

**CONCEPT NOTE**  
**Executive Education Program: Building World class  
Universities – Leadership for Sustainable Change**  
**Tunis, 5-7 July 2010**  
**African Development Institute**  
**Center for International Higher Education, Boston College**

**Introduction**

Universities everywhere require leadership and expertise prepared to participate in an increasingly complex and globalized world. The Center for International Higher Education (CIHE) at Boston College will provide a workshop in collaboration with the African Development Institute (ADI) that will encourage thoughtful analysis and discussion of the critical issues facing universities everywhere while helping participants to consider effective strategies for internationalizing their own institution. *Leadership for Higher Education: Strategic Thinking for a Globalized World* is an encounter and symposium aimed at top leadership in African higher education. It includes an intensive three-day workshop and continuing networking and research activities.

Higher education everywhere today is influenced by rankings and the push to achieve “world class.” International competition and benchmarking can be daunting for Africa with limited resources and intense competition for public funds for a range of services. Yet every university can be world-class in the sense that it makes use of state-of-the-art thinking about the critical elements of higher education development and management. World-class universities, no matter the national or cultural context in which they operate, are committed to providing the best possible academic services to students, academic staff, and the community. These institutions “think” globally while functioning effectively in their local environments. They achieve this by taking relevant ideas and practices from academic trendsetters around the world, then adapting these appropriately to meet their specific needs and objectives. This kind of strategic thinking requires an understanding of how the broad themes of the day—such as competition in the global academic marketplace, privatization, and new mechanisms for financing universities—affect the daily operation of a university and the policy decisions that must be made by academic leaders.

Strategic leadership represents an artful combination of good management and a clear understanding of the broader purposes of higher education. While growing market forces are shaping universities everywhere, universities, as institutions, are also playing a role of ‘public good’ by helping to shape societal debate, preserving and interpreting culture, and helping to educate citizens for productive careers and for participation increasingly complex economic and social realities.

Globalization means, among other things, that universities worldwide face largely similar challenges. Thus, academic institutions worldwide can learn from common experience. With a few exceptions, the most successful academic institutions in most categories are located in the north, where they have had a longer experience coping with the expansion of enrollments, the nurturing of research universities, and the like. Academic institutions in the south are now proceeding through similar stages of development. The experience of the north can be useful for emerging academic

systems. At the same time, national circumstances vary considerably. There are lessons to be learned from the global academic experience.

This workshop focuses on broad global issues and the experience of universities and academic systems everywhere. The workshop is not tailored to any specific region or country in the belief that participants can benefit from global realities and a wide set of experiences and ideas. Yet through case studies and small group activities participants will have opportunities to reflect on these trends in local contexts.

This proposal is intended to provide a description of the purposes and general orientation of the symposium.

### **Purpose and Participants**

This strategic leadership program addresses the central issues—practical and conceptual—facing university leadership today. The focus is put on world trends, introduce best practices, and discuss tools for developing and applying innovative strategies. The dynamic of the encounter/symposium integrates talks and facilitation by leading experts with dialog among participants culminating in a discussion of how these key themes affect the operation of a university and the development of a strategic plan.

Presentations and discussions integrate perspective and experiences from around the world. Special focus is put on the realities and issues that relate to the world's most rapidly expanding higher education sector—middle-income and developing countries. Chancellors, Vice-Chancellors, Rectors, vice rectors, and other top-level university administrators who are actively involved in institutional development and strategic planning will benefit most from the symposium's/encounter's focus and resources.

The aim is that participants will take away the following perspectives from the program:

- An enhanced understanding of today's global higher education context
- A perspective on the balance between the day-to-day and the larger challenges facing an institutional manager
- Some specific knowledge of the key issues chosen for emphasis in the program, such as quality assurance, the academic profession, internationalization, access & equity and others.
- A sense of the complexity and importance of the academic enterprise in the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- A sense of community and common purpose and networking with the participants as well as the symposium faculty and staff.

### **Program Characteristics**

The encounter/symposium will be limited to no more than 25 participants, in order to facilitate discussion and networking. The African Development Bank will meet the travel, per diem, and accommodation costs of the participants. The program will combine access to experts and academic leaders with extensive research and practical

experience. The program will be highly participatory, combining expert presentations, discussions, group work, and case studies.

### **Curriculum and Schedule**

The symposium will include a series of experienced speakers who will not only discuss key themes but who will be available to interact with the participants.

Among the topics that will be considered are:

- Globalization and its impact on African universities
- Quality assurance, accreditation, and the measurement of institutional performance
- The profile and qualifications of the academic profession in the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- Trends in higher education development in Asia, Europe, and the United States
- The implications of increasing privatization and the growing private sector in higher education
- Financing world-class higher education

The symposium will last three full days of intensive work. There will be a combination of presentations by key experts, Q and A with those experts, small group discussions led by the symposium faculty, and several group work sessions.

The tentative schedule follows. The CIHE reserves the right to make adjustments in the program after further consultation with the faculty and representatives of the ADI.

### **Ongoing Benefits**

The encounter/symposium marks the beginning of an ongoing intellectual relationship for professionals in the field of higher education. Participants will become part of the Center for International Higher Education's network of academic leaders. The CIHE will provide continuing resources on key higher education issues to all participants on an ongoing basis following the encounter/symposium. All participants will receive a subscription to the Center's quarterly publication, *International Higher Education*, as well as complimentary CDs with many of the Center's books. CIHE researchers and staff will be available to participants to answer specific research-related questions. For a period of one year there will be no additional charge for these services. Follow-up encounters/symposia may be organized if participants express an interest in accessing additional modules focused on topics of special concern.

## **Annex 1: Tentative Program Schedule**

### **Day #1**

8:30am-9:00am	Registration and check-in
9:00am-9:30am	Welcome <i>Dr. Philip Altbach</i> Overview of Program and Schedule <i>Dr. Liz Reisberg</i>
9:30am-11:00am	The New International Landscape for Higher Education <i>Dr. Philip Altbach</i>  This session establishes the intellectual and conceptual framework for the program, highlighting key issues and challenges facing universities in Africa and around the world. Participants will acquire working definitions for globalization, internationalization, and “world-class.”
11:00am-11:30am	Break
11:30am-12:30pm	Exercise and Guided Discussion <i>Dr. Liz Reisberg</i>  Participants will complete an institutional profile, designed to stimulate critical thinking about their university’s unique strengths, weaknesses, and world-class aspirations.
12:30pm-1:30pm	Lunch
1:30pm-3:00pm	Building Academic Excellence <i>Dr. Marjik van der Wende</i>  This session will provide insight into the process of redefining undergraduate education to balance liberal arts, technical studies, and professional preparation. It will also explore the role of graduate education in world-class institutions.
3:00pm-3:30pm	Break
3:30pm-5:00pm	The Academic Profession <i>Dr. Philip Altbach</i>  This session will examine the central role of academic staff in world-class institutions, covering issues of doctoral training; faculty recruitment and retention; and academic productivity and professional excellence.

## **Day #2**

- 8:30am-9:00 am Small group case review and preparation
- 9:00am-9:30am Review of Day #1  
*Dr. Liz Reisberg*
- 9:30am-11:00am Building Financial Strength in Higher Education  
*Dr. D. Bruce Johnstone*  
This session will outline the key financial issues facing higher education institutions around the world, and the particular challenges and imperatives of funding for world-class performance. Topics will include the trends relevant to philanthropy, endowments, investments, subsidies, loans, and fee schemes.
- 11:00am-11:30am Break
- 11:30am-12:30pm Exercise and Guided Discussion  
*Dr. Liz Reisberg*  
Case study
- 12:30pm-1:30pm Lunch
- 1:30pm-2:30pm Case Study: Strategic Investment and Allocation  
*Dr. D. Bruce Johnstone*  
Participants will read an assigned case in advance and engage in a guided discussion about one university's experience with strategic investment and fund allocation.
- 2:30pm-3:00pm Break
- 3:00pm-5:00pm Building International Relevance  
*Dr. Philip Altbach*  
This session will look at the principal trends relevant to the internationalization of higher education policy and practice around the world. Participants will be provided with a broad overview of key issues. They will also be given the opportunity to discuss a pre-assigned case study illustrating one institution's experience with internationalization.

### **Day #3**

- 8:30am-9:00 am Small group case review and preparation
- 9:00am-9:30am Review of Day #2  
*Dr. Liz Reisberg*
- 9:30am-11:00am Quality Assurance and Accreditation  
*Dr. Liz Reisberg*  
This session will cover the growing preoccupation with university quality and quality assurance schemes currently operating in different countries. The session will also address the challenges of implementing new procedures for evaluation and accreditation.
- 11:00am-11:30am Break
- 11:30am-1:00pm International Rankings  
This session will provide an overview of the current university ranking schemes around the world, helping participants to make sense of these varied approaches to measuring institutional excellence. A discussion of the link (or disconnect) between rankings and quality will be a central component of this session
- 1:00pm-2:00pm Lunch
- 2:00pm-3:00pm Exercise and Guided Discussion: Case study  
*Dr. Liz Reisberg*
- 3:00pm-3:30pm Break
- 3:30-5:00pm Building Sustainable Change  
*Dr. Marjik van der Wende & Dr. D. Bruce Johnstone*  
This session will provide an opportunity for facilitators and participants to synthesize the various strands of the program and discuss key issues for future consideration and action. These include articulating a vision for world-class performance; defining and strengthening internal capacity; managing constituencies and building consensus; and learning to anticipate threats, obstacles, and opportunities
- 5:00pm-5:30pm Wrap-up, Concluding Remarks, and Certificates  
*Dr. Philip Altbach*