

Editorial

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Editor

Welcome to Volume 2, Issue N^o1 of the Tuning Journal for Higher Education entitled *Policy and implementation: actions for curriculum reform*. This issue aims to address some of those aspects of policy and its implementation that affect the ongoing global reform of higher education. The need for such policies is clearly stated in the opening sentence of the OECD ‘Education at a Glance 2014’ report: “Governments are increasingly looking to international comparisons of education opportunities and outcomes as they develop policies to enhance individuals’ social and economic prospects, provide incentives for greater efficiency in schooling, and help to mobilise resources to meet rising demands.”¹ This report shows that 40% of the population of surveyed countries have undertaken some form of tertiary education. However, the proportion is lowest amongst older members of society. Student mobility is increasing from about 0.8 million in 1975 to about 4.5 million in 2012, especially in the area of higher degrees and research. 12.9% of national public expenditure is on education, with about one quarter of that sum being spent on higher education.

Higher education cannot be reformed by governments acting in isolation. In many cases these policies must operate over a longer timescale than the life of a given administration. Policies must be developed by all stakeholders at all levels ranging from intergovernmental agreements to decisions taken by the director of an individual module. It is probable that the most influential such policy statement was the Bologna Declaration (1999),² initially signed by 31 European jurisdictions. This commitment to harmonise policies to enable the development of the European Higher Education Area took just 970 words. The effects of this Declaration and the

¹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *Education at a Glance 2014: OECD Indicators* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2014), 3, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2014-en>.

² “The Bologna Declaration of the 19th June 1999, a Joint declaration of the European Ministers of Education,” http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/about/BOLOGNA_DECLARATION1.pdf.

changes it promoted and promotes in the higher education area are now being felt in over 100 countries.

This issue tries to address some of these topics. Van der Hijden reviews European policies designed to develop educational ‘markets’ at international level. New initiatives such as the European Student Loan Guarantee Facility and the European Charter for Researchers will drive change by promoting educational and research activities and by improving quality, mobility and co-operation. In particular, he highlights the pivotal future role of doctoral training. Isaacs shows how the perceived benefits of creating transnational areas of higher education in Central Asia can drive partners to try to overcome long and proud traditions of culture and history. Lennon gives an account of the actions amongst the thirteen jurisdictions in Canada, but most notably Ontario, in trying to develop a common understanding and implementation of competence-based higher education. Although Isaacs and Lennon describe processes at federal, governmental and inter-governmental levels, I suspect the ongoing debate they report will resonate with those engaged in such negotiations at sector or even programme level. Vargas argues that lifelong learning principles must be incorporated into higher education policies. This should not only make higher education more inclusive but will address the ‘generation gap’ where a lower proportion of the older population have third level training.

Policy cannot be formed in a vacuum. It requires research. Higher education policy cannot be isolated from those directing secondary or primary education. If we have competence-based education only at third level, students will find the transition from second to third level confusing. De Prada and González report on a research programme applying a methodology developed during the Tuning Higher Education in Europe programme³ to mathematics education for 11 to 14 year olds in Spain. They report not only an increase in performance, but involvement of the teachers in promoting competence-based education.

The final three articles deal with the various stages of policy implementation. Ssentamu describes the development of teacher training standards in East Africa over fifty years, which has resulted in their standardisation and harmonisation at regional level. This review argues that the structure and organisation of the programmes for teacher education have evolved in response to the post-independence cultural landscape. Sackey,

³ Julia González and Robert Wagenaar, eds., *Tuning Higher Education Structures in Europe. Reference Points for the Design and Delivery of Degree Programmes in Education* (Bilbao: University of Deusto, 2009), <http://www.deusto-publicaciones.es/deusto/pdfs/tuning/tuning18.pdf>.

Venkata, Chinyama, Onana, Danwe, Megahed, Delpouve, Chama, Mahomed, Kayibanda, Yakasham, and Müller report on a study within the Tuning Africa project whose aim is to reform Mechanical Engineering higher education in Africa to make it more responsive to that continent's developmental needs. Such cooperation to develop agreed standards is essential to the formulation of good policy. The final article shows how methodologies and policies developed as a result of the international Tuning Latin America project can be applied at programme level. Dias, Fernández, Rubau, and Tovar Toulouse report a case study identifying the competencies required to develop research skills as part of the undergraduate programme in Chemistry. It could be argued that much of the fabric of modern society stems from the competence 'Research Skills in Chemistry'.

The Editorial Board welcomes submission of articles that fall within the compass of this Journal (see www.tuningjournal.org) and in particular articles that would be relevant to the theme of our next issue, Volume 2, Issue N^o. 2, 'The Student Learning Experience'.