



Canada:

Challenges facing universities today

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Outline

- Students: massification & diversification
- Content and technologies
- Operating costs and productivity
- Operating revenues and capital
- Structural conservatism of institutions
- Confusion around governance
- Concluding thoughts

Students

- Massification: have we developed a K-16 system without realizing it?
- Diversification of student population and accompanying challenges: lack of preparation; language issues
- Divided attention: paying the bills
- Indigenization of campuses
- Immersion in fragmented/non-linear text

Content and technologies

- The “digitization of everything” and the implications of ubiquity: who needs to be where, when
- Transformation of campus IT operations and the
- Data security and robustness of networks

Operating costs & productivity 1

- ◉ Academic salary and benefit scales
- ◉ Downward pressure on teaching loads
- ◉ Union suspicion of variable workload assignments
- ◉ What does CAN \$55 K / year buy?
- ◉ Research impact

Operating costs & productivity 2

- ◉ Sessionalization
- ◉ The end of mandatory retirement

Operating revenues and capital

- Patterns of government support
- Vanishing capital and diminished PMR
- The 60s and 70s come back to haunt us:
deferred maintenance

Structural conservatism

- Agrarian roots
- The “shining city on the hill”: universities as mini-nation states
- Credit transfer and recognition of prior learning
- The academic caste system
- The credit-hour economy and the tripartite degree sequence: obsolescent or obsolete?

Confusion about governance

- The Arcadian view of university management
- "Collegial" governance – failed?
- A vacuum abhorred? – unions rush to fill the governance gap
- Conflicts of interest and commitment

Concluding thoughts 1

- Universities are the “most significant creation of the second millennium the quiet but decisive catalyst in modern society, the factor essential to its effective functioning and well-being.”

-- Frank Rhodes (2001)

Concluding thoughts 2

- “[U]niversities not only are in great need of reform, but their unique structure, circumstances, and culture make such reform a worthy intellectual challenge.”

-- William F Massy (2016)

Thank you!



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