

HESIG Provides Outlets for Research and Outstanding Achievement in Higher Education

Val D. Rust^{a,1} and W. James Jacob^{b,2}

^a*Center for International & Development Education, University of California, Los Angeles*

^b*Institute for International Studies in Education, University of Pittsburgh*

The Higher Education SIG (HESIG) is now celebrating its second successful year in CIES. Those of us who decided to establish the SIG had little idea of the overwhelming interest in higher education among the membership. However, as we reviewed the panel topics of the annual conference, it became immediately clear that the interest level was high. In fact, we discovered that a good percentage of the panels in the conference highlighted higher education in one form or another, and we are delighted to say that the HESIG membership is larger than any of the SIGs in CIES.

A reasonable question ought to be raised about the importance of having a SIG dedicated to higher education. One might argue that the interest is already so high that it is superfluous to set up yet another organized unit that might cultivate further interest in higher education. Yet, it is crucial to maintain some structure to provide what we consider to be a hub for researchers and organizations to network with and learn about critical issues related to higher education. HESIG can unite, inform and empower individuals, groups, and even organizations that are working together to understand issues related to higher education in an international context. It might work to facilitate the networking process, to aid in information sharing, and to help coordinate ongoing activities in CIES related to higher education.

As we anticipated the development of HESIG, we asked ourselves what the most difficult issues were that researchers and academics confronted. It was clear to us

that we face ongoing difficulties finding the resources to carry out our research and development projects, of finding time to carry out our research projects, and turning the outcome of these projects into quality written documents. These are perennial problems that every researcher faces, but HESIG is dedicating itself to assisting its members in whatever way it can.

However, it was clear to us that the major obstacle we researchers always face is to find an appropriate outlet for us to publish the outcome of our research findings. And so, in the organizational meeting of our HESIG, we announced that we were launching a HESIG book series dealing with higher education in the international context. And during the first two years, three proposals for publication have already been accepted, and the first tangible product will be available at the time of our 2010 annual conference in Chicago. *Higher Education Policy and the Global Education Phenomenon*, edited by Laura M. Portnoi, Val D. Rust, and Sylvia S. Bagley, promises to be a huge success. The editors have included some of the best people in the field to address issues that link globalization and higher education.

It is difficult to imagine another time in history when globalization has had a greater cultural, economic, and political impact. The increased importance of the knowledge industry, innovations in information and communication technologies, a stronger orientation to the market economy, and growth in regional and international governance systems, all contribute to an accelerated flow of people, ideas, culture, technology, goods and services in our globalized world. Globalization has been neither neutral nor uniform in its impact. It affects countries, cultures, and systems in different ways—some in positive ways, others in more negative ways.

¹Corresponding author: Email: rust@gseis.ucla.edu; Address: Center for International and Development Education, University of California, Los Angeles, Box 951521, Moore Hall, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1521, USA.

²Corresponding author: Email: wjacob@pitt.edu; Address: Institute for International Studies in Education, University of Pittsburgh, 5714 Posvar Hall, Pittsburgh, PA 15260, USA.

All sectors of society are being affected; higher education is no exception.

The book also maps how competition has become a central preoccupation of higher education. It is closely connected with a global free-market economy. Combined with the impact of globalization and the development of the global “knowledge economy,” these competitive forces have resulted in the *global competition phenomenon* that is currently reshaping higher education. Many developments characterize global competition in higher education, and the book touches on some of these developments, including (1) the rise of global university rankings, (2) declarations by nations to have a world-class university, (3) the development of regional units of control and reform, (4) the development of cross-border quality assessment practices, and (5) the internationalization of universities. We encourage members of our HESIG to submit proposals for additional books that might be added to our book series.

Comparative and International Higher Education, the official HESIG newsletter, offers another publication outlet for HESIG members. Organized around six global regions—Africa, Asia/Pacific, Europe, Latin America, Middle East and North Africa, and the United States/Canada—we invite HESIG members to submit

article contributions on a variety of higher education topics. Articles should be submitted for review to either one of the regional editors or to the editors directly depending on the scope of the manuscript. In addition, *CIHE* provides a location for informing HESIG members about current academic article and book publications as well as upcoming conferences that focus on higher education.

This year our HESIG Awards Committee established three recurring SIG-sponsored awards for the Best Research Article, Best Book, and Best Dissertation. Together with the Lifetime Contribution Award, which was first presented in 2009, we now have the ability to recognize outstanding and emerging scholarship in the field. Brief biographies on each of the 2010 Awards Recipients are included in this issue (see pp. 19-23). We look forward to presenting the awards at the HESIG Business Meeting in Chicago on 2 March 2010, with a special tribute to Philip G. Altbach, recipient of this year’s Lifetime Contribution Award. We want to thank Rosalind Latiner-Raby and the entire Awards Committee for their service in establishing the selection criteria and spending countless hours in the selection process.