

NYU Berlin, Humboldt Universität zu Berlin

Workshop on Global Higher Education

„Merging Practices and Aspirations – Setting the Bar for Global Higher Education in the 21st Century“

NYU Berlin, Academic Center, 8-9 November 2012

Abstract

Internationalizing the Curriculum and Celebrating Diversity: Four Challenges for Mass University

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Most universities, these days, underline their commitment to internationalizing their profile. This involves a strategy and a number of measures, for example internationalizing the staff, privileging international and intercultural approaches at least in the curricula of certain disciplines, promoting international cooperation and attracting a diverse student body, while advertising the intrinsic value of such a diversification for the sake of quality, innovativeness and attractiveness of higher education – the mantras of higher educational policies in the 21st century. However, this evolution towards a contemporary form of internationalization (for university has historically been international since its invention) does not happen automatically and without having to meet some challenges. I shall address some of them in my paper: *Firstly*, higher education is proceeding towards a divide between elite universities and mass higher education, implying a heterogeneous student body with different levels and qualities of cultural and social capital. *Secondly*, the Bologna reform imposes a tight scheme and schedule which reduces the space for free research. *Thirdly*, it is by no means evident to everybody (staff and students) nor is it a universally shared belief that the philosophy of internationalization and of the celebration of diversity in education is mandatory or unquestionable. *Fourthly* and finally, the idea that higher education should have a broader scope (in the sense of a liberal education which is international and open to diversity) reaching beyond training qualified and efficient professionals, contrasts with current neo-liberal policies and several constraints.

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