

# MAJOR ISSUES IN U.S. HIGHER EDUCATION

## CURRENT CHALLENGES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION ADMINISTRATORS

HIED 66595 / 76595

Paul L. Gaston

White Hall 0312

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Mondays 11:00 AM-1:45 PM

### Our Priorities

Higher Education Administration has always been a challenging profession, but the issues confronting leaders in higher education in the second decade of the 21st century may be unprecedented in their variety and complexity. Because of the scope of our seminar, we will not be able to examine any issue in great depth. For instance, accountability and assessment, the subject of a semester-long seminar, will be our focus for one week only! But you will become acquainted with the major issues in higher education and you will have the opportunity to exercise your scholarly skills in investigating them and your leadership skills in framing responses to them. Greater knowledge of the complex environment of higher education is but one of our priorities. The other is to gain experience in thinking like a higher education administrator. And because an administrator must be able to frame a complex issue in order to understand it more clearly, members of the seminar will gradually assume responsibility for defining at least some of the assignments.

*At the conclusion of this seminar, you should be better able to*

- *speak with knowledge and conviction on a broad range of important issues confronting higher education;*
- *describe the development of these issues and their current status using the appropriate vocabularies;*
- *divide complex topics into manageable assignments that lead cumulatively to coherent understanding;*
- *investigate such assignments so as to gain command of essential elements and to lead others to share your awareness; and*
- *approach analytically and judiciously issues that may bear eventually on your professional assignment.*

### Timely Topics

The subjects of this semester should prove as timely as the daily reports of *Inside Higher Ed* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Therefore, while we will follow in order the topics chosen by the seminar, we will also be alert to developments that may demand our immediate attention. If important topics beyond those identified at the start arise in the course of the semester, we may revise our list.

### Our Method

As a member of the seminar, you share a commitment to everyone's knowledge and understanding. Either

individually or in small groups, you will pursue nearly every week a reporting assignment or brief case study related to the topic being considered. During the subsequent meeting of the seminar, you will provide at a succinct, substantive report or response, and you will lead a brief discussion. The questions listed in the syllabus offer a general idea of issues we may cover on a particular day, but the assignments distributed each week will be much more specific and may reflect recent or anticipated events.

### Conferences

Please discuss with me your reading, assignments, and concerns. My office is Moulton Hall, 213. My office hours earmarked for members of this seminar are 9:30-10:45 every Monday that the seminar meets, but anyone in the seminar may make appointments (672-6003) to see me at any time that the schedule permits.

### Organization of Seminar Meetings

Most meetings of the seminar will be divided into two sessions. If we are beginning our discussion of an issue, organization or process, I may offer at the outset a brief overview. Then we will review recent news that bears on the issues we are considering. The second session, which will usually begin well before the break, will ordinarily be devoted to the issues reports and discussions you and your colleagues have prepared. What are the vital contexts for the issue, organization, or process? When did it emerge? How has it changed over time? In what ways is it likely to change? What is going on now? What are the implications of the issue, organization, or process for higher education (both academics and student affairs), for K-12 education, and for the general public? While we will follow the schedule, there may be occasions when we decide together to continue an issue from one week to the next. *Because of the mid-day scheduling of the seminar, there will be a 20-minute luncheon break at 12:10.*

### Issues Reporting

An issues report or case study response should distill your acquaintance with a subject or an issue. You should plan on allocating at least three to four hours in familiarizing yourself with the topic. If you have extensive experience in speaking from an outline, you may rely on notes. If not, you may prefer to draft your reports for delivery. Useful models include an outlined

military briefing, a standard NPR report, the average reading length of two double-spaced pages with Times New Roman 12 point. In no more than three or four minutes, your issues report should acquaint the members of the seminar with the issue or subject you have chosen, explain its importance, clarify its present status, and give some indication as to what may happen next. If you are responding to a case study, you may embellish the narrative, but you should not change the situation you have been given. You may distribute an outline or refer participants to other sources. You will then lead a brief discussion. In preparation for the questions likely to follow your report or response, you should note information that you cannot include in your report but that might be helpful in the discussion.

### Essays and Presentations

In addition to the weekly issues reports and case study responses, participants will (A) write a brief essay (2-3 double-spaced pages that embodies careful thought and efficient writing—usually arising from one of the weekly briefing reports) and (B) prepare a presentation or lesson plan in order to lead the seminar in a substantive discussion of a topic of your choice. Doctoral students will write also a longer essay (8-10 double-spaced pages) reflecting on the topic chosen for the presentation. Prior to the first essay, we will discuss principles of effective writing particularly relevant to brief, cogent analyses. Prior to the presentations, we will discuss rubrics that may offer guidance.

### Examinations and Grade Calculation

Because every seminar meeting is critical, the mid-term exam will be out-of-class; it will be distributed on October 11 for return on October 18. Meant to complement the work in the seminar, the examination will offer an opportunity for thoughtful consideration of ways in which different issues and topics bear on and influence one another. The final exam, consisting of

brief, time-limited presentations on a choice of topics, is scheduled for 3:15-5:30 PM on Monday, December 13. The course grade for master's degree students, based on a total of 100 points, will reflect the weekly briefing reports (40), Essay 1 (10), the mid-term exam (15), the Presentation/Discussion (20), and the final exam (15). The course grade for doctoral students, based on a total of 100 points, will reflect the weekly briefing reports (30), Essay 1 (10), the mid-term exam (15), the Presentation/Discussion (10), the longer essay (20), and the final exam (15).

### Other Matters

- (A) Because one important priority for participants in this seminar is to gain experience in identifying and evaluating sources that are informative and reliable, there is no textbook. However, you should read the daily news feeds of *Inside Higher Ed* and the *Chronicle of Higher Education* as well as the weekly printed issue of the *Chronicle*. In addition, I will regularly post on the seminar Blackboard site materials that offer useful information.
- (B) Because this seminar meets only once each week, please make every effort to attend every session of every meeting. If illness, emergency, or an unavoidable conflict prevents your attending a session, please let me know in advance. Poor attendance may result in a lower grade; typically, each full, unexcused absence beyond one will result in a reduction of the final total by five points.
- (C) During the meetings of the seminar, please turn off your laptop computers, cell phones, espresso makers, pagers, crockpots, PDAs, etc. I will do so also.
- (D) This syllabus remains subject to amendment throughout the term. In particular, case studies may be chosen in the light of events.
- (E) Administratively required documents are posted at the end of this syllabus.

## Schedule

(Remains Subject to Modification)

The questions below indicate in a general sense the topics to be covered each week. One week in advance of each seminar meeting, each participant or participant group will choose a specific reporting assignment.

- I August 30 INTRODUCTION**
- ▶ Who are the members of the seminar? What are their long-term professional objectives? What are their interests beyond academe and employment?
  - ▶ In what ways does this seminar differ in method from most other graduate courses?
  - ▶ What are the primary learning objectives for this seminar? How will we achieve them?
  - ▶ What will be the nature of the weekly assignments, reports, and discussions?
  - ▶ What is the scope of the seminar? What are the basic processes and principles we will follow?
  - ▶ In what ways may participants shape the seminar to meet their needs more fully?
  - ▶ What are the most important issues facing higher education today? Are there important issues not reflected in the syllabus? Should we give greater emphasis to some of these issues and less emphasis to some issues on the syllabus?
- II September 6 LABOR DAY HOLIDAY: NO SEMINAR MEETING**
- III September 13 ACCOUNTABILITY, ASSESSMENT, VISIBILITY, TRANSPARENCY**
- ▶ How should higher education—and institutions of higher education—respond to increasing demands for consumer information?
  - ▶ Why has the political pressure for greater transparency emerged particularly within the past decade?
  - ▶ What forms does such pressure take? What forms may such pressure take in the near future?
  - ▶ Is it possible to maintain an emphasis on internal strengthening when expectations of visibility may make the institution vulnerable to unfair comparisons?
- IV September 20 THE UN-FUNDING OF HIGHER EDUCATION**
- The Jeffersonian idea of higher education as a public good has given way in the last 30 years to a priority on private benefit. That is at least one explanation for the dramatic reallocation of state funds away from universities to other state needs. Some well-known state institutions that once received more than 60% of their annual E&G budget from the state now receive less than 30%. Some receive less than 6%. What are the implications of this shift for public universities? What lies ahead? What are the options? Is the current funding model for public higher education broken? What other models deserve consideration? What can higher education leaders do to contribute to the development of a more secure resources base for colleges and universities?
- V September 27 AFFORDABILITY, STUDENT PERSISTENCE, TIME TO DEGREE**
- These distinct topics bear directly on one another. As the costs of higher education have risen, the number of students who work 20 hours or more a week has increased dramatically. “Workers who study” have replaced “students who work.” As a result, student persistence has suffered and the average time to degree has increased. Is there any sign these trends may soften or be reversed? What can college and university administrators do to ensure that qualified students will continue to have access to their institutions? What are the principal issues concerning federal financial aid likely to confront college and university administrators? What other issues are—or are likely to become—critical for higher education administrators?
- “MINI-EVALUATION” OF THE SEMINAR**

- VI** October 4 **DISTANCE EDUCATION AND ONLINE LEARNING**  
**ESSAY DUE**  
 Since the mid-1980s, distance education has promised to transform higher education. While there are important developments, most administrators would agree that the progress in this arena has been less than expected. Should college and university administrators invest more heavily in distance education? And, if so, by what criteria?  
**“MINI-EVALUATION” OF THE SEMINAR: RESULTS AND RESPONSES**
- VII** October 11 **A CHASM BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE**  
 To do their jobs well, colleges and universities must work far more closely with the high schools from which they draw their students. Are the assumptions of high school students about admissions requirements consistent with the expectations of college faculty? How might the divide be bridged?  
**MID-TERM EXAMINATION DISTRIBUTED**
- VIII** October 18 **STUDENT AFFAIRS AND THE CO-CURRICULUM**  
 In what venues other than traditional classroom and laboratory study do students learn? What is the relative importance in this regard of student leadership experiences, of residential life, of campus recreation, or of student employment? In what ways might the curriculum and co-curriculum be integrated more effectively? To what extent can commuting students benefit from the co-curriculum? To what extent *do* they benefit?  
**MID-TERM EXAMINATION DUE**
- IX** October 25 **CORE CURRICULA, GENERAL EDUCATION, LIBERAL LEARNING**  
 What is meant by the terms “liberal education,” “general education,” and “core curriculum”? What is the relationship between them? What is the continuum of practice in higher education? What difference does it make?
- X** November 1 **INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS**  
 What is the appropriate role for intercollegiate athletics in a contemporary university. How can administrators secure that role in the face of pressures to achieve national visibility through success in intercollegiate athletics? What are the most important risks an *academic* administrator may face in the arena of intercollegiate athletics? Why can't college and university presidents exert more control in this important arena?
- XI** November 8 **INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS, INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS, INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION**  
 What do international students contribute to an institution? What special needs do they present? How important is effective international student recruitment? How important is it that students have an international experience of some kind during their academic careers? What qualifies as an “international experience”?
- XII** November 15 **TOPIC CHOSEN BY SEMINAR, e.g.**  
 Scholarship, Research, and Academic Freedom  
 University fund-raising  
 Enrollment management  
 Curricular development
- XIII** November 22 **PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSION**
- XIV** November 29 **PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSION**
- XV** December 6 **PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSION**  
**DOCTORAL ESSAY DUE**
- December 13 **FINAL EXAMINATION: 3:15-5:30 PM**