**Nagan’s Thoughts on Future Higher Education**

The current thinking about higher education focuses on the demographic reality. There will be multiple thousands of students, otherwise qualified, who will have no place in the current institutional form of higher education, which is university-based. Moreover, accelerated building plans will not be able to cover the deficit. Additionally, it is by no means clear that we can produce a faculty sizeable enough to cope with the problem in conventional terms. In short, many more students, less learning space and even less qualified university teachers. That is the crisis. It does not provide for an easy solution. On the assumption that our electronic wizards may provide a form of mass education, that can also provide credentialing and a level of quality to meet social and cultural expectations, I want to focus on another aspect of the challenge that might be incorporated into any successful and innovative response.

*1. The ostensible goals of higher education*

This is a matter that is important to higher education as it is and also to the prospect of new innovations for the delivery of higher education in the future on a global basis. Higher education has to confront an important division in its ranks. First, there is the importance of science, scientific methods usually implicated in the philosophy of positivism. This institutionalization of science works predominately on a principle that it is value free and this is a principle that still largely influences how science is done and taught in a university setting. The other branch of higher education has its focus on philosophy and the humanities and there are rigorous debates about the content and nature of values, morality, and ethics.

In my view, the general question about higher education is what is higher education for? Is it for the promotion and defense of the basic, agreed upon values of the body politic, or is its correct position one of neutrality with respect to these values. Let me express what I think these values might encompass in general. First, higher education should strive to ensure that the fundamental security values of the community are enhanced and promoted. Those values include the threats to humanity posed by technologies related to weapons of mass destruction or climate change and more generally, it should focus on the university experience as an experience for promoting world peace and security, in every technical field where it is appropriate to introduce such ideas. My second value commitment is one that centers on the principle of the sanctity of the individual and the principle of a university-shared commitment to human dignity. This would encompass the values in the entire International Bill of Rights as we know it today. In short, the fundamental values of education that should be strategically secured in the curriculum of higher education is a commitment to human security in the wider sense, and this includes the commitment to universal peace and a commitment to fundamental human rights and human dignity on a universal basis.

When I was putting together a Peace and Human Rights Institute at Makerere University in Uganda, I conducted a four-day faculty workshop requesting that faculty in the courses they were teaching in whatever field reflect upon the implications of their course for various aspects of human security and human rights. Unfortunately, there was not enough time to follow this through, but a surprising level of insight emerged from these discussions.

I now want to move from these objectives to the notion that the courses themselves will generate perspectives of observation and where appropriate, the challenges of intervention. Since in future model the classes will be required to be global in scope, the critical question is how can students understand the global context of eco-social values and social interaction? This requires that students will have to be introduced to the idea of contextually mapping global phenomena in order to capture their salience from the global to the local levels of interest and effect. This means that the student must have the tools to delineate such important matters as (1) global social interaction, (2) global processes of effective power, (3) global processes of constitutionalizing effective power, and (4) the global dimensions of various aspects of the global system of public order. These are matters that require an appropriate perspective of observation and appropriate tools of mapping their salient features.

*2. Thinking Skills*

Thomas Dewey, the great educational philosopher, wrote a famous book about education called, “How We Think.” I distill here five important thinking processes that he felt were critical to the education experience of the student. I shall add one more to Dewey’s list:

1. Thinking skills emerged from the social process context as problems. Therefore, I add to Dewey’s list the issues of problem identification and the social process context from which it emerges.

2. Problems implicate contestations about values and therefore require a form of exposition in terms of value clarification and goal thinking.

3. Problems will normally carry a historic pedigree and therefore there is an important skill in understanding the trend, which precedes the problem under consideration (historic thinking).

4. The problems and responses to them in the past reflect the conditions relating to problems and solutions to them in social process. Thinking in terms of conditions means thinking in terms of causes and consequences (scientific thinking).

5. A solution to the problem requires some form of predicting or futuristic thinking. Here thinking about the future requires a student to project into the future, possible consequences of diverse responses. This can usually be guided by the value clarification and a projection into the future may project a best case and a worst-case scenario.

6. Creative alternative thinking. Here the creative faculty, possibly cultivated by the method of free fantasy may facilitate in creating problem solving that is constructive and guided by value clarification.

*3. Critical Thinking Skills and the Challenge of Decision Making in the Experience of Higher Education*

We conventionally consider that one of the most important skills any student may receive in the higher education experience are critical and analytical thinking skills. An important addendum to this important objective is that these critical thinking and analytical skills are only given effect when human beings have to make decisions utilizing those skills. Different disciplines will provide different perspectives on the forms of thinking that are considered to be critical. But all of these ultimately come down to an understanding of those critical analytical thinking skills and their ability to influence human beings in the day to day business of making decisions at every level of social organizations. Below we provide a table of decision making functions:

1. Intelligence. Intelligence, which includes gathering information relevant to making decisions and its processing, storage, retrieval, and distribution to all participators performing decision functions.

2. Promotion. The decision-making function of promotion requires agitation and recommendation of certain policies, which in the form of prescription. In this sense, promotion is a critical component in decision for directly changing the common interest.

3. Prescription. This decision function implicates the formulation and adoption of certain policies as authoritative pronouncements in appropriate sectors of the social process.

4. Invocation. This function of decision-making is essentially a provisional decision function that characterizes behavior as incompatible with the law and goals of the community. Those who perform the invocation function raise the question of what initiatives enhance or violate community prescriptions.

5. Application. This is the authoritative characterization of conduct that is appropriate. Sometimes to secure lawful ends, the applier must use tools of some form of sanction to secure appropriate application. In terms of the objectives of development, the consequences of development may be critically related to the actual applicative performance.

6. Termination. The decision function of termination means the termination of something in the status quo and its replacement by something that changes the status quo.

7. Appraisal. The theory of decision-making as applied to economic policy requires that there be constant measures that may be appraised in terms of advancing toward progressive socio-political goals and avoiding the regression to the opposite.

*4. Values Institutions and Critical Thinking Related to Decision*

Individual social participants whether they make decisions about what to study or what matters requires some sort of intervention in their social roles should be guided by the taxonomy of values that we can extract from the International Bill of Rights. The following explains the value institutional context which challenges the human capacity to make thoughtful, critical informed decisions.

1. Power. The most important expression of power as decision is the understanding of the

institution within which it expresses itself. For example, globally, power is significantly

decentralized. This means an economic paradigm of global salience runs into the

problem of the degree of lack of institutionalization of power. It is probably true that

the most power-deprived are the least well off in global society. The new theory must

be able to map global power and to appreciate its capacity to be mobilized for rational

developmental objectives.

2. Wealth. In general, this refers to the aggregate volume and composition of what a

society produces. It may refer to income in the community and also to the notion of

an aggregate resource base. In general, when wealth is developed, the outcome is an

increase in the volume and composition of products without depleting the resource

base. (P+I)÷R

3. Enlightenment. What we mean by enlightenment is the prescription and application of

education in social and economic development. The nature of enlightenment as a social

capital is evident when education in a society leads to development. A society with

an increased education-knowledge base uses enlightenment to extend development

through informed decision-making. Decision-makers would make decisions based on

informed enlightenment.

4. Well-being. Well-being including health refers to the state or condition of a society and

its members. The well-being of a society is directly proportional to the level of “life

expectancy” and indirectly proportional to the expectancy of disease occurrence in that

society. The optimum level of well-being, however, is dependent on other values in that

society.

5. Skill. Skill is the ability to perform tasks (especially employment or professional tasks),

as a function of human capital development. The skill value is for the benefit of society.

Skill development is a consequence of an increase in the strength of the “skill pool” in

a society where skills are directed towards development. Skill is a critical component

of individual and social capital.

6. Affection. Affection is a form of positive sentiment and underlines the loyalty of

individuals and associations to the group. Being a basic value, it has tremendous

social capital. The increase in scope of positive sentiments in a society increases

developmental achievements and goals.

7. Respect. Showing regard for other individuals within a society is crucial to development.

A lack of respect gives rise to discrimination, which in turn becomes a direct cause of

retarded development.

8. Rectitude. Rectitude drives moral behavior in society. When rectitude of individuals

within a society matches its development goals, there emerges what we call rectitude

development.

9. Aesthetics. Aesthetics is rooted in human creativity and in human creative capacity. A

culture of strong aesthetics will inspire social development objectives.

In conclusion, the new paradigm for global higher education should have the following elements:

1. It must be contextual, i.e., it must perceive all features of the social process of immediate

concern in relation to the manifold events comprising the relevant whole.

2. It must be problem-oriented.

3. It must be multi-method.

4. It must be interdisciplinary with a focus on the dynamics of global interdependence and

global inter-determination.

5. It cannot be value free. It must be value informed.