

Gregor, Alexander D., & Jasmin, Gilles (Eds.). *Higher Education in Canada*. Ottawa: Association for Canadian Studies and the Secretary of State for Canada, 1992, pp. 105. Reviewed by Lesley Andres Bellamy, University of Houston.

Higher Education in Canada is the result of a collaborative effort by Canadian scholars of higher education. According to the editors, it is "the first effort of its kind to describe the Canadian postsecondary system in its entirety, bringing together the two major realms of the community colleges and the universities" (p. 5). The purpose of the book is not only to provide an overview of the system, but also to stimulate additional scholarly work regarding the Canadian higher education system.

The book is organized into ten chapters. In Chapter 1, Alexander Gregor provides an overview of the forces affecting the development of higher education in Canada. After pointing out that the definition of "higher" or "postsecondary" education is problematic in and of itself, he outlines the historical development of the Canadian system of higher education. The outline highlights the ways in which the following have impacted the development of the postsecondary system: federal-provincial tensions regarding responsibility for education and related problems of training and education; lack of a coordinated system of postsecondary education; economic development; bilingualism and multilingualism; First Nations' issues; and the changing student population.

In Chapter 2, Michael Skolnik describes the structure of higher education in Canada by contrasting the degree and non-degree sectors. This section is followed by a discussion of federal-provincial relations and funding, provincial government relations, and governance. Skolnik emphasizes that continued caps on the rate of increase in funding of higher education imposed by the federal government, lack of a national department of higher education or other coordinating body, less than ideal access by certain groups, and limited coordination of the constellation of postsecondary institutions at both the provincial and federal levels challenge the ability of the system to meet the demands of the 1990s.

In Chapter 3, Donald Savage traces the creation of the academic disciplines and the academic community back to various learned societies and documents their evolution into present day forms. Chapter 4, by Sheryl Bond and Gilles Nadeau, addresses faculty-student ratios over time. The authors point out that while postsecondary enrolments at both universities and community colleges have increased dramatically, hiring patterns at the two types of institutions have differed. In the case of the university, limited hiring in the lower ranks has

resulted in an imbalance in the proportion of university faculty in each rank. Also, whereas 51% of university students are women, women constitute only 17.9% of faculty at Canadian universities. At community colleges, faculty have tended to be hired on a part-time basis, and females are overrepresented in these positions.

In Chapter 5, Norman Uhl and Anne Marie McKinnon describe the forces accounting for the unprecedented and unpredicted growth in postsecondary participation since the 1980s. They indicate that despite burgeoning enrolment patterns, several groups remain underrepresented in postsecondary institutions. While women comprise at least 50% of full-time and part-time enrolments at both universities and colleges, they remain underrepresented in certain disciplines (e.g., engineering and mathematics). Considerable progress is still required for underrepresented groups such as First Nations people and persons with disabilities.

In Chapter 6, Jeffrey Holmes explicates the array of program offerings at non-university and university levels. In Chapter 7, Charles Bélanger and Robert Lacroix describe research in Canadian universities within the context of limited private sector research. They document the myriad funding agencies at the federal and provincial levels, and describe the provision of funding to postsecondary institutions through direct grants, targeted funding, or provision of indirect support (e.g., overhead costs).

In Chapter 8, Claude Lajeunesse and Robert Davidson describe how university and community college faculty and staff differentially fulfill the service function role. The authors define the service function as “formal and informal research and...educational activities through which institutions respond to societal expectations and demands” (p. 75). Although service is an integral component of the community college, and is designed to meet local, regional and provincial needs, community service is most often viewed by universities as an outgrowth of the dual missions of research and teaching. Lajeunesse and Davidson warn that as increasing pressure is placed on educational institutions to become service institutions in the pursuit of national economic growth, it will no longer be acceptable for an institution to approach the community service function “as an ancillary function.”

In Chapter 9, John Dennison asserts that while higher education constitutes an enormous and complex industry, higher education as a field of inquiry has not developed at the same rate. He indicates that the literature over the past twenty years reveals three prevalent themes: planning the system, operation of the system, and performance of the system. Research on issues of higher education is conducted by faculty within postsecondary institutions, members of

scholarly associations, and by employees of governmental agencies and departments. In the concluding chapter of the volume, André Girard and Norman Uhl summarize the forces of change affecting the Canadian higher education system over the years.

This book is a useful introduction to the study of the Canadian higher education system. It provides a concise interpretation of the strengths and weaknesses of the system based on functional assumptions of meritocracy, the need to develop an expert society, and the goal of democracy. However, little is offered in the way of an in-depth critical analysis. For example, considerable analysis, criticism, and direction for change could be incorporated into the discussion of the low numbers of women faculty in universities (see Caplan, 1993). Rather than considering it “a matter of time – and perseverance – before [women] outnumber [men] at the graduate level and achieve equal representation among faculty” as Girard and Uhl suggest, Hackman (1991) challenges us to “consider weaving webs of inclusion and connection” (p. 9) for women students and faculty in higher education. Within a functionalist paradigm it is possible to argue that rapid expansion has “imposed strains [leading to the] continued underrepresentation of Native peoples, francophones outside of Quebec, persons with disabilities, women in some fields, and certain other minorities in higher education.” However, it behooves us to address the extent to which, as Altbach and Lomotey (1991) suggest, change must be effected through curricular and program changes and increased support for minority students.

In her 1991 presidential address to the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Judith Dozier Hackman outlines four forces contributing to disarray and turbulence in American higher education: 1) increasing gender equality; 2) increasing globalization; 3) increasing multiculturalism, and 4) expanding technology. These headings may be useful for organizing and conducting a much needed critical analysis of the issues besieging Canadian higher education.

References

- Altbach, P. & Lomotey, K. (1991). *The racial crisis in American higher education*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Caplan, P.J. (1993). *Lifting a ton of feathers. A women's guide to surviving in the academic world*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Dozier Hackman, J. (1991). What is going on in higher education? Is it time for a change? *Review of Higher Education*, 16(1), 1-17.