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Editorial: Changing Higher Education, from Longstanding Matters to Future Evolutions

Yasar Kondakci

Department of Educational Sciences, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey

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Corresponding Author: Yasar Kondakci, kyasar@metu.edu.tr

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Editorial:

Changing Higher Education, from Longstanding Matters to Future Evolutions

Higher education has always been sensitive to economic, social, political and cultural developments in the society. Higher education systems and individual universities have been struggling to survive the forces of change emanating from these developments. The unfolding COVID-19 pandemic has proven to be a huge force impacting higher education governance and policy around the globe. International scholarly exchange of knowledge, experience and observation is expected to contribute to rethinking higher education governance and policy in the post-pandemic era. Committed to open science, the Higher Education Governance and Policy (HEGP) aims at contributing to the process of rethinking higher education in the post-pandemic era. In this issue we covered five articles from various country contexts, which we hope to contribute to the international exchange of knowledge on higher education governance and policy.

In the first article of this issue, Caliskan, Zhu and Dinh discussed the role of leadership in responding to the forces of change in higher education and highlighted the need to empower young academic leaders on this task. According to the authors despite their critical role in departmental level administration as well as research and teaching, the young-level academic leaders are under rated. Examining the conception of young academic leader through online discussion forums the study revealed the competencies needed to be an effective academic leader and the challenges of young academic leaders. The outcomes out the study were suggested as an input for an academic leadership training program. The second article of the issue which is titled “Higher Education and Equitable Life-Long Learning for Diversified Students in the Digital Era” by Arar, Saiti and Prokopiadou elaborated on the impact of digitalization on equity in higher education. The authors argued that various technologies provide unique ways for recognizing individual differences in higher education. The third article by Salomaa, Cinar, and Charles investigated the link between the rankings and regional development. The authors implemented multiple case design and conducted interviews in the Netherland, England and Finland in order to explore the link between regional engagement of the universities and the rankings. The authors concluded that the rankings lead to an emphasis on quantitative third mission indicators and shift the focus of the universities from regional relevance to global excellence. These two orientations weaken the regional engagement of the universities. The fourth article of this issue by Lee, which is entitled as “Research University Initiatives in South Korea: Accomplishments and Challenges,” investigated the performance of research universities towards the mission of becoming world-class university. Lee found that despite the financial commitment of Korean government, Korean research universities have not been performing adequately on doctoral training and academic freedom and shared governance. With the final article of this issue, Bernasconi compared university autonomy in Latin America and the US and stated that university autonomy has different locus in these two regions of the Americas. In the US the university autonomy was built in a bottom-up process as a construction of the community of scholars while in the Latin America the university autonomy is a top-down institutional phenomenon. In the Latin American case individual professor’s autonomy is vested in the autonomy of the university. Bernasconi documented historical underpinnings of this pattern of autonomy understanding in the Latin world.

Hopefully the articles of this issue will prove beneficial to international scholars and policy makers in higher education around the world.

Yasar Kondakci

Editor