

# Differentiation and Diversification in Higher Education: The Case of Private, Faith-Based Higher Education in Manitoba

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## Abstract

The central proposition of this article is that Manitoba's faith-based higher education institutions have become more accepted by, and more closely integrated into, the mainstream post-secondary system in the province. Drawing on theoretical work explaining change in higher education systems, the article examines legislative and policy actions by government, public universities, and the faith-based institutions themselves that have increased the legitimacy of the private, faith-based institutions.

## Résumé

L'idée maîtresse de cet article est que les établissements confessionnels d'enseignement supérieur du Manitoba sont aujourd'hui plus acceptés et mieux intégrés qu'auparavant par le courant principal du système d'enseignement postsecondaire. À l'aide de travaux théoriques qui expliquent les changements apportés aux systèmes d'enseignement postsecondaire, l'article étudie les interventions législatives et politiques exercées par le gouvernement, les universités publiques et les établissements confessionnels, et qui ont accentué la légitimité des établissements confessionnels privés.

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Faith-based education has played an important role in the development of higher education in Manitoba. The province's contemporary university system resulted from uniting a community of religious colleges beginning in the late 1800s (Gregor, 1974, 1995, 1997; Harris, 1976; Morton, 1957), and early religious influences on Manitoba's contemporary public university system included the Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Mennonite, and United denominations. Today, faith-based, degree-granting institutions in Manitoba include the Canadian Mennonite University, Providence University College and Seminary (Evangelical-

cal Christian), William and Catherine Booth University College (Salvation Army), and Steinbach Bible College (Mennonite). These institutions together enrolled approximately 1,500 students in 2009–2010, equivalent to 2.7% of the public university student body.

Faith-based institutions exist across Canada, often with the legislative sanction of their host provinces (Canadian Council on Learning, 2010), yet their place within post-secondary systems is unclear (Marsden, 1994), and they have generally been marginalized (Skolnik, 1997). This article argues that in Manitoba, any marginalization of these institutions has been reversing itself as these institutions achieved greater legitimacy through a process of de-differentiation that has accelerated significantly since the late 1990s, resulting in faith-based institutions being more heavily integrated into the province's mainstream post-secondary system.

To demonstrate this thesis, the article examines structural change in Manitoba's post-secondary system brought about through legislative and policy change by government, as well as through procedural changes by the private post-secondary institutions themselves. A challenge to examining structural change in post-secondary education is that "Canada does not have a clear framework for understanding the many changes that have occurred within the [post-secondary] sector over the past 15 years" (Canadian Council on Learning, 2010, p. 4). The article also uses van Vught's (2008) ideas on differentiation and diversity as conceptual tools to help explain structural change in post-secondary systems.

In pursuing its main argument, the article examines three areas. First, it seeks to determine what has happened in Manitoba's faith-based higher education institutions in relation to the overall higher education system in the province. Second, it identifies how this situation came about and then outlines what Manitoba's experience reveals about change in post-secondary systems generally.

This article examines not individual colleges and universities in Manitoba, but rather the system of higher (that is, degree-granting) education, a system that includes both public and private sector institutions, and since 2009 includes Manitoba's public community colleges as degree-granting institutions.<sup>1</sup> Defining "private" versus "public" in the higher education sector is not easy (Levin, 2005; Orton, 2003; Rae, 1996). Definitional efforts refer to ownership, majority control on governing boards, funding arrangements, and the vehicle of incorporation (Levy, 1986; Orton, 2003); however, the diversity of institutional arrangements frustrates attempts to develop clear distinctions. Levy (1986) argued that the clearest expression of private and public status is "extant usage": an institution is private (or public) because everyone agrees that it is so. However, confusion persists. For example, Rae (1996) observed that Ontario's public universities refer to themselves as private to emphasize their autonomy from government.

Despite this poorly resolved definitional problem, the principal focus of Canada's higher education system continues to be on public institutions (Marshall, 2004a, 2004b; Marshall & Eifert, 2004; Orton, 2003), with credibility and quality generally being established through public legislation: "If an institution was approved by the respective provincial government, it was deemed to be accredited" (Marshall & Eifert, 2004, p. 3). Although the public nature of Canada's higher education system has endured for decades (Marshall, 2004b), most Canadian provinces have "accepted ... the validity of the private, not-for-profit, (primarily faith-based) degree-granting institutions. Most provinces have at least one such institution chartered to offer a limited range of undergraduate degrees"

(Marshall & Eifert, 2004, pp. 10–11; see also Marshall, 2004a, p. 80).

This article examines the place in Manitoba's larger post-secondary system of faith-based higher education. A theoretical model is presented to help establish a framework within which to situate developments in the province. The article then turns to an exposition and discussion of those developments before presenting conclusions.

### The Theoretical Context

Change in higher education is complex and not always easily explained. Some have observed a tendency toward homogenization whereby institutions move toward higher levels within the system—often programmatically toward the provision of degrees and structurally toward university status (Canadian Council on Learning, 2010; Jones & Skolnik, 2009; Skolnik, 2004, 2005). Others have observed countervailing tendencies regarding differentiation through the creation of new institutions, which may include amalgamations of existing institutions (Canadian Council on Learning, 2010). Faith-based higher education is not immune to these processes.

Understanding how higher education systems change is important for transparency for students (Canadian Council on Learning, 2010), for their families, and for employers. Further, structural change often involves legislative among other changes, and it may have lasting implications for other areas such as funding. Governments must also understand such change.

Van Vught's (2008) framework related to differentiation and diversification helps explain change in post-secondary systems. Differentiation, van Vught stated, is "the process in which new entities emerge in a system" of higher education (2008, p. 151), whereas diversity is "the variety of entities within a system" (p. 152). Van Vught distinguished between *internal* diversity (differences within institutions) and *external* diversity (differences between institutions). This paper focuses on the latter, and van Vught has detailed its various dimensions (2008, p. 152):

- Structural diversity: differences resulting from legal, policy, or historical foundations.
- Programmatic diversity: differences in the levels and/or types of programs offered.
- Reputational diversity: the perceived status and/or prestige of a given institution.
- Procedural diversity: differences in teaching, research, and service functions at an institution.
- Constituent diversity: differences in the backgrounds of students and staff.
- Systemic diversity: differences in institution type within a system.
- Ethics and values diversity: differences in institutions' social and cultural norms.

Horta, Huisman, and Heitor (2008) cogently summed up the value of diversity, saying that it allows for:

increased availability of educational choice for learners, thus promoting wider access to higher education for everyone; enables institutions to match educational needs, learning styles, curricula, goals, learning ability and speed of learners; permits institutions to decide upon their focused institutional missions and activities (underlying here the linkage with the institution's location, resources and type of desired or available students); and guarantees the legitimacy of institutions by

making them more responsive to a fast changing technologically based society, which is becoming ever more complex and diverse. (p. 147)

Greater diversity allows for greater responsiveness to the needs of students and to the needs of the local community and wider society (Canadian Council on Learning, 2010; Horta et al., 2008).

Van Vught believed that differences between diversification and differentiation were poorly understood, a common perspective in Canadian higher education (Canadian Council on Learning, 2010). Van Vught's (2008) framework includes two basic propositions. First, when faced with scarce resources, organizations adapt to general conditions perceived as being successful, leading to greater uniformity. In the current context, faith-based institutions may seek to appear similar to public institutions, by, for example, identifying themselves as universities. Accordingly, van Vught (2008) concluded that the pursuit of reputation (defined by van Vught as the subjective perception of the quality, influence, and trustworthiness of an institution) is important in understanding change in higher education institutions. Levin (2004) agreed, arguing that "institutional motives, such as legitimacy and prestige, and organizational behaviors ... drive organizational actions" (p. 2).

Van Vught's second proposition argued that, where the influence of academic norms and values is greater in a system, less diversity can be expected in that system. Here van Vught claimed that organizations' behaviour may conform to common practices, such as, for example, faith-based colleges adopting academic freedom provisions or governance arrangements common among public institutions, or making curricular changes to facilitate credit transfer agreements between different institutions.

According to van Vught, change in systems includes not only the emergence of new institutions, but also the transformation of existing institutions. This change is relativistic: the nature and extent of change in a given post-secondary system depends to some extent on the norms and perceived successes within the post-secondary environment itself.

Van Vught's work suggested methodological tools for studying change in higher education systems. As a first step, establish the level of uniformity of the system to set the context for change. Second, understand to what extent the institutions under study have integrated dominant academic values and norms.

The remainder of this article is organized as follows. The article presents a brief analysis of Manitoba's university system, with the object of understanding the level of uniformity. It then turns to an analysis of the changing relationships between faith-based education and public education institutions in Manitoba.

### **Manitoba's Public University System**

Manitoba's public university system is relatively small, composed of four public universities: the University of Manitoba, the University of Winnipeg, Brandon University, and l'Université de Saint-Boniface. Noteworthy is the level of uniformity in the system.

Structurally, the institutions are similar. Each is established by separate legislation, each has a bicameral system of governance with a senate and a governing board, as well as a president to lead the administration. Additionally, each of these universities has since 1967 come under the ambit of the provincial post-secondary intermediary agency, first the Universities Grants Commission and, after 1997, the Council on Post-Secondary Ed-

ucation. This arrangement provides common processes for operating and capital funding, and a program approval process that has little regard for differences in each university—factors identified by Horta et al. (2008) as contributing to the homogenization of post-secondary systems. System-wide policies relating to items such as accountability and tuition are also governed by the intermediary agency and applied to the universities in similar ways. Each university enjoys independence in areas of academic policy, admissions, graduation, and the hiring of staff.

Manitoba's universities are also similar programmatically. Although each university offers a variety of undergraduate and graduate degrees, for reasons of cost containment (Saunderson, 1981), the University of Manitoba offers most professional programming, as well as the majority of master's and all doctoral programs in the system. Additionally, there is significant procedural similarity (for example, senate review and approval of programming, and regular program evaluations), as well as similar working conditions for faculty (for example, faculty organization, tenure, academic freedom, research release time, and sabbaticals).

In terms of the reputation of Manitoba's public universities, each shares commonalities. Each is established by provincial legislation, all are members of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, all are authorized to grant degrees through The Degree Granting Act, each receives public funding, all are designated for purposes of student aid, all are approved by Manitoba's Department of Education for the purposes of teacher certification, and all are generally well regarded in the national and international academic community.

There is less similarity across the universities in terms of constituents. For instance, the chief distinguishing factor among students and staff at l'Université de Saint-Boniface is that the language of instruction is French. Brandon University's student constituency is primarily rural, in keeping with its southwestern location in the province and its status as the only university outside the province's capital of Winnipeg. Although the University of Winnipeg strives to focus on the inner city, its student population, like that of the University of Manitoba, is drawn from throughout Winnipeg and the province. Similarly, the norms of each university vary to some extent: each university shares similar priorities for teaching, research, and service, but seeks to fulfill these functions from their specific niche in the system, be that a province-wide reach (University of Manitoba), an urban focus (University of Winnipeg), a rural orientation (Brandon University), or French language of instruction (Université de Saint-Boniface).

Universities in Manitoba have much in common. From van Vught's perspective, the general uniformity in Manitoba's higher education environment is a significant factor when analyzing changes pursued by private faith-based institutions in the province.

### **Faith-based Institutions in Manitoba**

Faith-based education is not without controversy, and tension is often felt between academic freedom and the religious mission (Burtchaell, 1998; Hollinger, 2002). This tension has been observed in hiring practices in Manitoba. For instance, the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) identified the Canadian Mennonite University and Providence University College as institutions that require faculty members to adhere to a statement of faith as a condition of employment, and in 2010 and 2012, respectively,



CAUT added them to its “faith test list” as schools requiring faculty members to adhere to a such a statement of faith (CAUT, 2010a, 2010b, 2011, 2012).

Hiring practices at faith-based private institutions have been formally tested in Manitoba in two ways. First, in *Schroen v. Steinbach Bible College* (1999), the Manitoba Human Rights Commission heard and dismissed a discrimination complaint that Steinbach Bible College fired an accounting clerk because she was not Mennonite. The Commission ruled that religious conformity is a bona fide basis for discrimination, based on the expectation that all SBC staff share the Mennonite faith with the community. The Commission found that “everyone employed at SBC was expected to share in a faithful way with students espousing the Christian faith, as that was what SBC was all about” (*Schroen*, 1999).

Hiring practices and faith-based colleges were again explored in 2009 during a debate in the University of Manitoba Senate. Senate was debating a new master’s program in Peace and Conflict Studies, a program offered jointly with the University of Winnipeg and Menno Simons College, a college of the Canadian Mennonite University. The Senate Committee on Academic Freedom advised that the provisions with respect to academic freedom provided at Menno Simons/CMU were “not equivalent to the unequivocal protection provided by those at the University of Manitoba” (University of Manitoba, 2009c, p. 122). Of particular concern were the “Mission, Faith, and Hiring” provisions that required, as a condition of employment and continuing employment, faculty members of Menno Simons College to adhere to a particular faith perspective (University of Manitoba, 2009c). Those opposing the program raised concerns that faculty at Menno Simons did not have the same freedoms as faculty at the University of Manitoba. Those supporting the program pointed to the Canadian Mennonite University’s membership in AUCC, and that the proposed master’s program had already been reviewed and approved by the University of Winnipeg Senate (University of Manitoba, 2009c), with the inference that the provisions of academic freedom associated with the Canadian Mennonite University and Menno Simons College had already been tested by two other academic entities, and found to be sufficient.

Ultimately, the University of Manitoba Senate approved the program, reflecting a comfort level with the Canadian Mennonite University’s membership in AUCC, the review of the specific program in relation to academic freedom by the University of Winnipeg Senate, the merits of the program itself, and the fact that an undergraduate and a doctoral program in Peace and Conflict Studies exist in Manitoba’s post-secondary system, but not a master’s program. It is not unimportant, however, that a graduate program largely offered through a faith-based institution, was accepted by the University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg only after direct debate of the issue of academic freedom at faith-based institutions.

*Schroen* and the debate in the University of Manitoba Senate present cases where there appears to be tension, but interestingly a measure of acceptance of faith-based institutions, both in terms of their particular faith mission and in relation to the academic mission of the academy. The following pages take a more structured approach to examining developments relating to faith-based institutions in Manitoba over the long term, with the object of exploring this acceptance. Historical developments related to faith-based institutions, listed in the Appendix, will be examined in two major categories: government recognition and zones of mutual trust.

## Government Recognition

“Government recognition” is an ambiguous designation. Manitoba’s Council on Post-Secondary Education (COPSE) comments on its website that “recognition” has no definition in Manitoba, and notes that there is no process of recognition (COPSE, n.d.). COPSE’s website continues, referring to the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC), which “identifies a ‘recognized’ post-secondary institution as any institution that has been given the authority to grant academic credentials by their provincial or territorial government through charters or legislation that ensures or enables mechanisms for institutional and program quality” (COPSE, n.d.). CICIC includes a list of recognized institutions on its website, including the Manitoba’s four faith-based, degree-granting institutions (CICIC, n.d.).

COPSE’s website identifies a number of mechanisms by which the province acknowledges post-secondary institutions. Mechanisms relevant to degree-granting institutions include funding and program approval through COPSE, student loan designation, ministerial approval of academic programming leading to teacher certification, and inclusion in the degree authorization framework established by The Degree Granting Act (COPSE, n.d.).

Thus, using COPSE and CICIC as a starting point, it is possible to present an operational definition of recognition for degree-granting institutions in Manitoba that includes a number of dimensions that, taken together, suggest recognition by government (see Table 1 in the conclusion). To make a potentially long story short, a review of the history of private post-secondary education in Manitoba reveals that all four of the private, faith-based, degree-granting institutions fit into nearly all aspects of this operational definition.

A brief review of government’s involvement in the development of the faith-based higher education system is revealing. Between 1925 and 1947, government was not involved in faith-based higher education, but there was increased activity beginning in 1948. From 1948 to 1997, “government recognition” consisted of actions that either established a faith-based institution in legislation or amended that legislation principally for the purpose of changing the institution’s name. Overall, much of the government activity between 1948 and 1997 was related to the incorporation process or the naming process. This focus contrasts with the nature of government activity after 1997.

Beginning in 1998, government’s activity more strongly reflected the recognition of faith-based higher education in the province. The increased involvement of government can in part be explained by a 1998 statement of the then-minister of education and training, the Honourable Linda McIntosh, to the Manitoba Legislative Assembly that “the independent colleges are an integral part of Manitoba’s post-secondary system and have been for much of this century ... The need to incorporate the independent colleges under The Council on Post-Secondary Education Act comes from the initial desire as expressed in the [1993 Report of the University Education Review Commission] to ensure that Manitoba’s post-secondary system is fully co-ordinated and articulated” (Manitoba, 1997). To date, this statement remains the only policy statement about faith-based higher education in Manitoba. Subsequent government action suggests that the integration of faith-based education into the larger system remained a policy objective.

Since 1998, government action also involved legislative or policy decisions. Legislative action included establishing the Canadian Mennonite University in 1998, the first, and to date only, private university in the province. At the same time, legislation was created to formalize a funding relationship with other faith-based colleges through a 1998 amendment to The Council on Post-Secondary Education Act, as well as the reaffirmation of the degree-granting authority of each of

these institutions through the creation of The Degree Granting Act in 2006. In 2009, a change in legislation was made to include the term *university* in the name of William and Catherine Booth University College. Similarly, in 2011, legislation was passed allowing Providence to change its name to Providence University College and Seminary.

Further, a series of non-legislative policy decisions were taken that suggests greater government recognition. These decisions include allowing international students attending private religious institutions to participate in federal-provincial employment programs, the inclusion of Providence University College and the Canadian Mennonite University in the Knowledge Infrastructure Program federal stimulus package, and the approval by COPSE of the use of the term *university* in advertising for two faith-based colleges. Additionally, in 2009, Manitoba Education authorized degrees from Providence University College and from William and Catherine Booth University College as eligible teachable subjects for the purposes of teacher certification for students entering education programs at a provincial university.

These actions, taken independently, demonstrate a growing government recognition of Manitoba's four faith-based institutions of higher education. In the absence of a *de jure* process of recognition, this article proposes that these dimensions represent *de facto* recognition of these institutions. Indeed, in the light of these legislative and policy actions, it may be impossible for government to argue that these institutions are *not* recognized.

Although government recognition of institutions is important, acceptance of faith-based institutions by the mainstream post-secondary system may be more important in terms of reputation and legitimacy. There is evidence that faith-based institutions in Manitoba have adapted to the academic norms and values commonly held by the public system through increased inter-institutional trust, discussed below.

### **Zones of Mutual Trust**

Aldeman (2009) describes a “zone of mutual trust” (ZMT) as being

established by a series of agreements on the delivery, recognition and evaluation of learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences). It can be formal or informal according to the mutual confidence and needs of the stakeholders involved. The details of the agreements between organisations can be used to build a framework of recognition based on levels of ... learning. (p. 16)

A ZMT is not imposed externally on an institution such as through legislation, for example, but rather arises from the system itself through agreements between institutions (Aldeman, 2009). Thus, a ZMT could be said to exist where there are credit transfer agreements in place, or one institution has an affiliation agreement with another.

In the Manitoba context, ZMTs exist between public and private post-secondary systems through credit transfer agreements, Approved Teaching Centre (ATC) status, affiliation agreements, and external processes such as accreditation and membership in national organizations (for example, the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada). Another indicator that a ZMT exists includes participation in the Council of Presidents of Universities of Manitoba (COPUM), a forum similar to bodies such as the Council of Ontario Universities or Universities UK.

The concept of ZMTs links well with van Vught's (2008) perspective on institutional isomorphism, a perspective that stresses institutional adaptation to the presence of other



organizations in the environment which “tend[s] to lead to homogenization, as organizations react more or less similarly to uniform environmental conditions. Isomorphism is a constraining process that forces organizations to resemble other organizations that face the same set of environmental conditions” (p. 154). The development of zones of mutual trust has in the case of Manitoba’s post-secondary system led to the adoption by faith-based institutions of the academic norms held by public institutions.

For space reasons, this article will look at specific ZMTs selected because of their intentionality; that is, the extent to which the ZMT reflects an active decision on the part of a public institution to accept a faith-based college. Thus, while articulation (for example, credit transfer) arrangements may indicate a ZMT, credits accepted on a course-by-course basis, or even acceptance of an entire program, may not necessarily reflect wider acceptance of an institution.

Although there are affiliation agreements in Manitoba, such as that between the Canadian Mennonite University and the University of Winnipeg, a structured affiliation arrangement that speaks to a broader acceptance of an institution as a centre of instruction is ATC status with the University of Manitoba. The ATC policy, established by the University of Manitoba in 1970, includes detailed criteria that must be met, including academic freedom for faculty at the ATC and related procedures of appeal and faculty protection. In addition, the qualifications of instructors must be equivalent to those at the University of Manitoba, credits must be approved by the relevant department at the University of Manitoba, and staff and students must be governed in academic matters by the same rules and regulations established by the University of Manitoba Senate for its own students and staff (University of Manitoba, 1994).

In 1992, the University of Manitoba granted William and Catherine Booth College (today a university college) ATC status, essentially accepting the courses and programs taught at Booth for academic credit (WCBC, 2010b). Similarly, the Canadian Mennonite Bible College, which has since been succeeded by the Canadian Mennonite University, also received ATC status.

However, the ATC relationship has not been embraced by all faith-based institutions, as suggested by an administrator at Providence University College and Seminary in Manitoba when considering ATC status: “I personally ... was leery of that, out of concerns lest we become mired in this academic freedom philosophical debate, having to make some kind of commitment to philosophical or theological pluralism as the *sine qua non* of academic freedom and legitimate university education” (Rae, 1998, p. 264).

William and Catherine Booth University College (Booth UC) had no such concerns, and indeed amended its internal processes in response to pressures placed on it with respect to academic freedom as a direct result of pursuing ATC status. In the report of the University of Manitoba Senate Committee on Approved Teaching Centres (SCATC) regarding the approval of Booth UC as an ATC, SCATC stated concerns that the teaching load of Booth UC faculty, at 24 credit hours, was out of line with current norms. SCATC noted in its report that Booth UC amended its policy, lowering the teaching load to 18 credit hours, something SCATC believed was more appropriate for university-level teaching (WCBC, 1999). Through revising its policies relating to academic teaching load, Booth UC made changes to gain ATC status, thereby improving its overall recognition within the larger post-secondary system.

A similar benefit, but one with national implications, is derived from membership in the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC). AUCC (n.d.) criteria

represent important norms in Canada's higher education community, including degree-granting authority, governance arrangements "appropriate to a university" (including a senate or equivalent), an independent governing board, a focus on teaching, research, and service, and support for university autonomy, to name some key criteria.

The Canadian Mennonite University became a member of AUCC in 2008 (CMU, 2008). The impact of AUCC membership on the university was important, and CMU president Gerald Gerbrandt noted that it has been easier for students to gain access to Canadian and other graduate schools: "AUCC membership has been instrumental in opening these doors" (CMU, 2009a). AUCC membership helps to establish the credibility of an institution within the larger post-secondary community.

Finally, how one university perceives another within the larger framework of a post-secondary system is important. In June 2009, the University of Manitoba Senate voted to change the admissions procedures for graduate studies so as to allow students from "Canadian institutions empowered by law to grant degrees" eligibility for admission to the Faculty of Graduate Studies (Providence College and Seminary, 2009a; University of Manitoba, 2009a). Providence University College reported that "up to the present, the Faculty of Graduate studies maintained a list of schools with acceptable degrees. Providence was not on the list. Providence graduates generally had to complete a second Bachelors degree to enter graduate studies" (PCS, 2009a). The implication of this policy change for Providence, Booth UC, and Steinbach Bible College was that their students could gain admission to the University of Manitoba's graduate programs despite the institutions not being members of the AUCC (PCS, 2009a; WCBC, 2009) because each of these colleges is able to grant degrees in accordance with the framework established by the province's Degree Granting Act.

This change has been interpreted as a further acceptance of faith-based higher education in Manitoba. David Neal, vice-president (academic) at William and Catherine Booth University College, told the *Winnipeg Free Press* that "this change in the University of Manitoba's policy represents an evolution in their approach to faith-based colleges in the province ... It's a very positive development for us" (Longhurst, 2009, p. A9). Augustus Konkell, president of Providence University College, said that the change is "extremely important. It means that a degree from Providence is the same as any other degree in Canada" (Longhurst, 2009, p. A9). Clearly, the faith-based higher education institutions, at least, have perceived this policy change as meaning greater integration in the post-secondary system.

## Discussion and Conclusion

This paper has identified several markers of acceptance of faith-based higher education in Manitoba (see Table 1). Acceptance has accrued over time through government recognition, as well as by the identification of zones of mutual trust by mainstream post-secondary institutions and the larger post-secondary community.

Together, these markers of acceptance help to lend legitimacy to the operations of faith-based institutions. Such legitimacy helps to improve the reputation of these institutions as well, as van Vught has indicated, improving the subjective perception of their quality, influence, and trustworthiness. Given the extent of the markers displayed in Table 1, and the degree to which faith-based institutions have matched those same markers with

Table 1

*Dimensions of Legitimacy for Three Types of Institutions*

Dimension of Legitimacy	Public Colleges	Public Universities	Faith-Based Institutions
<b>a. Government Recognition</b>			
Established in Legislation	All	All	CMU, PUCS, WCBUC
Funding From COPSE	All	All	All
Programs Approved by COPSE	All	All	CMU (Limited)
Accountability Requirements	All	All	All
Designated for Student Aid	All	All	All
Degree Authorization	All	All	All
TECC-Approved	n/a	All	CMU, PUCS, WCBUC
“University” in Name	n/a	All	CMU, PUCS, WCBUC
Use “Canada Brand”	All	All	All
Listed as “Recognized” on CICIC Website	All	All	All
Eligible for Off-Campus Work Program for International Students (Federal-Provincial Program)	All	All	All
<b>b. Zones of Mutual Trust</b>			
Articulation Agreements	All	All	All
Approved Teaching Centre Status	n/a	n/a	CMU, WCBUC
AUCC Member	n/a	All	CMU
COPUM Member	n/a	All	CMU
Eligible for Acceptance in Graduate Studies at UM	n/a	All	All

## Acronyms:

AUCC – Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada  
 CICIC – Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials  
 CMU – Canadian Mennonite University  
 COPUM – Council of Presidents of Universities of Manitoba  
 COPSE – Council on Post-Secondary Education  
 PUCS – Providence University College and Seminary  
 SBC – Steinbach Bible College  
 TECC – Teacher Education Certification Committee  
 UM – University of Manitoba  
 WCBUC – William and Catherine Booth University College

the public post-secondary system, it would be difficult indeed to say that the faith-based institutions were not recognized institutions. Recognition can be used by the institutions to suggest that they are legitimate post-secondary institutions offering quality programming that is trusted by governments, professional associations, and peers. In short, beginning in 1998 their reputation has improved in the context of the overall system.

The fact that so much of the development is government controlled—legislation, funding, policy—suggests broad agreement for the idea of bringing them into the mainstream, and the government is directly involved in this process. Interestingly, the observed developments span governments of different political stripes. Although support for private post-secondary education can be ideologically charged, the development of the private post-secondary system in Manitoba has not appeared to have been hampered by partisan politics.

The theoretical concepts introduced by van Vught contribute to our understanding of how higher education systems could both differentiate and diversify. By establishing the dimensions of diversification, van Vught created conceptual tools that allow one to observe increasing acceptance through, for example, adopting procedures related to the treatment of academic freedom to gain greater legitimacy within the academic community while at the same time pursuing a diversification agenda, such as continuing to focus on the niche market of education from a particular religious perspective.

Applying van Vught's conceptual framework to events in the history of faith-based higher education in Manitoba leads to two general conclusions. First, these institutions have sought to reduce structural, reputational, and procedural diversity, and they have been helped through decisions made by public universities. Interestingly enough, the evidence presented above does not suggest a pursuit of programmatic diversity, but instead suggests that these colleges appear to be working toward matching the structure, procedures, and the reputation of public universities.

Second, the faith-based institutions have incrementally redefined their relationships with the post-secondary system and with individual universities. Faith-based institutions have been integrated into the post-secondary funding and accountability processes, into policy frameworks such as degree authorization, the use of the "Canada Brand" in international marketing, and other benefits. Further, faith-based institutions are increasingly integrated with the public system through affiliation agreements and ATC status. It would seem, then, that since 1998 faith-based institutions have sought to offer their programming through the accepted model of post-secondary education. Membership in AUCC, and acceptance by and participation in COPUM, further suggests that the relationship between faith-based institutions and the larger post-secondary system has become closer.

These conclusions have meaning for Manitoba's post-secondary system, and they point to a question: whether or not the integration of faith-based post-secondary institutions in Manitoba's post-secondary system is a desirable development. This question suggests that better direction-setting for post-secondary education may be helpful. For example, van Vught (2008) noted that the California Master Plan has been successful in preventing the homogenization of that state's post-secondary system. Although "master planning" has not been the norm in Canadian provinces, longer-term system planning may at the very least force the issue of diversification and differentiation into open discussion.

Contributing to this discussion would be additional research that explored, on an institutional level, the internal changes in institutional mandates at faith-based institutions.

Key questions for exploration would include whether or not these colleges are moving toward secularization, and if so, why. Such research would help to nuance and add depth to the understanding of how and why post-secondary systems are changing.

After nearly a decade and a half, the 1998 statement by Linda McIntosh remains the only policy statement on the subject despite the fact that more recent trends (for example, quality assurance) have contributed to the discussion surrounding private higher education in other provinces. As the development of the post-secondary education system in the province continues, Manitoba may need to engage in a more comprehensive assessment of the place of private religious education in the province's overall post-secondary system.🍁

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Although they are degree-granting institutions, community colleges and the University College of the North are generally excluded from detailed analysis. Practically, this exclusion is for reasons of space and, more substantively, because community colleges and the University College of the North provide different educational outcomes than faith-based institutions.

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## Appendix

*Timeline of Key Events*

Event	Category	Governing Party	Comments
Winnipeg Bible Training School established		United Farmers of Manitoba	Became Providence College and Seminary in 1992
“Bible School” established by the Steinbach Mennonite Brethren Church		Progressives	Became Steinbach Bible College in 1974
Bible School discontinued		Liberal Progressives	Became Steinbach Bible College in 1974
Classes at Steinbach Mennonite Brethren Church resumed		Liberal Progressives	Became Steinbach Bible College in 1974
Mennonite Brethren Bible College (MBBC) established		Liberal Progressives	Became Concord College in 1992
Canadian Mennonite Bible College established		Liberal Progressives	
Winnipeg Bible Training School changes name to Winnipeg Bible Institute (WBI) and College of Theology and is established in legislation	GR	Liberal Progressives	Became Providence College and Seminary in 1992
Canadian Nazarene College moves to Manitoba from Alberta		PC	Returned to Alberta in 1995, and became Ambrose University College in 2008
MBBC enters into an affiliation agreement with Waterloo Lutheran University (later Wilfrid Laurier University)	ZMT	PC	Eventually became Concord College
WBI renamed Winnipeg Bible College (WBC) and adds a degree program	GR	PC	Became Providence College and Seminary in 1992
Canadian Nazarene College established in law in Manitoba	GR	PC	By private member’s bill
University of Manitoba establishes the Approved Teaching Centres policy	ZMT	PC	Approves the practice of establishing centres of instruction with authority to offer University of Manitoba courses in other geographical areas



Event	Category	Governing Party	Comments
MBBC agrees with University of Winnipeg to cross-register students	ZMT	NDP	Eventually became Concord College
Canadian Nazarene College becomes an Approved Teaching Centre of the University of Manitoba.	ZMT	NDP	See Ambrose University College (2010)
Steinbach Bible College incorporated		NDP	Through Letters Patent (an older term for articles of incorporation)
Menno Simons College established in legislation	GR	NDP	
Catherine Booth Bible College (CBBC) established in legislation	GR	NDP	Became William and Catherine Booth College in 1996
Menno Simons becomes an affiliated college at the University of Winnipeg	ZMT	PC	
MBBC becomes Concord College		PC	Removes the term <i>Bible</i> from name
Booth College becomes an approved teaching centre of the University of Manitoba	ZMT	PC	Allows for ease of credit transfer
WBC legislation amended to change name to Providence College and Seminary	GR	PC	Removes the term <i>Bible</i> from name
Canadian Nazarene College moves to Calgary, Alberta		PC	Decision made in 1994 and since 2007 known as Ambrose University College (Ambrose University College, 2010)
CBBC changes name to William and Catherine Booth College (WCBC)	GR	PC	By private member's bill and removes the term <i>Bible</i> from name
Section 27.1 added to COPSE Act	GR	PC	Providence College, William and Catherine Booth College, and Steinbach Bible College brought into formal funding arrangement

Event	Category	Governing Party	Comments
Mennonite Colleges Federation (MCF) Act established	GR	PC	Ultimately became CMU, and was created by an amalgamation of Concord College, Menno Simons College, and CMBC
MCF renamed Canadian Mennonite University	GR	NDP	Private university created; a consequence of the MCF Act, allowing the institution to use the term <i>university</i>
WCBC broadens degree-granting authority, role of minister; establishes “purposes and objects”	GR	NDP	Private member’s bill sponsored by a government MLA
Private religious higher education institutions included in Statistical Compendium	GR	NDP	A decision of COPSE based on the fact that they get funding, with institutions included since the first edition of the Statistical Compendium
Private religious higher education institutions brought into degree-granting framework through The Degree Granting Act	GR	NDP	
International students at private institutions allowed to participate in the federal government’s Post-Graduate Work Permit Program	GR	NDP	A federal government decision at the recommendation from the province, which had to indicate that the participating institutions were authorized to grant degrees (Canadavisa.com, 2007)
CMU gets AUCC status	ZMT	NDP	An AUCC decision, an independent body; CMU students are therefore eligible to be certified as teachers in accordance with Teacher Education Certification Committee rules
WCBC allowed to use the term <i>university</i> in advertising	GR	NDP	A COPSE decision based on delegated powers under The Degree Granting Act

Event	Category	Governing Party	Comments
Private religious higher education institutions included in Manitoba Graduate Survey	GR	NDP	A decision of Manitoba Advanced Education and Literacy (colleges were not included in previous surveys)
University of Manitoba changes graduate studies admissions procedures	ZMT	NDP	Connects eligibility to legal authority to grant degrees rather than AUCC membership
Manitoba Education changes education certification provisions, allowing Providence and Booth grads to be certified as teachers similar to graduates from public universities in Manitoba	GR	NDP	A directive to the Teacher Education Certification Committee by the education minister
CMU receives Knowledge Infrastructure Program (KIP) funding, cost shared with the federal and provincial government	GR	NDP	No prior capital support to CMU since its establishment in 1998
Providence receives KIP funding, but only from the federal government	GR	Federal Conservatives	Not a shared-cost project with the province, unlike other KIP projects.
Providence request to use <i>university</i> in advertising approved by COPSE	GR	NDP	
WCBC changes its name to William and Catherine Booth University College (WCBUC)	GR	NDP	A legislative change to a private act introduced by a government MLA; the request received by COPSE and referred to the Legislative Assembly
WCBUC signs an agreement with University of Winnipeg for credit transfer into the teacher education program	ZMT	NDP	
Providence requests to use term <i>university</i> in name referred to Legislative Assembly by COPSE	GR	NDP	Consistent with the 2010 WCBC decision.
Providence College and Seminary changes name to Providence University College and Seminary (PUCS)	GR	NDP	A legislative change to a private act introduced by a government MLA