higher education while preserving its elite university system. Very briefly, since so many know how California's Master Plan works it is not necessary to describe it in detail. But its origins are of special interest, and perhaps not so widely known.

In 1951-2 the population of California was growing rapidly, as it has most of the decades since, and colleges, including many community colleges were being created almost daily to serve the growing demands. But that was happening rather haphazardly, with initiatives arising both locally and in the state legislature, with considerable uncertainties about how all these institutions would be administered and funded. The legislature was particularly concerned that each institution would be pressing its needs and wishes directly on the legislators, competitively with other institutions. And legislators did not like the prospect of having to negotiate with powerful constituencies in their home districts, often having to say no when that would not be well received.

Rather than trying to solve the problem themselves, the Legislature wisely asked California higher education itself to come up with a plan. It appointed a small committee, with representatives of the University of California, the emerging four-year teaching colleges, many of them teacher training institutions, and the rapidly growing sector of community colleges. It also included representatives of California's private colleges and universities on the committee, and again, wisely, chose one of its representatives to chair it since the private sector was least affected by the plan to be developed. The legislature told this committee to come up with a plan for the organization and finance of the states colleges and universities within one year; if they could not come up with a plan, the Legislature would write one for them -- a threat which wonderfully concentrated the minds of all concerned.

With leadership from Clark Kerr, then the Chancellor of Berkeley's UC campus, (a professional labor mediator, among many other things), the committee produced a unanimous report with only hours to spare -- as you would guess, the real negotiation happened under the gun, so to speak. Its recommendations were accepted by the legislature and

governor, and written into law. The Plan has been reviewed numbers of times over this past half century, and been slightly modified, but its main features are in place as they were designed in the original plan -- testimony to its wisdom and durability.

Basically, out of an anarchic and growing aggregate of institutions of higher education, an aggregation that would be duplicated all over the modern world in the next decades, California's Plan created and formalized the three public sectors of higher education, each with its own primary spheres of responsibility, though with some measure of overlap of function and mission among them:

The University of California, then just about to expand beyond its flagship campus at Berkeley and its Southern campus at UCLA under Kerr's leadership, was given a monopoly on research and the awarding of doctoral degrees, and on professional education in medicine and law. The emerging four year colleges, currently 24 of them scattered around the state, were pulled together administratively as components of a new institution known as the California State University -- with the dignity of university name and status, but without the research mission; rather with the primary mission of teaching large numbers of students to the first degree and to the first professional masters degree in many new and emerging semi-professions. Most importantly, their mission was a permanent one; that is, there was no way in which they would be encouraged or allowed to become research universities. And finally, the community colleges were put together in a loose confederation of over a hundred institutions, offering both preparatory academic work for those hoping to gain a first degree at one of the four year colleges or universities, or getting vocational training in one of many skills and crafts. They currently enroll 1.6 million students, most of them working and part-time, but others full time academic students, and on some campuses even living in student halls of residence. And these community colleges were also told by the Plan that under no circumstances were they to imagine that by shifting their curriculum away from their vocational work toward academic subjects would they be allowed to become a four year degree granting institution, though many of them continued to offer academic college transfer studies along with the vocational courses that are their main educational function.

The Plan also makes distinctions among the sectors in their selectivity for entry. The University was allowed to set criteria that would permit admission to the top twelve and one half percent of graduates from California public high schools -- or corresponding standards for applicants from private high schools or from out of state. The CSU colleges were allowed to admit students from the top one-third of high school graduates. And the community colleges were defined as open-door colleges - that is,

open to any high school graduate, and currently to any California resident over 18 years of age who applies, even without a high school diploma. (Incidentally, these services are available to residents who are illegal immigrants. The idea is that if you are not going to find and expel these undocumented immigrants, the society better educate and socialize them to become Americans. In addition, different authorities are involved: immigration is a federal responsibility, while education is a state and local responsibility.)

While the Plan forbids the mobility of institutions between sectors, it actively encourages mobility of students between institutions and between sectors. For example, in a family I know, a daughter was admitted to a campus of the University of California, and after a year transferred to a CSU campus, seeking more practical training in a medical support specialty for which training was not available on any UC campus. The son in the family had not shown any great interest in his studies in high school, but on graduation enrolled in a nearby community college and after two years had earned the right to be admitted to one of the campuses of the University of California where he could and did earn a bachelors degree. As I noted, mobility between institutions is not merely permitted but encouraged. For example, the numbers admitted to UC campuses as first year students is restricted to allow room for transfers into the University from community colleges or CSU campuses two years later. Moreover, by an agreement between the University and the community colleges, worked out by committees of the academic senates of the two sectors rather than by administrators, it was accepted by the University that students in a community college who took and did well in the equivalent academic courses at the community colleges that their counterparts were taking in the University, would be accepted as third year students at the University. Their work would be accepted as equivalent to work done at these first two years of general education at the University

In addition, the leaders of the Academic Senates of the University and of the community colleges agreed on the principle that those students who took the academic courses in the community colleges which parallel the required courses for students in the University would be admitted without further review: the University faculty was saying to their counterparts in the community colleges that they trusted them to prepare those transfer students properly and did not need further "quality assurance. The policy has been successful, as shown by the fact that these transfer students have on average done as well, and graduate at the same rates, as those in the same subjects who did all their work in the University. You can imagine how much trouble has been avoided by the University not insisting on its right to continually test the quality of the parallel course work in the community colleges, which would have led to endless friction over these

judgements of quality, the most sensitive issue in the relations between institutions.

I should say that the numbers of these transfer students, while significant for the university enrollments, is a small fraction of all community college students, the great majority of whom are not taking university equivalent academic courses looking toward transfer, but are taking vocationally linked studies aiming toward some kind of technical qualification, or in many cases, no qualification at all.

Moreover the range of work done in the community colleges is itself enormously varied, as are the colleges themselves. Some of the community colleges close to Silicon Valley offer advanced highly technical courses to engineers who already have first or second degrees, and study in order to keep abreast of the latest developments in their specialties -- without regard for any further degrees or qualifications. And this is done alongside studies in subjects much less intellectually demanding. Community colleges have experience in creating and supporting courses in any subject for which there is any significant demand in their districts.

Of course, the simple determination of the level of degree or certificate that an institution can award, along with whether the institution has a research role and provides graduate education, shapes costs, both capital costs and operating costs. Over three decades ago I wrote that no society in the world, certainly including the US, was rich enough to support a system of mass higher education at the per capita cost levels of the then elite research universities. Education in the research universities has since become even more costly, costs in higher education everywhere rising more rapidly than inflation or GNP. The Master Plan accepts that fact and the substantial differences in costs at the University as compared with costs per student in the CSU or the community college. But the Plan limits the number of students who will be educated at these expensive levels without limiting the total number of students who can study beyond secondary school at some kind of institution that will allow them to go on to further studies somewhere. There is the almost sacred principle in American higher education of the second chance, or the third chance, or the fourth chance. We can no longer really determine what proportion of our population has some experience of post secondary education since that possibility remains open till the end of life. Incidentally, the per capita costs of education between segments do not vary much when one looks narrowly at the costs of undergraduate instruction; they vary enormously when you partial in the costs of graduate instruction and research.

I do not mean to suggest that there have not been some conflicts between the UC and the CSU in the past; the CSU has not wholly surrendered its hopes of expanding the right to award the doctoral degree in some fields, most notably in education, where by exception they can do so now but only in partnership with a UC campus. Moreover, the University has much greater autonomy in the management of its budget than do the CSU institutions, in part because of the explicit recognition and protection of that autonomy in the Constitution of the state, and in part because the greater diversity of sources of support for the University, which now gains only about a quarter of its operating budget from the state, by contrast with the CSU which is funded largely by the state -- supplemented by modest tuition charges to its students in ways more familiar to Europeans or Israelis. But on balance, the arrangement is largely stable, and its main principles unchallenged; they are so obviously working well. The state had the political will to make the Master Plan into law in 1952; whether California could do that today, in a more egalitarian era, I am not so sure.

Let me turn briefly to a problem faced by many countries other than the United States, the problem of weak presidents. The issue of diversity is closely linked to the issue of institutional autonomy. Where systems have grown, they have often put in place a lot of central government management designed to control their missions and cost -- and that inevitably is at the expense of their autonomy. This is not the case in Israel, where I gather institutions have largely preserved their autonomy under the largely benign oversight of the Planning and Budget Committee. Autonomy of institutions tends to extend institutional diversity, as institutions seek niche roles and new ways of finding and recruiting students. That in turn raises the question of the power of the president/rector to steer autonomous institutions.

The tradition of systems based on European models is that the institutions are led by rectors (by whatever name) who are elected for relatively short terms, often in contested elections, by members of the academic senate, sometimes with representation of students and non-academic staff. In addition, deans are also often elected by their academic constituents. The familiar result is a weak president, or more broadly, a weak central administration, with the president/rector more of a chairman of committees, primus inter pares, than a chief executive officer able to initiate and effect changes and reforms in the institution's mission or its capacity to carry it out, with substantial power over the budget.

This pattern has deep historical sources, as a way of preserving academic freedom -- the freedom to learn and to teach, a quite different matter than institutional autonomy -- against non-academic powers in state or church. A weak administration is a conservative force, subjecting internal change to the approval of academics -- usually the senior academics -- who often

are comfortable with existing arrangements, and wary of significant change. When social and intellectual change was slow, the costs of weak administration to the speed of academic change, in what was studied and taught – which often had to wait for the generational change of the ordinarius professors – were arguably worth the preservation of academic freedom. But today institutions need to be able to change rapidly and nimbly, both because of the fantastically rapid change in the map of learning that has come with the scientific explosion, and also because of the rapid expansion and changes in the nature of institutions and their students and missions.

Currently, knowledgeable people in universities and government in every advanced society recognize the importance of strong institutional leadership responsible to a board of trustees rather than to the academics or their committees or Senate. Recall I am speaking as a person with a lot of experience in Academic Senates, but who has never held an administrative post (beyond the directorship of a small research center). So my bias is naturally toward the role of academic senates. But people like myself who support the principle of a strong president in universities and colleges also recognize that such leadership cannot be effective unless it takes the sentiments of the academic community very seriously, and makes decisions through a process of close consultation with the academic senates or their equivalent. In UC we speak of “shared governance,” with the senate and its committees, together with the academics in their departments, having substantially total control over the curriculum, the appointment and promotion of academic staff, and the admission of students. But when it comes to the broad direction of the institution – for example, the distribution of resources among subjects, decisions about the size of institutions and their missions, the capital budget – decisions of that kind lie with the president, subject only to continued support by the board of trustees and ongoing consultation with his academic colleagues.

As a longtime active member of my own academic senate, I recognized that we were more effective when we were advising a powerful president or chancellor rather than a weak one. A strong president can do big things, make important reforms, take important initiatives – and when he makes them in close consultation with the Senate, the Senate has really more influence than when it is mostly obstructing the initiatives of a weak president or rector.

The need for stronger institutional leadership is widely recognized in many countries, but many of them lack the political will or capacity to make the needed changes – drastic changes, as it seems, in the traditional and cherished forms of university governance. So in some countries some reforms have been made – for example, the terms of appointment of

presidents/rectors has been lengthened in some countries -- as in the UK and in Germany. But the power of the chief campus officer in most countries remains closely constrained. This is a significant issue. For example, when professors retire or leave for another institution, who owns that position? Traditionally, in many countries, the faculty or department owns its establishment, which may have been determined by the legislature or some government agency, and it is assumed that the department or faculty can fill the open position. But that may not be in the best interest of the institution or the country. Institutional leaders should have the power to redistribute the resources of the institution, in response to changes in student interest as reflected in enrollment, and in changes in the map of knowledge. Departments and Faculties naturally defend their own interests, often with passion. But the president/rector, and the senior academics whom he appoints, are the only people who represent the institution and its interests as a whole, and should be able to override the parochial interests of a senate or a department or faculty -- subject always to my caveat about the importance of genuine consultation.

Decisions by senior administrative officers must be informed by consultations with the academics closest to the units affected. The quality of institutional governance depends in large part on the quality of that consultative relationship, and the trust on both sides that develops over time. It is the culture of the institution, especially the quality of trust that obtains between teaching faculty and administrative officers, that is decisive in the quality of those decisions and the state of morale in the institution. But this assumes that the final decisions on resource allocation lie with the president/rector who owes his appointment to a board and not to the academics who are affected by his decisions.

The justification of diversity

The linkage of academic status to the research function is so deep that it makes it seem to some that a commitment to diversity within higher education is to be acceding to the creation or preservation of a new hierarchy among institutions, with research universities at the top, below them in some descending order come technical institutions, teaching institutions, open universities, institutions of post-secondary education short of a bachelors degree, open access institutions.

My own view is that a commitment to such a status hierarchy among institutions of higher education is a kind of snobbery, no more defensible than any other kind of snobbery. Let me suggest two alternative ways of dealing with the error of mistaking diversity for hierarchy, one symbolic, the other fully and importantly substantial. A few years ago a group of European academics and civil servants concerned with higher education came to see how Americans were coping with its problems, and they

chose to come to the State of New Jersey. I happened to be at Princeton at that time, and met with a number of the visitors, some of whom I already knew. They all expressed to me their surprise that the meeting, attended by the leaders of most of Princeton's colleges and universities, including the presidents of Princeton and Rutgers, met on the campus of one of the state's community colleges. This was a quite unconscious symbolic statement of the irrelevance of the status hierarchy to relations among the different kinds of institutions.

But more substantially, California's Master Plan cemented a close alliance between the University of California and its approximately 120 community colleges. Very simply, the University understood that its survival as a highly selective and well supported research university depended and depends today on the parallel existence of a broad system of open-door colleges, able to admit great numbers of students who do not want the kind of education offered by UC, or do not have the academic talent or motivation it requires. Without the community colleges, and the 24 campuses of the California State University, the pressures on UC to expand to take this enormous demand from the society would be overwhelming. And that would be the end of the University of California as we know it. No matter that the University has guarantees of its autonomy in the state constitution, and has whittled its dependence on the State government down to about 25% of its operating budget – both very useful sources of support for its autonomy. But without the buffers of the other two public sectors, UC could not maintain its unique characteristics as the leading public research university in the country.

Conclusion

I will not try to summarize these remarks, beyond saying that the relations among the segments of a diverse system of higher education can often be obscured by the problems of each segment alone – and not least, by the sense of each that it must have more money. I can only say that the problems of each segment may also be approached through a consideration of its relation with the other segments, its partners in the nation's system of higher education, even more effectively than if it focuses exclusively on its own issues, problems and resources.