

European Universities and Change

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ABSTRACT

This article describes the findings of an exploratory research project conducted in Central and Western Europe during the fall of 2008. The purpose of the research was to identify the role of change that European Universities have faced throughout the 20th Century and to identify how they have responded to these challenges. One surprising outcome of the research was that most European universities were not impacted significantly at all by the several tumultuous events of the Century, but that they are now seeing substantive changes due to the implementation of the Bologna Process, which has been adopted by 46 European countries to improve quality and competitiveness in their universities. This article examines the issues around change that are being played out in European universities and suggests some strategies they may wish to consider as they work to become more competitive with higher education in the United States.

Are European Universities Competitive?

Higher education as we know it in the West began in Europe. The University of Bologna was the first and was founded in 1088 (Bologna, 2009) and, in 1158, became completely independent from church and/or state power. The next major university was established by the church in 1253. This was the University of Paris, otherwise known as the Sorbonne (Paris, 2008). Over the next centuries, several more universities were established throughout Europe to help burgeoning societies better train individuals to deal with the growing demand for administrators, lawyers, doctors, and ecclesiastics (Rüegg, 2004). Each university was established to help perpetuate its own ideals and the ideals of the regions they represented (Rudy, 1984). Southern universities, such as the University of Bologna developed educational programs related to the church and the law. The University of Paris developed programs also related to the church, but others related to medicine and the liberal arts. Later on, German universities developed programs that were more scientific and engineering based.

Through the years, European universities changed and others were established as society changed. The Renaissance, the Reformation, and other social changes saw universities adding more humanistic programs to their academic mix (Rudy, 1984). These trends continue today. For example, in the year 2000, the University of the Highlands and Islands Millennium Institute was chartered "To be a distinctive and innovative regional university of national and international significance: a university with

a pivotal role in the educational, economic, social, cultural and environmental infrastructure of its region and which reaches out to the people of the Highlands and Islands and the rest of the world through its research and teaching” (UHI Millennium Institute, 2009, UHI's mission statement, para. 2). One of its main visions is to help preserve Scottish language and culture.

Through all this development, each University has been fairly autonomous. The various countries and in some cases, regions, have given support but offered little direction. This has allowed most European universities to develop their own unique approach to higher education and independent academic programs, each based on its own history, stability, and inertia (Geuna, 1996). While the formation of European universities has a richness of tradition and historic innovation, their preeminence in the world of higher education has been challenged, primarily by colleges and universities in the United States. Serbo (2005) notes that 17 of the world's top 20 universities in the world are found in the United States and that since World War II, European higher education has been in serious decline. Darhendorf (2006) states that European professors don't care about teaching or the learning abilities of their students, and are often consumed with projects outside their universities. This view was also shared by the Economist (2005a).

Such conditions generally are not true in the U.S. According to the Lombardi Program on Measuring University Performance, colleges and universities in the United States, especially research institutions, “...accumulate resources of all kinds to support the highest possible levels of faculty and student quality. Faculty and students, pursuing their individual goals within the context of the university's academic programs and guilds, develop their skills and use them to create additional value either in the form of enhanced capabilities as graduates (at all levels from undergraduate through professional school to the PhD) or of contributions to new knowledge through research” (Lombardi, Craig, Capaldi, & Gater, 2002, p. 4). While the growth of European universities has slowed since the 2nd World War and (perhaps) higher educational institutions have become comfortable resting on their traditions, American universities have grown dramatically and have become renowned for the quality and quantity of its academic offerings.

A Century of Change

One might think, based on Serbo (2005) and others, that something occurred during the 20th Century that caused major changes and the loss of competitiveness in European universities. Like all organizations, colleges and universities reflect the character of their external environments. They are often challenged by external events to change their structures, approaches, and even academic mixes. Throughout the 20th century, the world has seen many substantive political, social, and economic changes that have affected all parts of society including higher education (Meyer & Schofer, 2005).

Europe has been on the leading edge of major political, social, and economic changes (Teichova, Matis, & Pátec, 2001). Two world wars changed the face of Europe and much of the rest of the world. The level of destruction and cruelty that took place in Europe was unprecedented. The rise of the Soviet Union at the end of the First World War created one of the world's largest totalitarian states based on an economic and

sociological philosophy that changed an entire region of the world, both in Europe and in Asia. The rise of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy and Spain led to a new era of violence as Germany annexed region after region and began its reign of terror against non-Arian races. The end of the Second World War found Europe not only physically devastated, but now the front line of yet another major conflict, the Cold War. The continent was divided into two regions, one dominated by communist ideology and led by the Soviet Union; and the other dominated by a resurgence of capitalism and led by the United States (Wasserstein, 2009). Another outcome from the Second World War was the development of atomic weaponry, which the United States used to end its war with Japan. Though it had never used it, the Soviet Union had also developed the atomic bomb, and both sides of the Cold War used the threat of the bomb in standing up to each other. If another world war had broken out, there was little doubt that Europe would once again be the center of action.

Two other events occurred in Europe during the 2nd half of the century which continued to bring change to its people, politics, and economics. The first was the development of the European Union and the second was the collapse of communism. The emergence of the European Union (EU) is at the onset quite surprising. The signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1951 (following Winston's Churchill's call for a United States of Europe in 1946 and French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman's 1950 call to integrate the coal and steel industries) France, West Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and Italy created an organization that in 1956 became known as the Common Market, and in 1957 (as part of the Treaty of Rome) the European Economic Community (EEC), establishing its headquarters in Brussels (Europa, 2009). Now why this development is surprising is that these countries had no history of cooperation, political or economic, and had been at war with each other up to 1945. The EEC eventually became the EU and today, has 27 members, primarily in Western and Central Europe.

While *not* a United States of Europe, the EU has changed the face of Europe in significant ways: the elimination of travel restrictions; the reduction and in some cases the elimination of tariffs between EU countries; a common currency, the Euro, used in most of the 27th countries; commonly regulated banking systems; common legal standards; a central Congress; and attempts to create an EU constitution. The EU has brought high level of change to Europe and has positioned Europe as a major economic player in the world's economy (Europa, 2009).

The other major event that changed the face of Europe was the fall of communism beginning with the rise of Solidarity in Gdansk, Poland in the 1980's and the election of Pope John Paul II from Krakow, Poland in 1978 (Donovan, 2005), and the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia in November of 1989 (Wheaton & Kavan, 1992). When the Soviet Union ended its own existence on Christmas Day, 1991, the Cold War was officially over and the political differences between the East and the West no longer were meaningful (Clifford, 1992). Yugoslavia was dissolved during 1991 as well, but economic and political stability have been harder to achieve because of significant conflict between the 8 former Yugoslav states, (Erikson & Cole, 2004). The West had won, and it became time to bring countries that had been part of the Soviet Bloc into the

capitalistic economies of the Western European countries, especially the EU. With the exception of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus, most of the former Soviet Bloc countries have become members of the EU. Of the Yugoslavian states, so far only Slovenia has joined the EU, but other states, especially Croatia are petitioning for membership. Once again, major political, societal, and economic change has occurred as Europe becomes more economically united. This said, one might expect that such environmental changes would significantly challenge European higher educational institutions as well. Our research shows, however, that the major changes that have occurred in European countries have not had the same effect in higher education – the change that is testing the status quo of European universities comes from other sources, particularly the Bologna Process.

The Bologna Process

Regardless of their histories, traditions, and stability, most European universities have come to understand that they are lagging behind the United States in the quality and vitality of higher education (Dahrendorf, 2006; Serbo, 2005; & the Economist, 2005a). Forty-six European countries (which includes both Western and Eastern European countries) and most of the universities in those countries have now signed-on to become part of a movement that potentially could change them in very basic and substantive ways – The Bologna Process (Bologna Process, 2009).

A structural reality of Europe is that it has been historically split into many nationalities and cultures. Attempts to unite even smaller parts of Europe, such as the creation of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia have generally failed (Erikson, & Cole, 2004). After the fall of communism, both of these countries split so that they could create governments that were more responsive to the cultural differences of their people. Today, while border crossing stations are now gone, and many European countries share a common currency, the continent is still characterized by dozens of different languages and cultural patterns. Each country is highly nationalistic and cooperation is still a challenge, a challenge the EU is working hard to overcome.

As the 21st Century has begun, the EU and the governments that comprise it are positioning themselves to not simply be more international in orientation, but to become strong competitive players in the new century (Folkentinget, 2009). The EU members realize that they must become and act more and more as a united force in order to compete with other economic and political giants in the world, namely the United States, China, and Japan. One area that poses a significant set of problems is the extreme cultural diversity that exists between university systems in each country (Figel, 2006), and the lack of integration that exists to allow transferability between institutions in different countries of students, professors, and programs. The Bologna Process was created specifically to create universal systems that will internationalize higher education and improve it (Council of Europe, 2009). The EU and the leaders of the Bologna Process realize that European universities are at a disadvantage in the competitive educational environment that has been dominated by the United States for a century. For the EU to be optimally successful, it must create a common intellectual

environment in higher education (European Commission, 2009) that will allow its universities to take on such giants as the colleges and universities of the United States as Europe positions itself to successfully compete in all areas of the economy.

The Bologna Process Defined

The Bologna Process (2009) is a multi-national initiative that has been adopted not only by the current 27 member nations of the European Union (EU), but by several more European nations as well to do a number of things, including:

- 1) develop a common credit system among all European universities to allow for ease of transfer;
- 2) resolve the differences between those countries that use a 4,1,3 study structure (4 years of undergraduate studies leading to a baccalaureate degree, 1 year of graduate studies leading to a masters degree, and 3 years of study leading to a doctoral degree) versus the more common 3,2,3 European study structure (3 years of undergraduate studies leading to a baccalaureate degree, 2 years of study leading to a masters degree, and 3 years of study leading to a doctoral degree). The current British and American universities use the 4,1,3 system while most of the rest of European higher education use the 3,2,3 system;
- 3) insure easy transfer of students between all universities through the institution of English as the common language of higher education; and
- 4) improve competitiveness and quality.

The Bologna Process in many ways is a much more invasive change process than many of the 20th Century change events have proven to be. It is currently creating the most controversy among university administrators and faculty members throughout Europe because as the details of implementing the process have become better understood, it is clear that the Bologna Process represents a significant change process. For example, one of the goals of the Bologna Process is to conduct classes in a language that makes it easier for students from different countries to travel to foreign universities and be able to fully participate in the educational process. Most business programs have adopted English as that common language and are beginning to offer more and more of their courses in English. While the research did not find that English will be adopted by all academic programs on European campuses, it is possible that it eventually will be. The University of Zagreb in Croatia wants to offer all of its courses in English within the foreseeable future.

The Research Model

The researchers decided to examine the several change events that have occurred over the past century in Europe to: 1) try to determine how these changes had challenged higher education; and 2) try to identify if any particular strategies have been used that have helped universities adapt to their change challenges more effectively than others in helping them persevere, retain quality and promote their competitiveness. These premises suggested two research hypotheses:

Hn1. The academic programming of Eastern European Universities changed significantly when the governments of those countries adapted Socialist/Communists regimes.

Hn2. In order to adapt to the changes imposed by Socialist/Communist regimes, universities in those states employed different strategies. Some of these strategies were more effective than others.

We decided to examine the experiences of universities all across Europe, but to concentrate our study in Central Europe, because this region has been at the center of most of the change activities that have occurred throughout the 20th Century (Kirschbaum, 2008). We also chose to primarily interview universities in Central Europe because of the common experience (or so we assumed) of having been governed by a communist system and we presumed having been heavily influenced by Soviet Communism. It was our thinking that universities in this particular environment might experience the greatest amount of pressure to change due to the substantive differences between communist and capitalist systems (which most Central European countries had experienced at some point during the century). In addition, we added 5 Western European universities to interview because of their experience with the Bologna Process.

To gather data, the researchers conducted a series of interviews with a variety of campus academic and faculty leaders in both Eastern and Western European universities. This approach allowed us to both gather scalar numeric data (which in the end proved unusable) from each institution and anecdotal data in the form of open-ended questions (which proved to be highly useful). Each interview in Eastern Europe was conducted in the same way: first, we asked several specific questions regarding decision-making when communist governments were in power; second, we again asked several specific questions regarding decision-making in a post-communist era; and third, for both Eastern and Western European universities, we asked several specific questions regarding the decision-making process as it applied to the implementation of the Bologna Process. The balance of the questionnaire contained a series of open-ended questions that led to free-form discussion which we used at all the institutions both East and West concentrating on the experience Eastern and Western European universities relative to the Bologna Process. In the end, it was this last part of the interviews that proved the most informative and led to the more interesting results.

Each interview lasted between one and three hours and was conducted by a single interviewer. The researcher interacted with between one to six representatives from each university, given the availability of campus administrators and faculty representatives to participate in each interview process. It should be noted at this point that the line between administrators and members of the faculty in Europe is much different from our experience in the United States. Administrators in Europe are first and foremost faculty members. They are elected to their positions for distinct time periods (usually 5 years) and can be reelected once. Upon the termination of administrative service, the individual returns to the faculty. What this means is that most administrators are especially sensitive to faculty member opinion, since they will one day have to

return to faculty ranks. Thus, when an issue comes up that divides the administration from the faculty, it is generally one of special significance. Such an issue did become apparent during the course of this research.

The Sample

We originally contacted 36 large Central European universities and asked the rector, academic vice-rector, or business deans if they would agree to meet with us for on-site interviews regarding each institution's experience with change during the 20th Centuries, and their use of particular strategies to deal with that change. The 36 universities come from a convenience sample which we selected based on their large size, the fact that each had been in existence over a century, and were representative of countries or large cities (such as the University of Warsaw). 21 of the institutions responded, but only 18 agreed to be interviewed. Due to schedule changes by the individuals or groups at 4 universities, we were finally only able to interview 14. In all, 44 different people responded to all or parts of the survey. Our limitations of funding and time prevented the researchers from trying to enlist other universities in other locations from our first list of potential sites. While the number of participating universities is small, which makes this exploratory research, we also note that the sample was a convenience sample (even though we were unable to select the specific institutions who ultimately agreed to be involved with this effort). As such, the data gathered in this survey does provide a useful data base to allow the study stir interest and encourage more in depth research.

The universities included and the number of interviewees in the study was:

1. The University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia (1)
2. The University of Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia (1)
3. Corvinus University, Budapest, Hungary (2)
4. Charles University, Prague, the Czech Republic (5)
5. The University of Olomouc, Olomouc, the Czech Republic (1)
6. Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany (formerly East Berlin) (5)
7. Furtwangen University, Veligen-Schwennigen, Germany (last part of questionnaire only) (1)
8. Leonard da Vinci University, Paris, France (last part of questionnaire only) (4)
9. The European Business School, Paris, France (last part of questionnaire only) (4)
10. ESC – Rennes School of Business, Rennes, France (last part of questionnaire only) (6)
11. The European Business School, London, England, UK (last part of questionnaire only) (4)
12. The Technical University of Wroclaw, Wroclaw, Poland (6)
13. The University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland (3)
14. The University of Krakow (Jagiellonian University), Krakow, Poland (1)

Locations where we had wanted to conduct further interviews but were unable to include were: Vienna, Austria; a 2nd university in Budapest; Bratislava, Slovakia; a 2nd university in Prague; Dresden, Germany; a 2nd university in Warsaw; and universities in

Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. We had also hoped to include one university in Moscow or St. Petersburg, Russia, but were unable to work out visa problems in time.

Interview Instrument and Questions

As suggested above, there were 4 different parts to the survey questionnaire. The 1st two parts were parallel, asking the same Likert-type scalar questions for the two different time periods – academic decision-making and strategic planning during the communist era and the post communist era. The 1st 12 questions were answered with a yes or no response and generally asked who had the rights to make decisions about academic issues and campus strategic planning? The next 11 items asked questions about faculty and university power over academic programming, governmental responsiveness, and faculty attitude regarding their power to influence the decision-making process. The next 2 items dealt with the transferability of college credits into and out of the institution. Finally, the last section dealt with an open-ended question regarding the need for change to improve quality and procedures.

The 3rd part of the questionnaire contained 26 questions that queried current structure, decision-making practices, and responses to the Bologna Process in the current campus environment. This section had 3 open-ended questions that described the various roles of administrators, faculty members, and students in all areas of decision-making. We had also intended to ask questions regarding the role of governing boards in the decision making process, but discovered that unlike the United States, most European universities do not have governing boards as we do in the United States. Finally, the 4th part of the questionnaire asked open-ended questions regarding how the university is attempting to improve its market competitiveness; how it plans strategically to improve resources; how it addresses academic quality; and how important the Bologna Process is for the campus, as well as for Europe.

Analysis

The primary method of analysis we used to evaluate the data gathered by the research was scholarly opinion. The two researchers and two academic colleagues reviewed the data and drew the conclusions we describe in this article. By simple inspection, the data reviewers determined that a statistical analysis of the results would not be meaningful because the numeric results were nearly the same from all respondents on the before and after segments of the questionnaire. While this suggests that historically, there may have been strong and dramatic influences of external environmental change, they do not appear to have not affected higher education significantly. The data gathered for sections 1 and 2 visually show little difference, and differences between campuses on these items are also surprisingly similar. Again, the small n and lack of observable differences made this scalar numeric data unusable. Further study with a large n could produce more definitive and usable results.

It is the open-ended questions that provide the most amount of data regarding how different universities respond to change, especially around the issue of the realities of

the Bologna Process. It was also during these discussions that interviewees shared their views about the strategic planning aspects of achieving a competitive advantage in their market; the move toward the use of a common language (English) in most classrooms; the dynamics between administrators and faculty members; a wide spread of differences regarding the use of students in the decision-making process; and the issues that define academic quality and faculty activities.

Results

The research we are reporting is more exploratory than empirical. While the purpose of this study and the anticipated outcomes of the data collection process were not supported by the actual numeric data, and as a result empirical analysis of the collected data was not useful. Therefore, neither hypothesis was supported. But what the anecdotal data does reveal are several items that suggest concern for the competitiveness of European universities, especially in competition with American colleges and universities, and the lack of dealing with change that may have created an internal environment that will create problems for implementing needed academic, revenue, and structural changes.

We report these results by first identifying the decision-making environments of the participating European universities, especially Central European universities, over the past century. Next we will identify more specifically the tenets of the Bologna Process and their current and potential effect on European universities. Finally, we will identify the opportunities and threats that challenge the ability of European higher education to compete and thrive worldwide.

How European Universities have Survived Through a Century of Change

As suggested above, the original premise of this research was to study how universities in Europe had not only fared during the several events of the 20th Century, but how they had adapted to the several changes which we had postulated to have occurred during several major historical events. It makes sense that as Europe changed from an academic tradition in many countries that is often centuries old that each university would have had to make changes to accommodate the contemporary prevailing political environment. For example, one might speculate that based on the philosophies of Hegel, Marx, Lenin, and Stalin, which were based on the rule of the proletariat and the elimination of private property, that the universities in communist states would not only become public property with party control for both governance and academic structure, but would also need to change their curricula to match state doctrine. The same type of speculation suggests similar change scenarios for those countries controlled by the Nazis and other Fascist regimes. It is also reasonable to suggest substantive change scenarios as countries in Central and Eastern Europe moved from communist systems to the western open markets and joined the EU.

The first major surprise of the research was that there was surprising little changes in the academic processes of any universities in Europe throughout the 20th Century, with

only one exception, and that is the institution of the Bologna Process. Clearly there was disruption of academic activity during the World Wars 1 and 2, when many cities that suffered significant damage. For example, Berlin and Warsaw had to nearly completely rebuild after the wars. In an interview with Dr. A. B. Wickstrom, a senior professor and head of International Education at the Humboldt University in Berlin, Germany, there was also disruption of academic activities in countries taken over by Germany during World War II, when universities were simply closed during the duration of the conflict, but then reopened after the war virtually intact structurally and academically (Wickstrom, personal communication, September 9, 2009). Note: Nazis did periodically round up intellectuals and sent them to concentration camps, such as Auschwitz and Birkenau, where those with higher degrees were treated more cruelly than those with lesser degrees. Educators in Vichy France were considered part of "the awkward squad," and were routinely suppressed, arrested, and sometimes deported (Hastings, 2006). Potentially this would have been a major disruption to universities when they reopened, but despite the tragedy of losing valuable colleagues, the faculties reconstituted their academic programs to look the same after the war as they had before the occupation (Hobbs, 1994).

In one of the paradoxes of the war, closing of campuses was not universally applied. In Germany itself, universities remained opened and surprisingly independent with no changes in academic programming of significance. While the Nazis did expel all Jewish professors, staff, and students in Germany arresting and deporting most of them, they essentially left the universities alone. However, like their other European sister institutions, German universities looked very much the same after the war as they had before (Wickstrom, personal communication, September 9, 2009)

The second major change event was the institution of communism as the Soviet Union took control over the countries in Eastern and Central Europe which they had "liberated" from German control in the several years following the war. Results of our research show that while the disruption to higher education had been minimal during World War 1, the disruption as a result of communist takeover was even less. Spagot and Iliasova (2006) found that changes in effective education during and following Soviet influence in education had nothing to do with government direction, but more with traditional home support and access to quality educational tools. All we were able to determine from our interviews is that two things happened: 1) each campus suddenly had observers from the local communist parties who periodically visited campuses and in some cases asked questions; 2) there was communist party concern over the content of economics and sociology courses, but the party did nothing other than mandate certain topics be added or deleted to classes. In both cases, interviewees stated that they knew who the observers were, so when they were around, they kept quiet. When the observers were gone, they went on with their business as usual. Too, while they did talk about the topics the party wanted, they made sure to add their traditional material to the courses as well. It's almost as if the colleges were playing a game with the communist governments, but it is also somewhat clear that the communists were not all that concerned with what was happening on campus (Renichav, 2008).

One interesting study is that of Humboldt University in Berlin. At Humboldt University in Berlin, the academic process continued through World War 2 and the communist era as it had always operated, including being funded by the state. During the war, no one from the government or the party tried to influence academics, and other than war damage, one would have seen no significant changes at Humboldt during this time. After the Second World War, because of its location in East Berlin, Humboldt University found itself in East Germany and literally blocks away from Checkpoint Charley, the hottest military point of confrontation between U.S. and Soviet soldiers and tanks. Nonetheless, the University was not compelled to change its academics to conform to communist doctrine (with the exception of economics and sociology as described above, and the presence of observers), so professors were able to exercise academic freedom without incurring the wrath of the East German Communist Party. The professors and students went about their business as usual, with essentially no concern for whom was running the government. For their parts, the governments of all the communist countries continued to fund higher education as they had always done, and the only form of regulation was administrative. Governments did what they have always been (and still is) which is to approve of new programs or new construction (Wickstrom, personal communication, September 9, 2009)

Generally, our research did not discover any particular major changes in universities in Europe over the past century primarily because whatever government was in control essentially did not involve itself in higher education, with the relatively minor exceptions noted above. Further, as one looks at the structures, traditions, and academic mixes of universities today, there is little difference from what would have been there a century ago (or in several cases, several centuries ago). European universities do not deal with change because they don't believe they need to. They have weathered the Renaissance, the Reformation, the growth of the Humanist Movement, and now one of the most tumultuous centuries ever. They are generally convinced that what they are doing is correct. There is an understanding that they have lost their competitiveness, but they do not see the need for major change in their operation in order to be relevant today or tomorrow. Therefore, they look at the current Bologna Process with a combination of acknowledgement and suspicion. According to the Economist (2005b) the issue is resources and many European university administrators feel that the states are using programs like the Bologna Process as was of increasing efficiency without providing more resources to allow universities to become more competitive. These and other concerns became evident through the research, and suggested the first major challenge to the tranquility and traditional independence European universities have enjoyed for centuries.

Results Related to the Bologna Process

Support for the Bologna Process is mixed. From our survey data, generally it appears that university administrators appear to support the process. Faculty members are either skeptical about the process or negative towards it. Adding to the controversy is the fact that while all of the governments in Europe (both EU and non-EU) who are participating in the Process support its goals, the research did not indicate that any

country had mandated inclusion of the Process on all universities in that country. Perhaps this leads to the perception on campuses that the various academic faculty have a choice is either supporting the Bologna Process or rejecting it.

However, the research also did indicate that nearly all universities are participating, at least on the administrative level. One explanation for this might be because of the dependence of most universities for nearly all of their funding, and therefore the need to support governmental directions. Resources are a major concern for most European universities, and maintaining a good relationship with governmental regulators is something of an imperative.

Resources are primarily a function of governmental support for the cost of education and for the growth of campuses and programs. It's important for those of us in the United States to understand that the common model in Europe is free higher education, but only for top qualified students. Only a few institutions charge tuition and then it is generally for non-qualified students, non-traditional students, and masters- level and doctoral-level students. The costs of technology improvement, new construction, and growth are all subject to governmental approval. This gives the state potentially a major say in asking for University participation in the Process.

Resistance to Change

Our research suggests that the faculties of many (if not most) European universities *do not* support the Bologna Process. We found that while most faculty members are cooperating, they are not doing so easily or happily, and that the result has been a growing rift between administrators (who support the Process) and faculty (who largely do not). We believe that the very history that saw European universities go practically unscathed by the monumental destructive events of the last century may well have given faculty members who continue to control academics in particular a feeling of false security. It may well be, too, that their institutions dodged a bullet (or several bullets) over the past century that should have created major change events on their campuses, but in the end did not. Now, however, it appears that there is no reprieve. The EU, the leaders of the Bologna Process, and university administrators are all aligning to institute the Bologna objectives, while the members of the various faculties may find that they do not have the power to effectively stop the process. One of the major findings of this research is that no one (countries, university administrators, and university faculty members) is searching for a strategy that will allow the Bologna Process to go forward and achieve its goals of assuring quality and improving competitiveness.

Overall, the need for a continent-wide improvement program and the lack of ability of the faculty to address its implementation for individual campuses might seem unusual to many educators in the United States. They do not see much difference between European and U.S. educational systems, so they may find it hard to understand better what is going on in Europe. What college and university educators in the United States need to know is that if the Bologna Project is successful, it should increase the competitiveness between European and colleges and universities in the United States

and that could have a profound effect on both systems. At the same time, it is important to understand the character of both the interaction of the current U.S. and European systems and the interaction of the future U.S. and Bologna-Project-influenced European systems. Much is at stake for both systems. As higher education in the United States continues to advance, will it find itself in conflict or in partnership with an improved European university system? Will both find themselves at odds with each other, or find new ways to cooperate and improve academic studies while improving their individual survivability.

Differences Between Higher Education in European and The United States

Table 1 below summarizes the several differences between higher education in Europe and the United States. These differences form the basis for policy decision for European universities, if they truly hope to become more competitive with U.S. colleges and universities.

Table 1

Major Differences between U.S. and European Universities

	Europe	The United States
Revenue – Undergrad Tuition	Free for qualified students	Students pay tuition
Revenue – Graduate Tuition	Students pay tuition	Students pay tuition
Revenue – State Support	Total or most of revenue stream	Only part or declining support
Revenue – Other Sources	Few	A major portion and growing
Governance	Administration – gov. oversight	Governing boards – gov. oversight
Societal Interaction	None	Small to large, growing
Teaching - Undergraduate	Mixed quality and support	Retention concerns are growing
Teaching - Graduate	Good, but not exceptional	Perceived as the world's best
Faculty Members - Qualification	Professors at PhD level	Professors at PhD level
Faculty Members - Commitment	May teach at several universities	May teach primarily at 1 university
Faculty Members - Research	Of little importance	Minor to extreme importance
Students - Undergraduate	Selected by class rank & exam	Selected by class rank & exam
Students - Graduate	More opening than applicants	More applicants than openings
Students - Participation	Small to high decision-making	Small role in decision-making
Students - Transferability	A problem – addressed by Bologna	Within the US, no problems

Academic Programming - Quality	Fair to very good	Very good to excellent
Academic Programming - Control	Faculty controlled	Faculty controlled – admin. OK
Academic Programming - Research	Small	Moderate to extreme importance
Perceived Quality of the Experience	Moderate	Moderate to excellent
Role of Tradition/Culture	Very important	Of small importance

In the United States, there is a different environment than we might otherwise see across the Atlantic as demonstrated in Table 1; and there would be a different dynamic in the United States were a national process be instituted to reform higher education across this country. There are many reasons for this.

1. In the United States, there are many more private colleges and universities than one sees in Europe, and public institutions do not depend upon the state for funding to the extent that occurs in Europe. Further, the existence of so many private colleges and universities in this country means that governmental regulation they are subject to is minimal. To be competitive, public institutions are also given greater amounts of latitude than their European counterparts. This gives individual campuses more control over their academic planning and such conditions could easily derail any national restructuring alignment of higher education.
2. The revenue streams of higher educational institutions in the United States are also significantly different from that of most European countries. In Europe, higher education is free for undergraduate education in most cases. Tuition may be charged, but only rarely to undergraduate students and normally to students who do not meet the university's entry requirements. Tuition is also charged for graduate programs, including doctoral programs. In this country, tuition is charged to all students regardless of graduate status, and can only be offset with grants and scholarships. While both U.S. and European public institutions receive money from the state, with their ability to charge tuition, institutions in the United States can easily garner more operating resources. This has some very important consequences.
3. European universities depend almost entirely on the state for their revenue streams. Again, tuition is non-existent or a small percentage of their resource base. In the United States, colleges and universities have developed a wide variety of revenue streams including state funding, tuition, grants, contracts, gifts, and endowments.
4. Professor pay is significantly different between European institutions and those in the United States (Inside Higher Ed, 2010). While there are no pay standards in either location that predicts common pay models, overall, U.S. professors are much better paid than their European counterparts. (We note the exception of the elite schools in both Europe and the United States, where professor pay may be

quite high, but what we are identifying in general is the average pay scales one will find in the United States and in Europe.)

5. A further consequence of low pay is that many full-time professors in European universities can work for more than one institution at any given time. So even though a professor is hired and given a high level of job security (close to the practice of tenure in the United States), that professor is free to work for other universities as well. This has led to some very strange abuses. During an interview at the University of Krakow in Krakow, Poland, we learned that the record for one professor working for more than one institution was one particular professor having contracts at 62 different institutions within the same year – the record is held by a Polish professor. In most American colleges and universities, full-time professors are prohibited from accepting like contracts with other institutions. Therefore, the amount of time that a professor in the United States spends on her/his own campus is significantly greater than one sees in Europe.
6. Because of the practice of teaching at more than one institution at a time, the amount of research European professors produce and the professor's interest in his/her students are substantially less than would be true of a professor in the United States (Darhendorf, 2006). This is clearly a quality issue and one of the concerns of the Bologna Process. In order to be competitive with the United States and other high quality higher educational systems around the country, European scholarship needs to increase. Further, in order for it to increase, the fundamental resource base must be redesigned to increase the ability of universities in Europe to increase professor pay and curb the practice of multi-institutional contracting.
7. Perhaps this perceived lack of quality is one reason the United States continues to lead the world in graduate education. For European graduate students, they would have to pay tuition in their own countries anyway, and if they believe that a U.S. masters or doctoral degree will be more widely respected than one from a European university, they may well choose to come to the United States. As proof of this, it is interesting to note the number of foreign students who populate graduate schools in the United States – up significantly from foreign students enrolled in undergraduate programs in this country. This is an indication that European students find it economically more feasible to attend undergraduate programs in Europe, but feel they will do better in seeking jobs if their graduate degrees come from the United States.

All of these differences help explain the decline in world-wide competitiveness that European universities have seen over the past several decades. If they are to regain their momentum and become highly competitive once again, we believe it is important that they need to rethink their structure and strategic positioning and look at successful models, such as those in the United States.

Recommendations to Improve the Competitiveness of European Universities

As shown in Table 1, there are several basic strategic areas where the colleges and the universities of the United States hold a strong competitive edge over their counterparts in Europe. One of the most important areas of difference is that of resource availability

and accumulation. While European universities have a wealth of tradition, it is difficult in today's economy to translate that into the capital needs of the modern university. The researchers believe that one of the most important areas for European universities to improve the competitiveness is in the restructuring of their resource accumulation activities. As we have seen in the United States, it is becoming more and more difficult to rely on state revenues to secure adequate short-term and long-term operating revenues. As we saw in the interviews at the University of Zagreb, perhaps it is appropriate for European universities in general to revisit the issues of tuition charges, fee charges, as well as the establishment of university foundations to seek external resources and invest them for future uses.

Recommendation #1: European universities need to expand their resource bases to provide more flexibility and operating options to possibly include: 1) the charging of tuition to all students (with scholarship and grant offsets similar to the U.S.), 2) increasing fees to pay for new technology and other pedagogy, 3) create foundations to build gifting and endowments, and 4) increase all areas of research to attract grants and contracts.

Another major area for revision must be envisioning the role of the student. We are not convinced that the perception of the student as ultimate consumer and, therefore, a major player in university decision-making, such as we saw at the University of Zagreb, is the best model. While we did see student representation in institutional governance on most campuses, we didn't see in the data any indication that the needs of students were taken into account in academic program development in most university settings. Faculty decided what students needed (and we do not wish to challenge the importance of academic freedom), but with the lack of research that occurs in European universities, it is suggested by the researchers that the decisions that are made on behalf of students do not particularly represent the actual needs of students to be fully prepared for the 21st Century and beyond. It appears to the researchers that a much broader connection with the community is needed – a connection with current and potential employers that would identify the type of programming that would most benefit students. Also, as the library research suggested, we believe it is important for European universities to provide a more integral connection between professors and students, to create an environment of mutual learning, which will benefit both over time.

Recommendation #2: European universities need to develop and institute programs that encourage higher levels of student involvement in academics and help foster higher student dedication to learning.

Further, another major area for strategic development is the role of the professor. The fact that professors feel free to teach at other universities – sometimes many other universities – is an issue European countries and university administrators must address. First of all, state regulators and university administrators must prohibit professors from teaching full-time at more than one institution. Second, they need to increase professor pay to allow educators of high quality to be able to live comfortably on their primary university salaries, and establish greater loyalty to those institutions. To

us, it seems like without a group of professors who are fully dedicated to their academic disciplines and want to see those disciplines grow at their home universities, it will be very difficult to improve quality measure on creating and disseminating new knowledge. It also makes little sense to require loyalty to a single institution if that institution is unwilling to assure the professor a comfortable living with the possibility of substantial increases based on higher levels of productivity.

Recommendation #3: European universities need to rethink the role of their full-time, tenured professors and change the relationship and expectations that govern professor-university relations. These include: 1) making salaries competitive and adequate so that professors will not need to seek professorships at more than one institution; 2) prohibit professors from accepting more than 1 full-time permanent position; 3) encourage and support faculty development to improve teaching, student engagement, and student development; 4) require higher levels of research and publication; and 5) institute periodic performance review to improve performance and quality.

Authors' Opinions, Conclusions, and Discussion

It seems contradictory that the continent that devised and developed Western higher education should now be in decline, at least in terms of quality and competitiveness. As some have suggested, the decline began around the end of World War 2 (Dahrendorf, 2006; Serbo, 2005; & the Economist, 2005a). At the same time, higher education in the United States was on an up-swing and soon became the world's most dynamic and competitive academic system. In this paper we have looked at both the differences between the European and U.S. systems, and tried to examine what happened in Europe during the century that might help explain the reversal of fortunes.

We believe that one of the most likely reasons for the decline in Europe was its own success. For centuries, European universities defined higher education and created the Western model. By the beginning of the 20th Century, European universities had a long and proud tradition of development and success and have clearly created much of the knowledge base the world has needed as it has evolved. However, during the first part of the 20th Century, the horrific events that occurred in Europe should have challenged higher education in a substantive way – but they did not. If decline did begin after the 2nd World War, it may be because European higher education as a whole felt invulnerable to the events of its external environments, and therefore, no need to engage in any sort of change process. They may have subscribed to the adage, “if it isn't broke, don't fix it!” Subsequently, when the imposition of communist systems again did nothing to challenge them, European universities in Central and Eastern Europe again functioned as if their external environments did not exist. The result was little to no structural change; and certainly no need for strategic change.

This was problematic for these institutions because they apparently failed to see the need for new academic study in science, engineering, sociology, and business among others. In the meantime, the United States found itself in a different role after the 2nd

World War. Having been on the winning side, having essentially no physical damage to its cities or industry, and having the largest economy at that time, the U.S. was in a position to grow and become one of the world's most powerful and important societies. It chose such a path, and turned toward its colleges and universities to help devise new strategic directions and lead the way toward a different long-term future. As we stated above, since the U.S. had both powerful private and public institutions of higher education who were already competing for resources, it was not difficult to fuel the growth of academia to create needed programs and graduates who could take the United States into the next generation.

These two different scenarios help explain why higher educational systems in the U.S. and in Europe are situated as they are. One used basic strategic management methods to examine its environment and engage in long-term planning for change, while the other did not. Now, within the context of the Bologna Process, European universities are being strategically challenged to change to better meet the requirements of the world's dynamic environment and to be able to compete effectively once more on the world stage.

Overcoming Resistance to Change

The most troubling outcome we found in the research was the level of resistance to change we found in the ranks of university faculty members and the lack of a realization of the need for countries, university administrators, and university professors to develop a strategic plan to face the common challenges of preserving quality and improving competitiveness. Professors most likely should be the leaders in determining the need for change and then proposing academic solutions to meet those needs. As is, however, we found that European professors do not demonstrate loyalty to their institutions, and underpaid at their primary institutions, do not interact effectively with students, and do not engage in research at the level they should. As a result, it is understandable why these professors (as a group) might resist change when they have historically been successful in doing what they have always done.

The leaders of the Bologna Process (including the EU) need to develop strategies to change the dynamics in European faculties and bring them more effectively into the process if the Process is to succeed. Already, the Bologna Process has had to revise its completion dates forward to 2010 to 2020, and lack of academic support could be the primary reason for this delay. Academics are that important. So we believe that the Bologna Process leaders, and European university administrations must work to overcome the faculty resistance to change through inclusion and re-envisioning. This will most likely lead to changing the culture of European higher education, which is time-consuming and expensive – but we see no other viable way of improving their educational products to become more competitive.

Competing with Higher Education in the United States and Around the World

While we believe that European universities can improve their quality and become more competitive through strategic change, we do not suggest that the resultant models will overtake higher education in the United States – at least not in the short term, if at all. Higher education in the United States will continue to grow and evolve. Further, it isn't just the United States' colleges and universities that European universities need to be concerned about. While the United States is the most competitive and has the largest number of top quality institutions, there are other colleges and universities throughout the world who are also growing and improving their quality and competitiveness as well.

The best strategic outcome for a resurgence and improvement of the European higher education system would be for a high-quality academic system that is highly competitive throughout the world. The result could be a system that can easily interact and develop strategic relationships with other models throughout the world to foster continuous academic improvement. There is nothing in the Bologna Process agreements that seeks anything else, and this should help lead to future cooperative ventures and relationships among most of the world's colleges and universities. As we see it, the key will be to overcome the resistance to change and develop a strategic direction that includes the entire European academic community, European governments, the EU, and world partners.

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