Higher Education and Quality:
Views from the Inside and Outside

John N. Hawkins

Director
Center for International and Development Education
University of California, Los Angeles

Professor
Social Sciences and Comparative Education in the Graduate School of
Education and Information Studies
University of California, Los Angeles

Abstract

Higher education institutions worldwide have been working diligently to assure stakeholders that the institutions and their missions and output are of high quality, deserving of the funds allocated to them and the fees paid by their clients. To demonstrate this many if not most are engaging in some form of accreditation process, often centrally organized at the governmental level but sometimes reflecting a more decentralized approach. Many institutions also engage in various forms of internal quality assurance. It is suggested here that in many cases, it is possible that these two efforts are not well coordinated. In this paper both the external accreditation and internal quality assurance measures of the University of California at Los Angeles are examined in the context of new and novel learning outcome measures being adopted. The conclusion is that accreditation is much more effective to the degree that it is well coordinated and recognizing of the various internal quality assurance mechanisms being practiced.

Keyword: Higher Education; Quality Assurance; Accreditation; Comparative Education

Manuscript received: 2010.8.4; Revised: 2010.12.7; Accepted: 2010.12.13
email: hawkins@gseis.ucla.edu