

Molly Corbett Broad's Remarks for the Panel Discussion, "Gauging the Climate: A Comparative Analysis of the Contextual Factors Affecting Higher Education"

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Thank you, President Toope, for those fascinating observations. It's a great pleasure for me to be participating in this Transatlantic Dialogue once again. I'm wearing a different hat now, but I'm very much looking forward to engaging with some of the same issues that we have grappled with in the past.

As you all know, it has been almost exactly seven years since many of us in this room gathered in Quebec to discuss the forces shaping change in higher education in Canada, Europe, and the United States. The *Brave New World* report that grew out of that 2001 meeting began by looking back at the numerous changes that had taken place in the world since the first Transatlantic Dialogue a dozen years earlier in Hartford, Connecticut. There was the popularization of a new invention known as the World Wide Web; the fall of the Berlin Wall; and the advent of higher education as a global enterprise, to name just a few. We concluded by looking forward, predicting that technology, competition, and globalization would be the largest forces for change in higher education.

Our task today is to take a similar look back at our 2001 deliberations and to engage in some honest self-assessment about what we got right and wrong. We've also been asked to explain what new issues and forces are shaping the future of higher education in our own nation or region.

My bottom-line conclusion is that the three transformative forces we identified in *Brave New World* were absolutely the right ones. However, the influence of technology, competition and globalization must now be seen in a dramatically shifting context. I'm going to cite three contextual factors that I believe significantly shape how we view the changes that are underway in higher education today:

1. **The first factor is September 11**, which has of course had an impact on Canada and Europe but has most profoundly affected the United States. The terrifying attacks that were visited on our nation have had far-reaching foreign-policy implications: The war on terror, wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and an intensification of anti-Americanism around the world.

These geopolitical developments have in turn had practical consequences for U.S. higher education. At the American Council on Education we've worked hard, with considerable success, to prevent student visa policies from becoming overly restrictive. But it's an ongoing struggle to balance legitimate security concerns with the highly beneficial effects of attracting the best and brightest from around the world to American universities.

We also worry about the perception among some foreign students that they may not be fully welcome on U.S. campuses.

And among American students, too, the post-911 world has created new concerns—some poorly founded, some legitimate, unfortunately—about which foreign nations are safe destinations in which to study.

2. **The second factor is the weak U.S. economy.** I'm speaking here not just of our nation's short-term economic woes, from job losses to the sub-prime mortgage crisis, but of the worrisome long-term economic outlook, which has significant implications for higher education. We are now a graying nation. According to the Social Security Administration, nearly 80 million Americans will become eligible for Social Security retirement benefits over the next 20 years, which averages out to more than 10,000 people per day. Rising health care costs, notably Medicare and Medicaid spending, are an even greater driver of our long-term structural deficit. Add global competition to this picture, and it becomes clear that if we don't shore up the public fisc, we may not have the resources we need to invest in education.

And such investment is vital. We are seeing troubling and growing educational disparities based on age, race, and poverty. The graying and "browning" of our workforce could mean the retirement of relatively well-educated Baby Boomers and their replacement not only with fewer workers but with less well-educated workers, primarily people of color. Our best weapon against rising unemployment and a declining standard of living is to boost educational attainment both for traditional-age students and for older, displaced workers.

3. **The third factor is the growth and strengthening of higher education in other parts of the world.** It's hard to do justice in the time I have to the explosion of higher-education activity that has taken place around the world in just a few years. In Europe, we've seen the acceleration of the Bologna process and the creation of what the Europeans call "a European space." In China, we've seen an extraordinary surge in university enrollments. In Southeast Asia, Singapore, and Malaysia have emerged as higher education hubs for the region. In the Middle East, huge sums of money are being spent to transform postsecondary education using foreign expertise, several nations in the United Arab Emirates, including Qatar, Dubai, and Abu Dhabi, have begun importing branches of Western universities such as Cornell and NYU. Saudi Arabia is using an extraordinary \$10 billion endowment to build a brand-new university, the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, or KAUST, relying heavily on partnerships with elite western institutions. When all these developments are taken together, it's not hard to conclude that the United States's standing as the world leader in higher education may not last forever.

So just to sum up so far, I think the three contextual factors I've mentioned – the post-911 era, the struggling U.S. economy, and the rapid changes taking place in higher education around the world – are absolutely vital, not only to our discussion today but to any discussion of the shape of transatlantic higher education in the coming years.

Now I'm going to turn to the three predictions that grew out of our transatlantic dialogue seven years ago at Laval.

1. **The first prediction was about technology.** “Technology may be the single greatest force for change in higher education,” declared our *Brave New World* report. I think we got this one right. We are in the midst of a technological revolution that has transformed our lives both at home and at work (so much so that, in this wired age, we can't always tell the two apart). Today's young people, in particular, are “digital natives”: They're using instant-messaging, social networking tools, and more to do everything from keeping up with their friends to creating their own online content. They're also increasingly comfortable using technology to learn in collaborative ways—and without regard to time and place. That's why another area of tremendous growth, pioneered by MIT with its Open Courseware program, is distance learning, which has helped an unbelievable number of people both inside and outside the U.S. to become independent learners and, in some cases, to earn degrees. Often, we're finding that technology is not completely displacing the conventional classroom but supplementing what it can offer: We're moving toward “blended learning” by using e-tools such as Blackboard and MERLOT. So are we there yet with technology? No, but we're on a path that will inevitably lead us to even more significant changes in what we do and how we do it.

2. **The second prediction concerned globalization.** In our last meeting we discussed several aspects of globalization, from the likelihood that it would increase the amount of instruction in English around the world, to the extent to which it would affect competition and internationalization. Laval participants predicted that English instruction would increase but said it was too soon to forecast the effect of globalization on the latter two phenomena. Seven years later, we can make the following observations:
 - Global competition has intensified. This is probably best illustrated by the rise of global university rankings – notably the Shanghai and Times Higher Education Supplement rankings – as well as the burgeoning national-level rankings that also reflect a desire to measure and improve university performance in order to be globally competitive.

 - There has also been a tremendous increase in cross-border education. By cross-border education I mean not just traditional cooperation between universities offering dual or joint degree across nations. I'm referring to more entrepreneurial approaches, such as branch campuses or degree

programs being created in foreign countries. China is the current hot-spot for many of these efforts, with significant activity also taking place in the Middle East, as I just mentioned. But many of these entrepreneurial ventures are only about a decade old, and their future is still uncertain. Don't forget that there was a similar "Gold Rush" in Japan in the 1980s, when many U.S. universities hurried to set up branch campuses there. Today, only one is left.

- On U.S. campuses, we're making progress in preparing students to be globally competent. Much good work has been done to take the rhetoric of internationalization and turn it into an educationally meaningful reality.. That said, transformation is tough for universities and our mission is not yet accomplished. Too few U.S. students study abroad; our curriculum tends to be spotty when it comes to international content; and, as the whole world knows, our foreign language competence is low. But the good news is that we also know from the successful work on internationalization that has been done so far by ACE and others that we do have the knowledge and the wherewithal to help campuses take a more global view.
3. **The third prediction was about competition.** In our conversations at Laval, we talked about the increased competition taking place between universities for students, faculty, resources, and prestige. Within the United States, that competition has only intensified on all those fronts. And for a certain group of research universities, that competition is now global, which is one reason the global rankings have become so popular. As you all know, however, the theme of this gathering is "Competition and Cooperation in Higher Education." One of the things I'm looking forward to discussing this weekend is how we can find ways to de-escalate the unhealthy forms of competition we sometimes see, and to address some of its more pernicious consequences.

Finally, having covered the state of these three major predictions – technology, globalization, and competition – I'm going to turn to several new issues that are shaping the thinking of American colleges and universities as we look at our priorities for the future.

1. **The first is the push for accountability.** The most visible sign of this came in 2006 from the Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education. Its criticisms led many institutions to voice their concerns about the potential "federalization" of accountability. While some of those fears have subsided, the debate continues and the fact remains that the Spellings Commission has placed accountability (along with the other two "a"s – assessment and accreditation) at center stage in our national discussion about higher education. We have already seen much voluntary experimentation on our campuses in this area and I expect to see more in the coming years as best practices are promulgated.

2. **The second new issue is the urgent need for higher education to ensure access and success for previously underserved students.** I have in mind immigrants, students of color, adult learners, low-income students, and another often-overlooked group, displaced workers who need education and retraining. Serving underserved students isn't an entirely new issue, but it has taken on renewed urgency as our society changes demographically and economically and higher education faces an imperative to continue to play its historical role of ensuring upward mobility to new groups.
3. **The third looming issue is our concern about the faculty of the future.** With baby boomers graying and retiring we're seeing too few grad students and junior faculty in the pipeline to replace them. At the same time, institutions are increasingly relying on adjunct instructors in place of full-time faculty members, leaving many questions about what the faculty will look like 50 or even 25 years from now.

Those, then, are the new issues we expect to be grappling with. There's certainly more I could say, but although this is the longest day of the year I'm determined not to speak the longest. So, on that note, I'd like to pass the baton to our next speaker, Professor de Maret.