

## John R. Thelin, A History of American Higher Education

### Chapter 8: Coming of Age in America

#### Higher Education as a Troubled Giant, 1970 to 2000

##### *A Proliferation of Problems, 1970 to 1980*

“*A rising tide lifts all boats.*” vs. “*Fasten your seatbelts! We’re in for a bumpy ride.*”

- Institutions began to experience an unsteady state as we entered the 1970-1980s.
  - NSMC: National Student Marketing Corporations
    - Prediction for the year stock
    - Reality: share price fell from \$140 → \$7  
= end of higher education’s “golden age”
- Despite:
  - Increase access to education for racial minorities and women
  - All-time high enrollment
- There was a fundamental crisis occurring within institutions
  - Decreasing confidence in rankings
  - Little information about higher education
    - Resolution Attempt
      - Clark Kerr: Carnegie Commission on Higher Education
        - Extensive research on the condition and character of educational institutions
        - 1974-1979: continued as Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education
        - Findings from Earl Cheit
          - the birth of a new depression in higher education
            - Socially unwelcomed
        - Lack of fiscal fitness in higher education
          - Increase in degree programs + fields of study
        - Institutions were homogenizing
          - Adding new programs → admit different kinds of students → attractive to the prospective student
- Goal: create order in the 2,500+ postsecondary institutions
  - HEGIS: Higher Education General Information Survey
    - Later expanded and changed to IPEDS: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Systems

- Information included
    - Enrollments
    - Basic budgets
    - Degrees conferred
  - Labeled different institutions to neutralize categorization
    - Results
      - Societal viewpoint
        - This is the creation of a hierarchical ranking system
          - = Institutions were quick to make changes to adjust their category to a “higher rank”
- More national studies show the cons of higher education
  - The Newman Report 1971
    - Students need a new outlook on what it means to go to college
    - There has been a pattern of uniformity in institutions
      - Does not portray the true interest of society
    - Possible solution: social justice
      - Working towards equality for women, increasing access for minorities, promoting diversity, funding
- Stagflation
  - Double-digit inflation while the decline in national economic productivity
    - Colleges decided to place budget cuts
      - Reducing department budgets on postage
      - Postponing repairs/maintenance
    - Result
      - State of campus repelled prospective students and their parents
      - Higher cost to make delayed repairments
- Going to college was unattractive to students
  - A decline birth rate
    - Fewer students to enroll
  - End of the mandatory military draft
  - Families migrating out of the Northeast / Midwest
  - Families migrating into the South and Pacific Coast
    - The uneven ratio of student enrollment across the nation
  - Statistic Results
    - 1975-176
      - Enrollment declines by 175,000

- The first drop after the implementation of the GI Bill

### *Demographics as Destiny*

- “Going to college” vs. “A real college experience”
  - Martin Trow
    - Roots of uncertainty and structure overload are in the demographic of students
  - Postsecondary education is reasonably affordable
    - The building of structure from taxpayers, legislators, governors, and donors
    - Results
      - Lack of understanding in the path of curriculum
      - Declined confidence in the definition of “college experience”
  - Public education is attractive
    - 1970: Constitutes  $\frac{3}{4}$  of enrolled students
    - 1980: 78% of student enrollment
      - However:
        - Four year private college continued to increase enrollment
  - “Going to college”
    - = Two-year public commuter campus
  - “Real college experience”
    - = four-year full-time residential

### *Federal Funding and the Transformation of Student Financial Aid*

- “The pendulum swing from federal emphasis on competitive research grants toward undergraduate need-based financial aid”
  - 1947 Truman Commission Report
    - Importance of affordable tuition
  - The price of going to college increases
    - Decrease in resistance to direct student grants
  - Who speaks for higher education?
    - Association of American Universities + American Council on Education vs. Student groups
  - BEOG Basic Educational Opportunities Grants → Pell Grants
    - Fulfillment of the 1947 Truman Report
    - Any applicant that matches the terms and conditions will be guaranteed financial aid
      - Full-time student

- 12 credits per semester
      - Maintain good academic standing
  - Up to \$1,250/year
  - Result
    - Thousands now have the opportunity to go to college
    - Institutions will compete to attract students for their Pell grants
  - A tactic for the new generation to go to college
- Federal support
  - 1. Student financial aid
  - 2. Sponsored Research
- Guaranteed Student Loan Act
  - Attractive to banks and students who do not meet financial aid criteria
  - Result
    - Recent college graduates leave college with mass debt

### *The Changing Profile of Students After 1970*

- Organized student movement
  - Students recognize the rights they should be given as consumers + members of collegiate society
    - = Institutions allow students to be on the governing boards
- Consequences of 1975-1976 enrollment decline
  - 1. More attention is given to students and their parents
  - 2. The acknowledgment of part-time students + returning students
  - 3. Older demographic of students may need accommodations
- 1960's lessons
  - Institutions still recall the collective strength students had to influence components of their campus
    - Students were no longer interested in the services offered in the 1960s.
- Michael Moffat's Study *Coming of Age in New Jersey*
  - Coeducational dorms were seen to allow sibling-like bonds
  - Gender proximity on campus was not seen as detrimental to modesty and self-consciousness
  - There are large gaps between students and faculty regarding what the college experience means
    - Even overachievers did not quite understand the job details of a professor
- The change in collegiate culture
  - 1980s
    - Large culture shift in music, taste, and vocabulary of youth

- Change in retention and degree completion
  - Solutions implemented
    - Professional advising
    - Teaching + learning centers
    - More student services
  - The continued weak performance disrupted the allocation of resources
    - Highlighted:
      - There was a dependency between research universities and high schools
        - Failing grades in core subjects partially attributed to secondary education
    - Result:
      - Institutions were investing too much money into freshman students who would not graduate
    - Solution attempt:
      - More resources in support services
        - Results: internships, study abroad, and field experiences become integrated into the bachelor's degree expectation
        - 4-year bachelor's degree becomes 5 to 6 years as the norm

### *Profile of the Faculty*

- “*A national resource imperiled.*”
  - 15-year hiring boom ends by 1972
    - No job vacancies
    - Lack of mobility + leverage in current academic professions to influence decisions
      - Not the biggest issue for presidents
        - There was the luxury of choosing to hire new professors
        - Little to no tenured faculty would look elsewhere

### *The Community College*

- Pros
  - Open admissions

- Accommodates a variety of students
          - Possible con: may not apply conventional models of reporting retention patterns
      - Remedial courses
      - Provided advanced courses to degree-holding students
    - Cons
      - Lack of guidance on what is appropriate to allow in a community college
        - Students transferring from 2-year to 4-year declined
        - If they did transfer, their academic record declined from previous generations of transfer students
          - = 4-year loss of confidence in community colleges
    - 1978 Proposition 13
      - Caps local property taxes
      - Reduced flow of funding to community colleges
        - Budget restraints
          - Should they be the entry to education for underserved + undereducated students?
          - Should they offer postgraduate refresher courses to degree-holding students?
    - Influential Alexander Austin: *Four Critical Years*
      - Reliance on community college for first-generation students = low gains in cognitive skills
      - “Community colleges were not real colleges”

*Budget Problems and Trade-Offs: Brown University in 1980*

- “Can Brown afford financial aid to students?”
  - Ivy Leagues affected by budget cuts
    - Brown University
      - High energy costs
      - Higher numbers in student enrollment
      - High numbers of students needing financial aid
        - = debate on whether to continue admission and financial aid policies
          - Possible solutions:
            - Decrease faculty + their salary
            - Decrease operating hours + budget of libraries
            - Step back from need-blind admission
              - The financial status of the applicant was not taken into consideration

### *Learning from Adversity*

- “...a ‘life and death struggle’”
  - Colleges were an endangered sector
  - The incomplete transformation from its peak in the 1960s; was never tested by time
    - Change is needed
      - 1. Decrease in high school graduation geographically
      - 2. Double-digit inflation
      - 3. High energy costs
      - 4. Expensive campus infrastructure
        - Howard J. Bowen: invested in education needs to be made for society instead of just personal gain
  - Surprisingly, recovery was made for many institutions
    - Due to enterprising evolutions
      - Connections need to be made between data and decisions
    - Federal + state moving towards privatization + incentives in funding
      - Matching grants
        - Agencies + private foundation challenged colleges to meet resources
  - Change in policies for this path
    - More institutions to the quest of receiving more awards
      - Results
        - 1. New generation of donors + foundations
          - Priorities in educational issues instead of individual campuses
        - 2. Awards towards innovative and exploratory projects
          - Minority and women students
          - International studies
  - No more assumptions from institutions that they are primary beneficiaries of certain giving

### *The States and Higher Education: Coordination and Centralization*

- “...increasing federal role in higher education...”
  - 1972 amendments to the Higher Education Act of 1964
    - Altering the governance of higher education
      - Strategy
        - Federal to provide incentive funds for institutions to create coordinating agencies

- Will enable communication between institutions and the federal government
- 1202 commissions will fund agencies
  - Allowed independent colleges + universities to be included in state institutions in discussions of statewide policies
  - Mixed results
    - Coordinated agencies already existed
    - Funding also created new agencies
    - Variation in character of agencies
- State councils
  - Relies on suasion/coercion to have institutions address statewide questions that they wouldn't consider on their own
  - Mandate to make recommendations on
    - 1. Budget
    - 2. Capital Construction
    - 3. Closing down programs
    - 4. Endorsing programs

= issue: no guarantee it would happen
- 1970's intersegmental cooperation
  - State universities are given funding if they cooperate with community colleges and state colleges
- Steady State Growth
  - Campuses can add new programs if an established one is removed

### *The Development of Formidable For-Profit Sector*

- For-profit colleges want to participate in financial aid programs
  - Objections from established colleges and universities
    - Claims that high default rates in their students meant there were loose educational standards
    - For-profit schools countered: "regular" colleges and universities already have an uncertain education quality + rely on political donations

= Did not change the decision to allow for-profit schools to enter programs

### *From Retrenchment to Recovery, 1980 to 1989*

- Higher-education association's campaigns



- Investment in higher education is for the betterment of the economy and society
- Signs of recovery after inflation dropped in 1983
  - Call for partnerships between state government, private industries, and higher education
    - “High tech” state economy
  - Universities joining state governments to sponsor research parks
- Charles Clotfelter's 1996 study
  - Institutions' ambition + drive for quality and prestige = institutions spending generously
    - Quest to find top students and faculty

### *Government Relations in Regulation*

- Good standing between higher education and the federal government
  - (as long as funding was appropriate)
- 1982 study
  - Tension in control of higher education
    - Colleges and universities are expected to meet the needs of society
    - The freedom to conduct their work
  - Result:
    - Officials of higher education associations + university presidents argue federal regulations are excessive
      - Business vs. higher education
        - 1910s
          - Businesses are given regulations
          - Higher education allowed to function as it wishes
        - 1980s
          - Businesses are given exemptions + incentives
          - Higher education given lists of regulations
  - Higher education receives criticism from inside and outside
    - Who speaks for the campus and who does it represent?
    - If there was a lack of government regulation, how would higher education respond to the issue of social justice?

### *Regulatory Issues and Equity: Women in Higher Education*

- “... a pervasive ‘chilly’ climate for women”

- Undergraduate enrollment vs. Graduate enrollment
  - Undergraduate
    - 1970: 41%
      - 1950: 32%
  - Graduate
    - 1970: 39%
      - 1950: 27%
- 1975 study
  - Men and women enrollment rates are nearly equal
  - Disparities in Ph.D. enrollment
    - Explanation
      - Women applied to oversubscribed departments with low acceptance rates and lengthy degree completion
      - Men applied to fields with vacancies and shorter degree completion time
    - Overall: women were not applying to certain graduate fields
      - Women have been discouraged from entering mathematic
        - Not due to level of achievement
      - Solution: changes in advisement and mentoring before undergraduate career
- 1977-1978: Change in professional and doctoral degree recipients
  - 43% are women
    - 66% in veterinary medicine degrees
    - 45% in law degrees
    - 42% in medical degrees
    - 38% in dental degree
  - 37% of women in 1984-1985 received Ph.D.'s
- The switch to coeducational colleges
  - Women's colleges switch to coeducational colleges
    - Male applicants had lagged behind women applicants in academic records
  - Male colleges switch the coeducational colleges
    - Women applicants had higher SAT and high school GPA scores when compared to their male counterparts
- 1972: Title IX legislation
  - Prohibits discrimination in higher education
    - 1997: Bown v. Cohen
      - Implementation of criteria that would used by higher education to show compliance with Title IX

### *Regulatory Issues and Equity: Minorities in Higher Education*

- Affirmative Action
  - Initially for businesses + industry
  - Shifted to higher education
    - Faculty → students
- Colleges and universities want to promote racial equality
  - Bakke v. the Regents of the University of California
    - Race alone cannot be used for admission decisions
    - Race with other components can be used for admission decisions
  - White colleges and universities had an interest in recruiting black students
    - What does this mean for HBCUs?
      - Can they compete for students against Princeton? Harvard?
        - There was a lack of trust between black students and white colleges and universities
          - HBCUs still had a very high contribution to black students receiving degrees
- Lack of help from cases to colleges on how to achieve equity

### *The College-Costs and College-Price Debates*

- Federal scrutiny intensifies
  - Institutions raising tuition to increase the number of students who need financial aid
    - Institutions receive their Pell grants
- Price vs. cost
  - The cost of educating an undergraduate at a four-year public was nearly the same as at a private institution
    - Debate over tuition charged
      - Colleges raising pricing faster than inflation
        - Seen through the consumer price index (CPI)
          - Con
            - Both products are not the same kinds of purchases
              - Result: creation of higher education price index (HEPI)
  - Price connected to prestige
    - Higher tuition meant the number and quality of applicants

### *The Curricular Wars*

- Disputes between higher-education associations
  - What should be taught?
  - Which perspectives should be taught?
    - Disputes in the liberal arts
      - Result
        - 1. Creation of permanent departments for a variety of fields
        - 2. Integration of new perspectives
  - Consequence
    - Conservative alumnus believes institutions are moving too far to the left

### *Research Universities and the Federal-Overhead Controversy*

- “...*bigger was not always better*...”
  - Complaints among university officials and members of Congress that certain institutions were being favored
    - Result
      - Programs like EpScor
        - Ensures research funding is properly distributed to institutions that do not have a strong record
      - This raises the question: is there room at the top for newcomers?
        - Claims that peer review limits the chances new grant applicants/research would apply for prestigious grants
    - Reputation + total federal research dollars = rank and rating
      - New formula
        - Scholarly achievements + basis of productivity in research per faculty member
          - Results
            - Institutions in the South at the level of traditional Ivy Leagues
  - Issues for liberal art colleges and state universities
    - Is large-scale research an obligation for professors?
      - Faculty with heavy loads were expected to public books and produce successful grant applications
  - Issue of maintaining attention on elite research universities
    - Overshadowed master degrees
      - Power of the master degree

- Offered at research universities and comprehensive universities and state colleges
- Enforced strong presence in higher education
- Expanded the middle-class education

### *Themes for the Twenty-first Century*

- “... *the rich man who wears scuffed shoes and a frayed collar when he visits the doctor...*”
  - College was the largest employer for a college town
    - Exempt from local property taxes
      - + federal and state income taxes
    - Subjected to renewal of policies
      - Consideration on imposing taxes
        - Public school systems were seeing a reduction in resources
    - Response from institutions
      - Voluntary payments to host local governments
    - Result
      - Creation of unrelated business income taxes (UBIT)
        - Why should a college be treated differently from a business?
          - They were the largest landowner
  - “Janus, the Roman god with two faces looking in opposite directions.”
    - Capital campaign is high → university claims it is in financial shambles
      - Consistent claims higher education institutions did not have adequate funding
        - Disconnect from self-image and reality
          - Loss of respect
      - Hinders those who truly need support
        - Community colleges
        - Private colleges with small endowments

