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HIGHER EDUCATION AND ITS COMMUNITIES

A Transatlantic View on Openness, Democracy and Engagement

By **Andrée Sursock**

November 2018



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It was agreed that the discussions were under the Chatham House rule of non-attribution. While this essay abides by that rule and does not cite any participant by name, even when they are quoted, institutional examples and case studies are identified, and the participants are gratefully acknowledged for having come prepared to present their institution.

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Executive Summary

The starting point for the 2018 Transatlantic Dialogue was the recognition that the recent political developments in Europe and North America have shown that the combination of holding a higher education degree and living in a university city can be an effective bulwark against the spread of populism and nationalism.

The seminar gathered around thirty presidents, vice-chancellors and rectors (see Appendix) from Canada, Europe and the United States to discuss how universities can best serve their students and their communities while upholding the values of openness and democracy. Based on case studies presented by participants, the 2018 Transatlantic Dialogue examined the civic role of universities and how the contribution of higher education institutions to the political and social debates can be strengthened.

The discussion ranged from looking at new ways of teaching and doing research to new ways of engaging with local communities. Participants broached such themes as ensuring access to higher education, preparing students to be active and constructive citizens, promoting public trust in science and bridging the gap between the university as an “expert institution” and the public.

A key concept that emerged from the discussion was the notion of “integration” when speaking about learning and teaching and research. Importantly, rather than considering service to

the community as a third mission, the Dialogue participants gave numerous examples of a seamless approach to teaching and learning, research and social engagement, whereby social engagement becomes embedded transversally in all activities.

The need to reach out in different ways means that good governance, communication and accountability are crucial in demonstrating the relevance of higher education to local and world problems.

Challenges to institutional leadership are many, including the current chipping away at institutional autonomy and academic freedom in some countries or the erosion of the public trust in higher education in other countries. Institutional leaders must ensure that public perceptions of higher education are realistic and accurate. They must also be adept at initiating social and cultural change both within their institution and in its relationships with its local communities and the State.

This essay explores those aspects and seeks to respond to two underlying questions: How can higher education institutions be initiators of social and cultural change? How can they model open, democratic and engaged communities?

Foreword

This essay is the result of the 15th Transatlantic Dialogue held in July 2018 at the European University Institute in Fiesole, Italy – just outside of Florence. The seminar, organised by the American Council on Education, the European University Association and Universities Canada, and hosted by the European University Institute in Florence, offered a timely opportunity for transatlantic comparisons and a rich dialogue among peers about the role that higher education can play in a politically disrupted world.

At a time when multilateralism is under threat, the choice the European University Institute as the host was fitting as an example of an institution that emanated from the European Union, the example *par excellence* of multilateralism in the recent history of the world.

The choice of Florence – the birthplace of the Renaissance – was equally fitting. In the context of the contemporary international situation, it is good to be reminded of the reasons that historians give in explaining why the Renaissance started in that city-state. They identify its commercial reach, which resulted in its cosmopolitanism; its embrace of Greek refugees who sought protection in the city after Constantinople fell to the Turks and who brought with them manuscripts of ancient Greek texts; its university, which was founded 1321; the academies that multiplied in the city with the support of the local community; and its political organisation that favoured public debate (although, the political organisation was unstable and public debate was limited to the happy few).

The foreword to the essay of the 11th Transatlantic Dialogue (2008) recognised that “higher education leaders around the world face the challenge of looking ahead and leading in an environment in which change is a constant, and turmoil all too ubiquitous.” That foreword reminds the reader that the 2001 Transatlantic Dialogue took place two months before September 11, while the 2008 Dialogue took place about three months before the 2008 financial crisis.¹

Similarly, turbulence and disruption are the key words to describe the situation before, during and after the 2018 seminar. The 15th Dialogue of 2018 focused on how universities and colleges, on both sides of the Atlantic, can best fulfil their missions and serve their communities in such a context. It is hoped that, by capturing the conversation, this essay would constitute a historical record for future transatlantic dialogues.

¹ For the list of previous Transatlantic Dialogue essays, see the reference list under Transatlantic Dialogue.

Contextualising the 15th Transatlantic Dialogue

1

The context for the 15th Transatlantic Dialogue is a world upended by strong social and political winds, which have brought criticism of higher education as the playground of an intellectual and cosmopolitan elite and which place the sector at a crossroads. This chapter presents how Transatlantic Dialogue participants described (1) the political context and (2) its impact on their institution. It draws on supplemental sources to support the seminar discussion while respecting Chatham House rules.

The economic, political and social context

The 1st Transatlantic Dialogue took place nearly thirty years ago, in 1989, a year of optimism that was marked by the fall of the

Berlin Wall and the beginning of democratic reforms in central and eastern Europe. By contrast, the 15th Transatlantic Dialogue took place in an international context that has become increasingly turbulent. “Brexit and the election of Donald Trump – the two biggest protest votes in modern democratic history – marked not so much the arrival of the populist era in western politics but its coming of age.” (Goodhart, 2017, p. 1). Not a day passes without a reminder of this new era. A snapshot of the quick-paced news cycles during the two weeks before and after the Transatlantic Dialogue shows how complex the political situation has been (see Table 1).

Table 1 A fortnight of news – The European and US news cycles between 25 June and 8 July 2018

25 June	<p>European Union member states from Eastern Europe boycott an EU meeting on immigration.</p> <p>President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan wins the presidential elections in Turkey with 53% of the votes and 87% participation. He will enjoy greater executive power after a limitation on checks and balances was agreed by referendum on April 2017. Among them, the parliamentary assembly will no longer have the right to question the government.</p>
26 June	The US Supreme Court confirms the legality of President Donald Trump's travel ban.
27 June	<p>A French ultra-right group is arrested for planning terrorism acts against the Islamic community.</p> <p>The Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babiš announces his plan to form a coalition between the social democrats and the ex-communist party on the day commemorating the victims of the communist regime in former Czechoslovakia.</p>
28 June	US Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy announces his retirement, giving President Trump the opportunity to shift the political balance of the Court.
29 June	<p>The European Union reaches a fragile and vague agreement on immigration, an issue that has become explosive with the results of the recent Italian elections. This issue overshadows the planned discussion on the Merkel/Macron proposal of a more integrated eurozone budget.</p> <p>Two UK citizens are hospitalised after exposure to Novitchock (one of them dies eight days later). The UK government accuses Russia.</p>
30 June	US military intelligence and analysis indicate that North Korea is hiding the full scope of its nuclear programme.
1 July	Austria takes the rotating presidency of the European Union, providing Prime Minister Sebastian Kurz with an opportunity to harden European immigration policies.
2 July	<p>The European Commission initiates a procedure against Poland over its reform of the judiciary which would limit judiciary independence.</p> <p>A Belgian husband and wife of Iranian origin are charged with plotting to bomb a rally of an exiled Iranian group that was held the previous week in France.</p>
3 July	Chancellor Angela Merkel gives in to her CSU coalition partners and hardens immigration policies in Germany.
4 July	<p>The Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, undeterred by the European Commission procedure against Poland, tries to proceed with the reform, despite the opposition of the judiciary.</p> <p>In response to President Trump's new tariffs, the European Union threatens to retaliate and prepares for the possibility that the transatlantic alliance might end.</p>
5 July	<p>A confidential document shows that Austria is siding with the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia in advocating to close the European borders to immigration, including to refugees.</p> <p>Scott Pruitt, Head of the US Environmental Protection Agency, resigns amid charges of conflicts of interest and misuse of public resources.</p>
6 July	<p>Austria, Hungary and Italy urge Germany not to close its borders to immigrants.</p> <p>UK and US business leaders warn their respective governments about the negative consequences of Brexit and the US tariff war.</p>
7 July	The Trump administration faces challenges in trying to reunite families of illegal immigrants who were separated by the US immigration authorities.
8 July	<p>David Davis, the "Brexit minister", and two of his assistants resign after Prime Minister Theresa May imposes a soft Brexit on her government.</p> <p>Europe worries about the impending visit of President Trump to NATO and his upcoming meeting with President Putin in Helsinki. It frets about the capacity to provide a collective response.</p> <p>President Erdoğan fires 18 632 civil servants in Turkey and confiscates their passports. He also closes down 12 NGOs, one TV station and three newspapers. Since the failed 2016 coup d'état, 160 000 civil servants have been fired and 50 000 people imprisoned.</p>

Many (albeit not all) political and economic commentators on both sides of the Atlantic find similarities between the current political period and the 1930s. Parallels include the recession caused by the 2008 financial crisis, the most important economic crisis since 1929, and one that still reverberates in a number of countries; the re-emergence of nationalism, ultra-right parties, European antisemitism, and the ostracism of migrants and refugees; the isolationism that President Trump is promoting, the threat of tariffs, and the weakening of the multilateral global governance that was put in place after WWII.

Furthermore, the 24-hour/7-days-a-week news channels, social media and online platforms have transformed both the way news travels and the pace at which it travels. Importantly, it has shifted part of the responsibility for the news to any owner of a smartphone or a laptop who now has a global reach. Space and time scales have shrunk: The world is smaller, news is instantaneous and in real time. Because it can no longer be curated systematically by professionals and validated by fact checks, it is possible to broad-brush any uncomfortable news as fake news and affirm that the world has now entered the postfactual, post-truth age.

It is against this backdrop that the Transatlantic Dialogue participants discussed the situation in each of their regions. The word “paradox” recurred over and over again in the discussion. The paradox of a growing economic prosperity, but increased inequalities; the paradox of a growing knowledge base and easy access

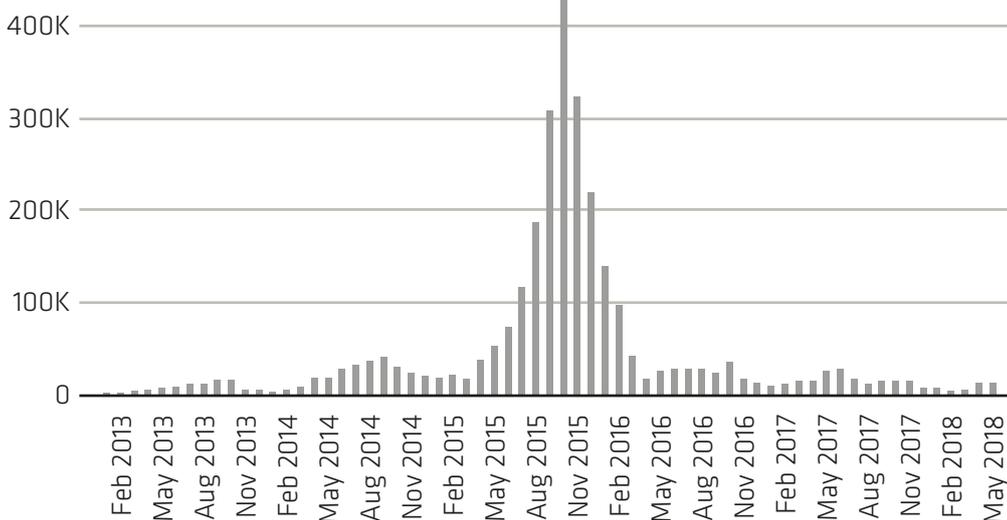
to information, but increased inability to evaluate information; the paradox of a growing proportion of educated people, which had traditionally been seen as the foundation of democracy, but increased doubts about the democratic process itself. The paradox of growing ease of travel, but the continuing rise of nationalism; a growing attachment to national borders and the erections of walls in many countries (see de Maret and Salmi, forthcoming).

On both sides of the Atlantic, the movement of people within countries and between countries is one of the major issues of the day. The population flows from rural and suburban communities toward the cities are creating areas where public services, including higher education, are represented weakly if at all and where residents are feeling abandoned and alienated. The displacement of populations – from south to north and from east to west – due to global warming and the depletion of natural resources, or to war and violence – is one key to understanding the world today.

A former Danish prime minister was quoted as stating, “Immigration is not a crisis, it’s a permanent issue.” Yet, as Figure 1 shows, recent statistics confirm that the “arrivals of migrants and refugees in Europe are down precipitously from their peaks three years ago. But migration is once again the EU’s hottest topic, as domestic politics, particularly in Germany, collide head-on with the failure to revise the bloc’s asylum rules.” (Herszenhorn, 2018)

Figure 1 Trends in the arrivals of migrants to Europe

Source: Cokelaere (2018)



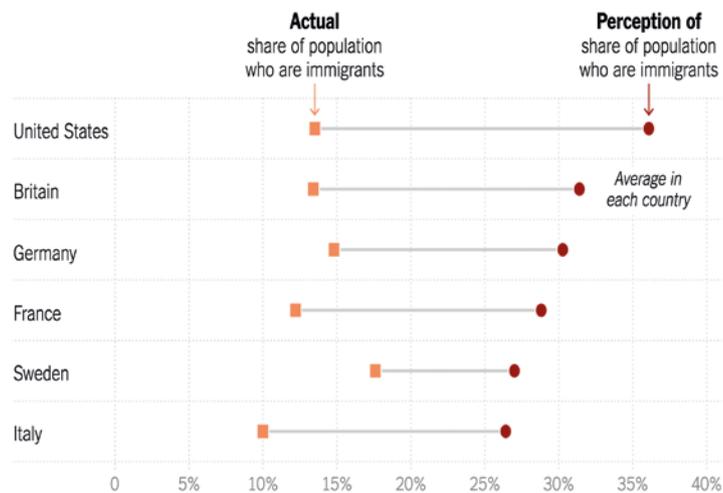
Clearly, as a recent study demonstrated, there is a gap between the actual vs. the perception of the proportion of immigrants (Figure 2). Eduardo Porter and Karl Russell (2018) in an article summarising recent research on the subject wrote: “on both sides of the Atlantic the proposition that immigration amounts to a large-scale threat is gaining ground on the right of the political spectrum... (but) people across the board vastly overstate their immigrant populations.” Based on recent European data, Hanne Cokelaere confirms that “EU citizens routinely overestimate

the proportion of people in their country born outside the bloc. On average, their estimate is double the actual share; in some cases it’s 10 times reality.” (Cokelaere, 2018)

The rise of nationalism and more restrictive visa and immigration regimes have changed the discourse about immigrants and weakened “the taboo of expressing negative sentiments towards those who are culturally different.” (Janmaat, 2016)

Figure 2 Actual vs. perception of share of population who are immigrants

Source: Porter and Russell 2018



Note: For the United States, the number of actual immigrants includes estimates of the illegal immigrant population | Source: “Immigration and Redistribution,” 2018. Alberto Alesina, Armando Miano and Stefanie Stantcheva (Harvard University)

Politically, the major political parties are weakening on both sides of the Atlantic. In a column entitled “Why are so many political parties blowing up?”, American columnist Thomas Friedman notes in *The New York Times* that in the US, the Republican Party is divided while the Democrats are kept together by the overriding desire to defeat President Trump. In Germany, Chancellor Angela Merkel took four months to form a fragile coalition, which risks imploding over immigration. In France, President Emmanuel Macron leads a centrist party that did not exist three years ago and the two historic governing parties (Socialist and Republican) have been side-lined. In the Netherlands, the popularity of the Labour Party went down from 25% to 6% in ten years. In Italy, the mainstream centre-left parties were defeated in the last legislative elections, bringing to power a fragile coalition of populists. In the UK, the Labour Party has veered to the left and the Tories are divided and paralysed over how to implement Brexit. (Friedman, 26 June 2018)

On the economic front, the two shores of the Atlantic are experiencing a growth of meaningless and poorly paid jobs (Graeber, 2018). According to the OECD, a weak labour productivity growth

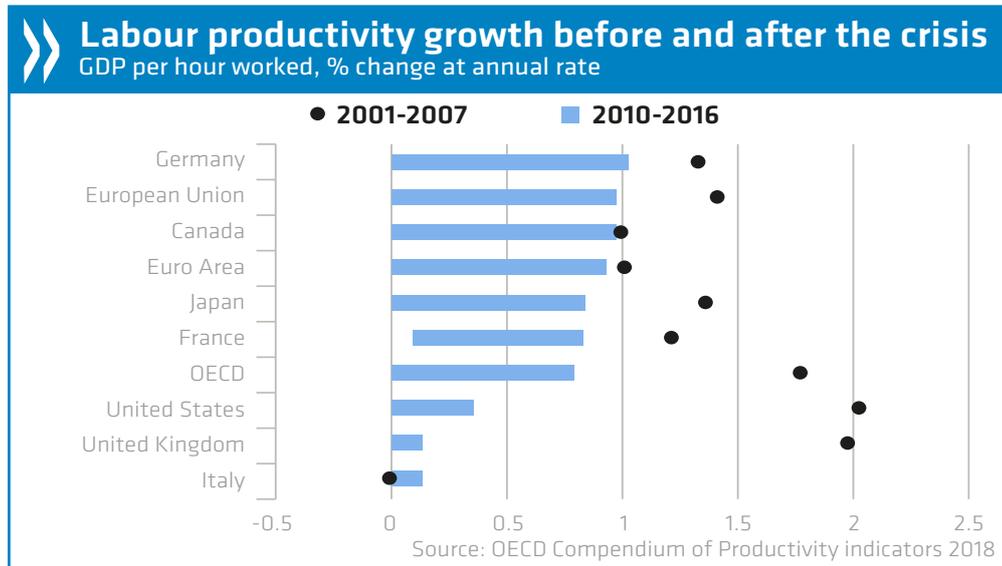
continues to mark the world’s advanced economies and risks compromising improvements in living standards and increasing social inequalities (Figure 3).

This political situation is associated with a stark choice facing citizens: “Exit, Voice and Loyalty”, to quote Hirschman’s celebrated book on consumerism (1970). In a digitalised world, those are polarising options: The choice each citizen makes leads to particular, self-referential echo chambers, curated by his or her favourite media and digital social networks, which reinforce rather than question personal beliefs and values.

Higher education: Shared challenges across the Atlantic

Dialogue participants also expressed concerns about the unprecedented attacks on higher education in the US, the UK and a few countries in continental Europe. While the situation in Canada is more serene, Canadian presidents observed that, depending on its political colouring, a provincial government may find inspiration in some of the attacks on higher education that are occurring

Figure 3 Labour productivity growth



on the US side of the border. This is described in further detail in Chapter 2; for now, to take the UK as an example, the university sector has been under heightened scrutiny by politicians and the media in the past two years. The repeated attacks on the sector led Alistair Jarvis, CEO of Universities UK, to declare that “it’s time to tackle the crisis of confidence in our universities.” He quoted Cabinet Minister and former Education Secretary MP Michael Gove who said during the Brexit debate: “People in this country have had enough of experts.” Jarvis retorted sharply, “It’s time for revenge of the experts... We are society’s truth seekers, building knowledge and promoting understanding must be at the core of our work.” (Jarvis, 2017)

US presidents were concerned about the erosion of public support to higher education. The latest Pew Research Centre Survey in the US (published after the seminar) shows that 61% of Americans feel that higher education is on the wrong path: About 75% of Republicans and 52% of Democrats believe so, albeit for different reasons. Republicans are unhappy about discussions of current social and political issues in the classroom and the concern with political correctness; Democrats are mostly concerned by the high cost of tuition fees. However, both parties agree on the importance of free speech: “Ninety-one percent of Republicans and 86 percent of Democrats said it’s more important to allow people on college campuses to speak freely than to guard students from objectionable ideas.” (Pettit, 2018)

Nevertheless, despite the broad public endorsement of free speech, some US universities and colleges have become battlefields for... free speech. US Dialogue participants reported numerous incidents that have occurred in the past two years, forcing

higher education institutions to come up with crisis management scenarios to deal with unprecedented provocations to violence, including hate speech (see Chapter 2).

European participants noted that academic freedom and institutional autonomy are at risk when, as in Hungary, the government directs its attacks on one institution, the Budapest-based Central European University; or, as in Turkey, where the government dismissed thousands of academics, in many cases suspending their passports, and has passed a law to ensure that all heads of institutions are government appointees.

Globalisation and its discontents: A transatlantic view

This comes at a time when the link between higher education and its local and national communities has been somewhat eroded by globalisation and the heightened competition in the sector. Michael Ignatieff, President of the Central European University (CEU), observes that as a consequence of globalising student and faculty recruitment, “universities became among the most diverse, among the most multicultural and among the most plural of all the global communities.” (Ignatieff, 2018, p. 2)

Taking CEU as an example, Ignatieff emphasises the perverse effect of globalisation and mobility. He noted that CEU is now recruiting from 120 countries because of the declining demography in Eastern Europe and the impact of Schengen on brain drain from East to West. “There’s a complicated sense in which the mobility story that we’re very proud of has had some perverse effects and may be triggering some of the resentment

about the impact of university education on Eastern Europe that we need to think about.” (Ignatieff, 2018, p. 3)

Ignatieff adds another important political twist to the CEU story, one of mounting clashes between the cosmopolitan university and a nationalistic society:

What we didn't see coming at CEU is that we trained the transition elite, a liberal democratic transition elite, but we trained the elite that lost politically. Post-1989, the transition elite, the liberal democratic elite, got pulverised in Hungary's election and a new centre right – conservative, religious, Christian, anti-migration – won. We are now facing all the consequences of having trained an elite that lost. (Ignatieff, 2018, p. 3)

Participants spoke about the impact of international and national rankings, which have pushed some universities to lose their focus on serving the public interest and their local community as they strive to become “world-class universities”. The reduced public funding that resulted in many countries in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis has meant that the financial tie to locality is being lost, particularly for research-intensive universities. The higher rate of tuition fees, notably in the US and the UK, has raised questions about access to higher education, as well as about its quality and relevance to society.

Those tensions are encapsulated in a conversation that a European rector had with a taxi driver in Cambridge, UK, following a meeting of Europe's most research-intensive universities. Speaking of her disadvantageous situation despite Cambridge's flourishing prosperity, the taxi driver noted: “We are not protected in a globalising world, we are losing out to others, we are not participating in prosperity.”² This statement provided a striking contrast to the concluding affirmation of the Cambridge meeting that “We are global universities, the labour market is ours, globalisation is imperative to improve the world.” (van der Zwaan, 2017, pp. 206-207)

The UK debate on globalisation: An example

Until recently, the talk in higher education was all about the need to train students to become global citizens. However, to take the UK as an example, globalisation has come onto the radar of politicians. Quoting Prime Minister Theresa May who stated, “If you believe you're a citizen of the world, you're a citizen of nowhere. You don't understand what the very word ‘citizenship’ means.” In response, a UK newsletter editor wrote:

Since that speech, we've been observing people across the higher education sector express their despair and bemusement at both the remark and the PM's overall political agenda. But is it possible that universities' general opposition to the Prime Minister is indicative of the sector falling out of touch with the prevailing political winds? (Wonkhe, 2017)

The answer, Wonkhe says, is yes. The newsletter observes that, for the first time, at least for this generation, no longer does the university enjoy the automatic support of its community; no longer can it rely on being the clear beneficiary from government policies and largesse. Even worse, the more higher education presents itself as an international actor, the more it stands to lose politically.

David Goodhart, in his book *The Road to Somewhere: The Populist Revolt and the Future of Politics* (2017), contrasts those who are from “anywhere” (liberally-minded graduates, living in a city different from their birthplace) to those who are from “somewhere” (and who have the obverse characteristics). In a review of that book, David Morris of the University of Greenwich, observes:

Even a liberally minded, card-carrying Anywhere like myself can still be startled by hearing for the first time that the University of Nottingham can now be found in Ningbo, China, or that you can walk to the University of Coventry, or Ulster, or Liverpool from our Wonkhe offices in Central London. Modern British universities... were founded on the implicit assumption of being for *some-where*. Now, universities are very comfortable to literally be *anywhere*; or rather, the epitome of Anywhere: London. (Morris, 2017)

“That's all well and good,” says Morris, “but let's not pretend there isn't a cost,” including opportunity costs to being from anywhere: “Though many vice chancellors will argue that a university can be both international *and* rooted in a local community, it's becoming increasingly difficult to pretend that there aren't trade-offs here, as well as a simple question of focus and priorities.” (Morris, 2017)

This echoes the comment of one of the European Dialogue participants who, speaking about the research achievements of his country, noted: “We are very successful academically but very weak politically because we are not seen as serving our country. Excellence without community support is a real challenge.”

Those developments pose several challenges, not least to the most visible part of the sector – the “world-class universities” – and, collaterally, to those aspiring to be inducted in the upper reaches of the higher education sector. More importantly,

² See the captivating article by Horner et al. on “How anti-globalisation switched from a left to a right-wing issue – and where it will go next.”

however, it can paint with a negative broad brush the sector as a whole. This plays out differently in Canada, Europe and the United States as the participants described the situation in their respective regions during the Transatlantic Dialogue.

Higher education: Regional overviews

In the US, higher education has never been so criticised despite the clear economic benefits accrued to graduates. It is perceived as being too expensive, inaccessible and not useful as a tool for social mobility. There is a kernel of truth in each criticism. In 25 years, there has been a 140% increase³ in tuition fees against only 9% increase in real terms of family income. States have disinvested, and colleges and universities have less resources. The 2008 economic crisis has led to significant cuts and higher education budgets have not recovered yet. This is limiting access of minorities, while the debt burden is falling disproportionately on them and on low income students. In addition, in the current politically-charged situation, free speech and liberal-arts education are being weaponised by the critics of higher education.

The situation in Canada is not as bad. The economy is growing, unemployment is down, the government is based on a stable majority and understands and values higher education. Similarly, the Canadian public generally supports higher education and believes in the social benefits of research and education (Universities Canada, 2017). There have been gains in acces-

sibility, emphasis on experiential education and digital learning and increased investment in research in the most recent budget. There are risks, however: the current discussions about NAFTA and trade more broadly, the major socio-political challenges posed by resource extraction; and the economic inequalities notably with respect to the indigenous populations. Furthermore, while Canada is relatively immune from irregular immigration, the risk of xenophobia is still present as resources, especially pertaining to refugee claims, can be strained, thus influencing public perception of immigration.

European higher education has been characterised by intense academic cooperation. This is being challenged by growing inequalities across Europe, with some higher education systems better funded, and some institutions more autonomous than others. A Swiss academic earns 50 times more than a Bulgarian one; northern Europe might be investing up to 4% for research while other countries are investing 0.4%. Added challenges include Brexit, the situation in Turkey, direct threats to the freedom of speech of university leaders, declining funding, increased accountability requirements, with little understanding of the distinction between immediate and long-term impacts. There has not been any recent opinion poll on the issue of public trust in higher education in Europe. However, based on available evidence, and apart from a few countries, the public seem to trust both higher education and academic research, which are considered as essential.

³ The 140% increase represents the unweighted published tuition rates, which does not include any financial aid.

Developing a new social contract

2

The disconnect between the cosmopolitan higher education institution and the more nationalistic segments of society leads to the perception that higher education reproduces existing social hierarchies, perpetuates social inequalities and is the playground of an elite. Sijbolt Noorda, President of the Magna Charta Observatory, rightly warns: “New-style nationalist policies... offer compelling reasons to rethink the social contract underlying higher education, the values driving individual institutions and the priorities of their agendas.” (Noorda, 2018, p. 2)

But has higher education totally lost its values and priorities?

Transatlantic Dialogue participants, well-aware of the need to rethink the social contract with society, have developed a range of actions. They spoke about the need to ensure the quality of the knowledge the sector produces and disseminates, to respond to the digital revolution underway, to promote democracy and improve the quality of life in local communities, and to reconnect with the notion of higher education as a public good rather than simply a workforce development tool. They also discussed the importance of good leadership and autonomy as well as communication with their internal and external communities as conditions for ensuring that the public understands and embraces what they do. Their specific responses to those challenges are explored in this chapter.

Promoting access, outreach and support

Dialogue participants discussed how to ensure equal access to higher education and prepare students to be active and critically constructive citizens. The need to provide quality education to the greatest number of students was described as one of the most important social missions of their institutions.

For most institutions today, this means outreach activities to schools, sometimes starting with kindergarten classes, teaching them about robotics, for instance, as is the case with Tallinn Technical University in Estonia. Saint Mary’s University in Nova

Scotia, Canada has a unique way of reaching out to the public. It provides some of its learning in an unusual setting – the municipal library. This presents an opportunity for any member of the public who wanders in, to sit down and listen.

Grinnel College students in Iowa, USA teach short courses on Saturdays for high school students, who are thus provided with their first contact with the college. In Grenoble, France, with its strong tradition of excellence in physics, the laboratories reach out to schools to talk about physics and their research in an attractive way.

Outreach also means recruiting a more diverse student population and ensuring gender and ethnic balance. Importantly, it means meeting potential students and their parents where they are. As an example, some members of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (ASCU) are now organising outreach to their Hispanic-speaking communities in the form of Spanish-speaking education fairs in partnership with Spanish media. Their students participate in those efforts and are very persuasive when they meet with families of prospective students. Acknowledging that providing access is insufficient, ASCU members support underprivileged students by considering and addressing their personal circumstances, such as limited access to food and housing or specific family situations.

The American Council on Education launched the [Global Attainment & Inclusion Network \(GAIN\)](#) in 2018, in which Universities Canada and the European University Association are involved as partners. The GAIN initiative aims to “create and sustain a highly engaged consortium of global practitioners, exchanging ideas and insights centered on supporting student success and reaching underserved student populations.”

The influx of refugees from Syria stimulated Germany to think about ways to integrate them into German society.

(They) are required to take integration courses – 600 hours of German language classes, as well as 100 hours of classes that cover the German legal system, history and culture. According to the [Migrant Integration Policy Index 2015](#), which uses numerous indicators to measure how much migrants are participating in society, Germany is doing very well. This is particularly true of integrating migrants into the German workforce. (van Lange and Böhm, 2018)

The German higher education sector got involved in teaching refugees. Institutions in other European countries are doing the same. Often, the students are involved in those efforts, as is the case at the University of Zurich in Switzerland. The European University Association keeps track of and supports those activities through its [Refugee Welcome Map](#), a “Good Practice Catalogue” and a range of other initiatives. By November 2018, the EUA Map collected almost 322 initiatives from higher education institutions and related organisations in 32 countries.

Delivering the mission

A central European rector spoke about how increasing participation to higher education did not lead automatically to strengthening a democratic society in the country, implying that there is also a need to teach differently and to provide meaningful learning experiences for students. Many examples were given of new ways of teaching, notably in providing students with opportunities for experiential learning through research and civic engagement and focused on developing such soft skills as teamwork, critical thinking and communication.

The University of Richmond in Virginia, USA – a small, private, liberal-arts, undergraduate college – is focused on providing research opportunities to its students and teaching them to communicate to the public. External funding has been secured to increase the number of minority students and women in the sciences. The students are brought on campus in the summer to work, in small teams, on small research projects; they take courses as a group starting in September. The paradigm for teaching undergraduate courses was changed from “sink or swim” to a more supportive, hands-on approach. This project has been very successful in increasing retention and completion, and many of its graduates find work in science or in public science policy roles. Through the [Bonner Center for Civic Engagement](#), the University of Richmond is also preparing “students for lives of purpose and connects student, faculty, staff and community stakeholders in social change efforts that value the knowledge and potential of our community.”

Maynooth University in Ireland decided to focus its core mission on developing the capacity of critical thought through diversity.

The university was concerned with two social trends: Social sciences and the humanities were losing ground in the mind of the public and providing access was associated with loss of quality for the university. In addition, the university had grown very quickly, and academic staff felt that the learning experience provided by the university was too narrow. The curriculum was restructured, with a great deal of attention paid to the first year. Based on small classes of 25 first-year students, the university introduced a rigorous course focused on critical thinking, evaluating sources, developing research practice, etc. This very successful project yielded several surprises: the power of interdisciplinarity (by mixing students from different disciplines) and the power of social diversity. It demonstrates how potent it is to bring students together for a critical conversation early during their undergraduate years and the impact on students of experiential learning through research.

The Communauté université (ComUE) Grenoble Alpes, a consortium of higher education institutions in Grenoble, launched [CITIZENCAMPUS](#) in 2018. This one-year course is focused on exploring the relationship between science and society and aims at teaching students to engage in public discourse and debate about key scientific challenges. The students are required to explore one theme in depth, through discussions with scientists, NGOs, journalists, entrepreneurs, politicians and citizens.

Grenoble students are also trained as intercultural mediators to go into primary and secondary schools and address issues of discrimination; similarly, the Association of American Colleges and Universities addresses issues of racial healing on campuses based on the W.K. Kellogg Foundation’s [Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation](#) initiative.

A number of universities are providing students with opportunities to develop entrepreneurship and leadership skills. With mentorship from academics and local entrepreneurs, [Pépîte oZer](#), the Grenoble incubator for students, has assisted in the creation of 49 companies in the last three years. Saint Mary’s offers a BA in entrepreneurship and is a member of [Enactus](#), an experiential learning platform, that “helps students unleash their entrepreneurial spirit and develop the talent and perspective essential to leadership in our ever-changing world.”

Many inspirational examples were given of how institutions reached out to their communities by recognising their interests and working with them to address concrete needs. Thus, the University of Zurich continues to support the study of Romansh, a minority language, for its relevance to the local community even though it does not contribute to the university’s international reputation. Engaging with the community is now central to the strategic plan of Simon Fraser University in Canada, East Tennessee State University in the US and the

University of Zurich in Europe, to name just three examples from the three regions.

Community outreach often includes students and contributes to building students' self-confidence and to validating their choices. It also provides the institutions with a seamless way to deliver on their three core missions: teaching, research and service to society.

Cultivating external partnerships has been a focus at Université Laval in Quebec, Canada, which had a major historical role in structuring the Quebec government in the 19th century and ensuring the education of French-speaking students. This tradition of public service allowed the university to move very successfully toward becoming more active in innovation. The approach is based on long-term, deep partnerships with government and industry. The diversity of partners brings with it the capacity to look at the world differently and to increase critical mass. Together with academic staff, external partners identify research areas of common interest and work on them. The university revisited the concept of partnerships with the humanities faculty, which led to identifying social rather than industrial partners and to changing the vocabulary to speak about social innovation. To ensure further support of the humanities for this type of engaged research, the university uses the income from royalties to fund research in the humanities. The four success factors of this initiative include a clear model of partnerships, long-term commitment to partners, recognition of staff involvement and good governance.⁴

The Grenoble consortium used the funding from the French excellence initiative (IDEX) to support 17 research projects, some of which involve the city, students, industry, NGOs and SMEs. Furthermore, like the University of Zurich, the consortium is very active in reaching out to the public through "citizen science" by engaging the end users in social science and public health research. It demonstrates that extending the model of translational medical research to other fields is possible and can be an effective way to integrate research, teaching and end users.

Similarly, McMaster University in Ontario, Canada decided to better engage with its local community, following the decline of the steel industry. The university began by asking the associations in the city about their needs and what the university could do to address them. The city provided a building to house the [City Lab](#), a place where the staff and students of four higher education institutions in Ontario discuss the identified issues. Long-term partnerships based on this work have been built between higher education and the city. This has been a win-win project for the academic staff, the city and, importantly, the

students who are provided with experiential learning that gives additional meaning to their educational experience. The university leadership provides resources to staff and guidance material to anyone interested in working with the university; a number of portals give access to the university activities.

East Tennessee State University in the US has developed an impressive service learning programme as an integral part of the curriculum and requires all first-year students to engage in community service. The university strengthened its connection to its community by opening nurse-managed clinics in rural and impoverished areas of the state. One associated with the NASCAR racetrack sees 5 000 people in two days for medical and dental care.

To signal its commitment to the local community, Grinnell College moved its bookstore downtown. This simple move has stimulated student and faculty traffic into the town and generated some economic windfall to local commerce.

At the University of Leicester in the UK, students receive credits for their pro bono work; they are encouraged, with the help of academic staff, to think beyond their activities and to focus on wider issues. In other institutions, students receive a co-curricular transcript that records achievements outside the classroom or they build a portfolio of the work they have achieved over time.

Integrating: A key concept in mission delivery

One important concept to emerge from the discussion was the notion of integration. Participants promoted integrative learning; that is, using activities in and outside the classroom to provide a stimulating and seamless learning environment to students.

The concept of integration found an echo in the discussion on research as well. Exposing students to research is a way of fostering better learning. The Association of American Colleges and Universities encourages its members to use the very effective model of [Vertically Integrated Project](#) (VIP) developed by Edward Coyle. The VIP research teams unite undergraduate and graduate students along with academic staff to work on specific research projects. Undergraduates are part of a research team for three years; this provides them with an opportunity to develop their research and problem-solving skills. Graduate students and academic staff benefit from having extra pairs of hands to carry out large-scale research.

A US participant mused about the "integrated medical model" and whether it could serve as a template for other disciplines. The integrated model refers to links to the community that are

4 Université Laval, [Chantiers d'avenir](#).

maintained through patient care and delivered in the university hospital; links to the university are maintained through research and teaching activities; translational medicine weaves research and patient care together.

In effect, the School of Transnational Governance at the European University Institute (EUI) is based on such an integrated approach. Its Director, Miguel Poiates Maduro, presented this project in the seminar. He noted that a growing number of universities are creating public policy schools that are focused on national governance. At EUI, considering the importance of both European integration and globalisation, the choice was made to focus on transnational governance. The School brings together students, researchers and practitioners from the private and public sector and policy makers. It is strong on interdisciplinarity and organises such activities as advanced and executive training on a variety of topics; high-level policy dialogues with experts, academics and policy makers; fellowship programmes with specific skills training (fellows come from around the world, have very different profiles and spend three to nine months at EUI); a master programme in transnational governance will be launched soon.

Ensuring academic staff buy-in

How should the future role of academic staff be conceived in this new environment and how can they be motivated to engage in a different way?

A European rector noted:

The new technologies have democratised communication. The position of the university has changed: It no longer has a monopoly on defining what is truth. As strange as it may sound, we need to fight for the scientific definition of what is truth. We have to teach it to students more actively, we do not have an automatic legitimacy. Many academics, however, reject this reality.⁵

In response to this specific challenge, the University of Zurich decided to make the digital revolution a research topic in order “to understand it, use it, and master it.”⁶

The engagement with local communities, the promises of experiential learning and the new digital environment are stimulating new ways of teaching. To support this movement, McMaster University set up an institute to drive learning initiatives and to discuss new ways of teaching. Furthermore, developing

new teaching approaches is not seen as an extra activity, but as inherent to the role and responsibilities of academic staff. At East Tennessee State University, the Office of Service Learning assists in incorporating service learning in all disciplines.

Recruitment and promotion criteria must be in line with those new priorities. However, if academia has developed relatively good indicators to measure research, the same cannot be said for teaching. Nevertheless, there are examples of institutions that are focused on the advancement of teaching through the staff promotion process. For instance, the universities of Maynooth and Leicester have developed a range of promotion criteria to recognise the professional development objectives of each academic staff member. This helps those institutions to celebrate different types of success, not just in research, but also in teaching and engagement.

However, academics are not only evaluated by their own institutions; they are also evaluated by their peers. While recognising that the traditional process of peer review is challenging to those academics who chose to conduct active and engaged research, it is useful to remember that “Making complex ideas readily digestible for a wider audience is perhaps the *most difficult* kind of teaching, one that should be acknowledged not only as a public service, but also as evidence of excellence in teaching.” (Green, 2018). Like Julia Green, many academics are eager to contribute to solving concrete problems. For instance, some are working directly on issues related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Their efforts should be recognised, particularly because higher education institutions, such as the University of Calgary or the University of Zurich (through its [citizen science](#) initiative), university networks⁷ and associations⁸ are starting to document their collective contributions to the SDGs.

Changing the narrative

Dialogue participants addressed the role of universities in ensuring openness, engagement and transparency in their research activities and fostering public trust in science. This has been a hallmark of activities in Grenoble since the 1970s. A number of examples of reaching out to the Grenoble public were presented during the seminar. These included an international forum on well-being, with politicians, academics and the general public discussing the relevance of economic indicators; a public event series to promote awareness of science; the opening of university laboratories to the public, etc. In addition, the Grenoble consortium is a founding and very active

⁵ “Post-truth” was named the 2016 word of the year by Oxford Dictionaries and its popularity remains unabated. A Google search of the word two years later yielded more than 650 million results.

⁶ [UZH Digital Science Initiative](#)

⁷ See an international example, the [Global University Network for Innovation \(GUNI\)](#); a European example, the [Aurora Network](#), and three national examples from [Canada](#), [France](#) and [Switzerland](#).

⁸ <https://eua.eu/issues/24:sustainable-development-goals.html>

member of *The Conversation*, which reaches 38 million readers worldwide.⁹

Other examples of outreach to the public include Simon Fraser University's [Public Square series](#), (Petters 2017), which are high profile events for the community, or the philosophy and [scientific cafés](#) that are organised by a number of institutions, whereby academics meet the public in coffee shops to discuss a research issue and respond to questions from the audience.

The Dialogue centred on common challenges and opportunities for increasing the openness, engagement and transparency of university research activities. While it is relatively easy to show the benefits of applied research, a Canadian president asked what is the best way to convey the importance of blue skies research to the wider public.

The Night of Knowledge is a very popular, European-wide, annual event: Its success demonstrates that the public is curious to learn, including about theoretical subjects, but needs to be given the opportunity. However, as one European rector stated, "while curiosity-driven research can be of interest to the public, it needs to be balanced with empathy to the current issues faced by the public." European research funding is now structured around the notion of "[missions](#)" precisely to convey the idea that research is critical to European citizens' well-being.

A Canadian president suggested that "the public might be ready to support scientific champions in the same way that it supports athletes, provided that we improve our communication to the public and we are less modest about our scientific achievements." The recommendation was made to use other voices, notably those of successful alumni and current students, and to make better use of social media. Indeed, a Simon Fraser University faculty, who analysed the twitter followings of ecology and evolutionary biology faculty in 11 countries, concluded that there is still a great margin of progression in building a social media presence that would positively increase scientific outreach. (Whitford 2018)

The 2018 Edelman Trust Barometer gives two useful recommendations on the use of social media.¹⁰ First, the message must be fit to "the 25 percent of people who amplify content out to the broader majority who are far less engaged. It must be presented in a style that is consistent with digital culture: personal, visual,

informal, and above all, emotional." Second, "Change begins with individuals at the edge of the (digital) network rather than from institutions at the centre" provided "the institutions they work for can enable them." (Rubel, 2018)

Building public trust would help counteract the current attacks on expertise, scientific and factual evidence and on higher education in general. While each institution is working with its local community, the representative associations are stepping in to provide a more powerful megaphone to promote the value of higher education and to back initiatives seeking to regulate scientific integrity and promote open science. The American Council on Education has been developing "multiple messages, in multiple modalities, to multiple segments of the public to promote higher education." Similarly, Universities Canada has organised several communications campaigns around the important role universities play in building a prosperous, inclusive future. The European University Association is promoting open science actively and stepping in to challenge those national government policies that constitute an attack on academic freedom or institutional autonomy and to support actions protecting scholars and students at risk. All three associations are active on the advocacy side. Equally, they and their members are conscious that self-regulation and external accountability are important in bolstering the legitimacy of the sector.

Preserving institutional autonomy

"Communicating to the community and partnering with it will remove the mystery of the ivory tower but the more you interact with your community the more they will feel ownership" warns one of the participants who adds: "There is a need to balance partnership with autonomy."

Without autonomy, institutions would lose the trust of the public because they would be seen as too close to the political arena. Unbiased knowledge, based on rigorous and autonomous inquiry, guarantees that science is not just another opinion and it is precisely thanks to academic freedom and autonomy that universities can be seen as serving the public interest. This comes with the responsibility of ensuring scientific integrity and being accountable.

Autonomy has various aspects, as analysed by the [EUA Autonomy Scorecard](#): organisational, financial, staffing and academic autonomy. While the Scorecard captures a specific situation, at one point in time, various participants emphasised the ebb and flow of autonomy. This is a dynamic concept describing the relationship among three partners – higher education, the State, and the public – a relationship that is essentially unstable and changing over time. As stated by one participant: "One is never sure where we are on the continuum between autonomy and

⁹ *The Conversation* publishes articles, for a lay public, that are written by academics on their research and on current economic, health, political and social issues. See reference list for a few examples of articles. *The International Panel on Social Progress* is another international initiative, stemming from Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School and the French *Fondation Maison des sciences de l'homme*, that unites 250 leading researchers from social sciences and the humanities. Its mission: "Developing solutions to the most pressing challenges of our time." (www.ipsp.org)

¹⁰ For the full report, see <https://www.edelman.com/trust-barometer>

erosion of autonomy; therefore, it is important to support the [Magna Charta Observatory](#).”

Threats to autonomy can come from various sources. In the US for instance, public funding is declining, and the power of private money can erode institutional autonomy, as in the case of a university that received multimillion-dollar donations with strings attached, including in academic staff recruitment (Green and Saul, 2018). Today, however, in the words of a Dialogue participant, “The fundamental threat in the US is the tactical and systematic erosion of the basis of autonomy by the politicisation of the campuses and the instrumentalisation of fake news. Revealingly, higher education is not the lone target: The press is also under siege. This is also happening on the other side of the Atlantic, in Turkey.”

Negative public perceptions of higher education can also trigger governmental interference. The controversy about “micro-aggressions”, “safe space” and “snowflake” students has spread from the US to the UK and is now a rising issue in Canada. Micro-aggressions are caused by triggers; for instance, in a classroom, they are stimulated by speech that reminds a student of a past trauma. In an attempt to avoid an emotional response and to create a safe space, teachers started to use “trigger warnings” when they wanted to broach sensitive subjects. This is leading to attacks (including from high government officers¹¹) that students are becoming snowflakes; that is, they melt easily and have no resilience.

In the UK, the past years have seen questions raised about vice-chancellor and senior staff officer pay; the three-month summer “holidays” of academics; the high tuition fees, which are purportedly set by a secret cartel; the number of students saddled with debt, which is leading politicians to compare higher education funding to a Ponzi scheme; entry standards for international students; grade inflation; as well as graduate underemployment and low salaries and, hence, the allegedly poor value for money of British higher education. Recently, a member of parliament requested all vice chancellors for details on anyone teaching about Brexit. This was resisted by the sector, although 28 universities cooperated in providing information on most or all of what was asked for.¹² Thankfully, Prime Minister Theresa May and the media sided by the universities.

Apart from these general attacks, specific situations were described that reflected a changing relationship to the State, and that undermined institutional governance and taxed institutional leadership.

In a Canadian case, provincial authorities are stripping the power of boards of governors and discussing issues of presidents’ compensation. They see this as essential safeguards to avoid problems that have not materialised yet. Freedom of speech on campuses is now an issue, based on what is happening in the US: In this case the province is threatening to cut down research funding if freedom of speech is not respected. It also wants to increase the number of provincial appointees on boards even though in this particular case they constitute already half of the board membership. This echoes the experience of a US university president whose entire board is made up of state appointees, leading to significant political swings as state governors come and go. It also means that the president currently faces the challenge of working with board members who have little prior experience in board management.

In other cases, institutions are asked to shoulder police functions by reporting illegal immigrants for instance. This raises a number of questions that today’s university leaders have to consider. How to balance social engagement and police functions? To what extent should universities, as agents of government, become an arm of the State? Is it not a characteristic of an authoritarian state to put higher education in that role? What are the boundaries and the conditions for engaging with those issues?

In the UK, [Prevent](#) is a police initiative designed to thwart terrorism and extreme radical views from becoming dangerous to society. This policy requires universities to abide by a series of regulations: for instance, alert police of dangerous situations and allow public speakers on campus, provided speeches are videotaped and a senior officer is in attendance. Although universities have responded to those requests, this policy raises questions about where to draw the line.

In the US, both the travel ban and the DACA discussion¹³ have generated a debate about how universities and colleges should respond. Specifically, how should they balance the need to protect the right of the students while respecting the law. Many petitions were signed asking institutions to set limits on police intrusion and become sanctuaries in the hope that sensitive locations (such as educational and health institutions) continue to be respected by the Department of Home Security and that the institutions are able to reassure students that the campus is a safe place.

11 For instance, in a recent speech US Attorney General Jeff Sessions “sharply criticized American universities, saying they were coddling students and creating a ‘generation of sanctimonious, sensitive, supercilious snowflakes.’” (Jacobs, 2018)

12 See <https://www.bbc.com/news/education-42431780>

13 The travel ban refers to the Trump administration ban on arrivals of visitors from several Muslim countries. DACA refers to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. The Trump administration has threatened to end this policy that allows qualified individuals who were brought to the US illegally to receive a two-year renewable residence and work permit. The [American Council on Education](#) has been in the forefront to defend the students affected by that policy.

Engaging with the campus community

Nevertheless, the notion of the institution as a sanctuary can be threatened by the irresponsible behaviour of its own students or faculty. In one US institution, for instance, a student posted a Facebook message giving a date to kill an officer of the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE), which brought the FBI to the campus but also – surprisingly – ICE.¹⁴ Some US student groups are guided by national organisations to commit acts of provocation; US university presidents report seeing more hateful flyers, posters and graffiti on campuses. In general, the institutions seek to remove them quickly and seize those occurrences as teaching moments. In France, a student occupation of a law school led the dean to unleash a hooded, far-right militia, equipped with baseball bats, to evacuate the students *manu militari*. This was caught on smartphone cameras, with serious legal and political consequences.

US campuses are encouraged to be mindful of the law and to apply the [Statement on Principles of Free Expression](#), developed by the University of Chicago. Clear policy and processes are essential. After a number of violent incidents on US campuses, the American Council on Education put together a playbook to help presidents deal with controversial situations. It recommends that institutions review all their internal processes for clarity and consistency; involve staff in “table-top simulations” and develop appropriate communication pathways, notably by reaching out to students likely to stage provocative events and working with student advisors to anticipate problems.

The controversy about trigger warnings and safe space have led “students to confuse comfort with safety” said a US participant, “and to decreased support, on the part of some US students, for free speech.” To deal with this as well as the range of potentially more violent issues of hate speech, some institutions have started organising speaker series that include controversial speakers, staff development to provide support on how to use diversity in the classroom and training to students to facilitate difficult discussions with people who hold different points of view. A guiding principle to their action is that “free inquiry is indispensable to the good life, that universities exist for the sake of such inquiry, [and] that without it they cease to be universities,” as University of Chicago President Robert Maynard Hutchins affirmed in 1935 (Tierny and Lechuga, 2005).

As a result, the number of provocative events has significantly decreased, but such situations – fraught with tensions and violence – are very taxing on the institutional leadership, which must decide when and how to respond as the community is looking for an effective and moral leadership.

Endorsing an effective, moral leadership

Participants discussed the leadership implications for dealing effectively with fraught situations. They spoke of the importance of an effective and moral leadership.

The effective leader is one who sets priorities, mobilises staff who are committed to social engagement and responsibility and celebrates their successes thanks to a diverse set of promotion criteria. The effective leader provides resources to incentivise bottom-up initiatives – whether they come from students or staff – and provides staff development and student support as appropriate. The effective leader meets the various campus constituencies where they are, and promotes the development of a good communication strategy, one that is inclusive of all segments of the community: alumni and students, faculty and staff.

Moral leadership has several dimensions. It starts with the leader embodying a moral compass, modelling behaviour, providing guidance on a range of activities. It requires disclosure and transparency, standing up for facts, being honest about what the leader can and cannot achieve and being accountable to the public by publishing quality assurance results.

It is about promoting a “trust institution”, to use the words of a Canadian participant; that is, one that is characterised by free and open inquiry and scientific research integrity. It is about enlarging the discourse beyond instrumentalism of higher education to speak about broader values, talking about intent of learning rather than just content of teaching. It is about both intervening appropriately in times of crisis and ensuring good governance daily. Most importantly, it is about building a community based on a culture in which social responsibility is valued and expected, and on the understanding that trust is built upon relationships, which requires working with all segments of the external and campus community and mobilising the energy and interests of all.

¹⁴ ICE is not supposed to enter educational, religious and health institutions.

Promoting a socially responsible institution

3

The civic institution

“Rankings are interesting for reputation but in many ways are meaningless. If we want to counter anti-intellectualism and anti-elite views and demonstrate ways in which we connect to community, we need to do something more,” said one Canadian participant. This “something more” is captured in the motto of

the University of Regina in Saskatchewan – “Together, we are stronger” – and that of the University of Zurich – “Created by the will of the people”. These mottos encapsulate the notion of the university as a civic institution and capture an institutional culture that promotes, expects and values social responsibility and societal engagement.

Table 2 The dimensions of a civic university

Source: Goddard *et al.*, 2016

Actively engaged with the wider world as well as the local community of the place in which it is located.

Holistic approach to engagement, seeing it as an institution-wide activity and not confined to specific individuals or teams.

Strong sense of place, recognising the extent to which location helps to form its unique identity as an institution.

Sense of purpose, understanding not just what it is good *at*, but what it is good *for*.

Willing to invest (time, people and resources) in order to have impact beyond the academy.

Transparent and accountable to its stakeholders and the wider public.

Innovative methodologies such as social media and team building in its engagement activities with the world at large.

Rather than considering service to the community as a third mission, the Dialogue participants gave numerous examples of a seamless approach to teaching and learning, research and social engagement.

Ellen Hazelkorn (2016) represented graphically the shift from “engagement as a third pillar” to “engagement as horizontal linking teaching and research” (Figure 4). Her diagram was endorsed by Dialogue participants who recognised that this new rule for social engagement was implicit in their discussion.

Dialogue participants recognised that there is an appetite for change, whether it comes from the external community, the students or the academic staff. Building on the vital energy of

those groups and meeting them where they are can stimulate a momentum for change within the institution.

Key elements of engagement

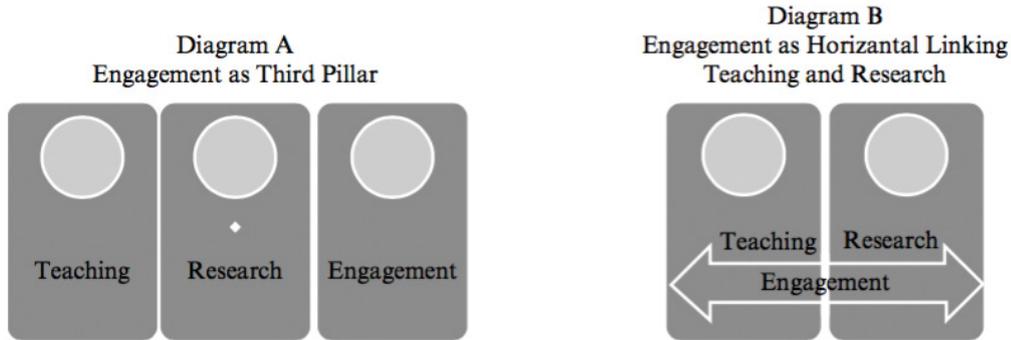
The actions that are described in Chapter 2 are captured in Table 3.¹⁵

The general impression from the 15th Transatlantic Dialogue, particularly by comparison to previous Dialogues, was the extent to which common questions and challenges were shared across the three regions and across different types of institutions.

¹⁵ See also de Maret and Salmi, forthcoming.

Figure 4 Shift to a transversal model of engagement

Source: Hazelkorn 2016, p. 73



Nevertheless, the key elements for engagement would require institutional adaptation by type. Also, it might be difficult for some institutions to take on all those tasks alongside their core business when funding is tight. Furthermore, the key elements would need further elaboration, notably in relation to five shared challenges.

Five shared challenges

First, there are still margins of progression in relation to reaching out to and communicating with all segments of the public. "Large institutions and the globalisation of higher education have not served people well and the question is how to appeal locally. We do a good job at reaching out but not a very good job at communicating what we do," said a European rector. He added, "it is not enough to engage with the 'community'. We

need to engage with all of its segments, particularly the boys from the white working class, which we have tended to ignore."

Second, as Ignatieff noted, if higher education has been successful at globalising student and faculty recruitment (as mentioned in the introduction) and at reaching out internationally, it has been less successful at globalising the curriculum:

We basically taught Western North Atlantic social science to a lot of eager people from other societies. We taught human rights in Myanmar from the outside. Did we teach human rights in Myanmar from the Myanmar side of the story, as controversial and difficult as that is? Not so much. Globalisation was very much from here to there, and not in a pedagogical dialogue that would change our curriculums. (Ignatieff, 2018, p. 3)

Table 3 Key elements of engagementSource: Goddard *et al.*, 2016

1. Be inclusive.
2. Train ethical and socially responsible graduates and ensure the ethical behaviour of staff and of the institution itself.
3. Focus on graduates' soft-skills, including critical thinking and out-of-the-box thinking skills.
4. Promote social engagement in the community: Provide opportunities for experiential learning, traineeships and internships, lifelong learning and upskilling.
5. Consider the purposes and objectives of internationalisation in line with social engagement in the community.
6. Engage in socially-relevant research and promote curiosity-driven research.
7. Persist in providing scientific evidence for policy makers and the public.
8. Align promotion criteria with the high purpose of being a responsible, sustainable and engaged institution.
9. Ensure that the institution is environmentally sustainable.
10. Come up with quality indicators that promote integrity and trust.

Contextualising knowledge might be achieved by, for instance, developing digital-based courses, which would require students from different continents to work on specific projects.

That being said, Ignatieff's questioning of the link between the international and local dimensions in the curriculum can be broadened. Indeed, if the overarching goal is to promote both local and international relations, should the purposes and objectives of internationalisation strategies be rethought to provide a more integrated approach to mission delivery? Another way of stating this is to note that, in its mature form, internationalisation is embedded in an institution's approach to teaching and research rather than a stand-alone strategy. If, as noted above, engagement is now embedded in a similar fashion rather than standing apart as a third mission, would it make sense to integrate, or at least link, those two transversal dimensions: internationalisation and engagement? This might ensure that the imperatives guiding engagement with society would also permeate internationalisation. It would avert having two sets of values and purposes – one for engagement and one for internationalisation – with the ever-present danger of internationalisation unmooring institutions from their local communities.

Third, while the future of lifelong learning in a changing labour market was not a topic of discussion, it remains an important challenge for institutions. As many papers and studies have pointed out, given the quick pace of change in the demand for new skills, the increased use of artificial intelligence and robotics in many sectors, the workforce will need continuous training to adapt to a rapidly changing labour market. Danielle Paquette (2018) writes about an interesting experiment that has started at the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business. The school launched a scholarship program to fund opportunities for its graduates to take classes there forever. She cites the school dean as saying "What is now true for a Michigan Ross student is your tuition is an upfront subscription, and that subscription happens to be for life... We see our relationship with students not as a transaction but as a lifetime partnership." (Paquette, 2018) This is not an isolated view. The Provost of the Questrom School of Business at Boston University points out: "The original meaning of the word 'alumnus' in Latin is 'foster child.' In a world where students never really graduate, the role of the university is to take lifelong care of them, as we would take care of our true foster children." (Dellarocas, 2018)

Fourth, the development of information and communication technology led to improving modes of delivery and the campus experience. A number of institutions – albeit far from being the majority – are now addressing how to build a healthy democracy in a social media age. This involves teaching digital literacy, developing critical thinking and citizenship. Ensuring student and staff buy-in is critical to those efforts and require resources

and targeted support. The experience that is building in this area should be shared more broadly within the sector in order to bolster the effect on local, national and global communities. This is essential in an era of post-truth and easy access to online platforms that disseminate falsehood at breakneck speed.

Fifth, quality and the traditional model of higher education delivery must be addressed. One European participant emphasised that "the need to recognise that the pressure to publish on researchers – young and old – is producing too many irrelevant publications that cast a shadow on the relevance and quality of research results." Furthermore, research performance indicators are too often based on international publications; this can potentially lead to a loss of local or national support; and the traditional peer-review process reinforces faculty disengagement from local and social issues. In general, as a European participant pointed out, "In public debate, we talk about quality as if we know how to measure it. We need to measure higher education's value-added in a diverse way and, at the same time, change our organisational structure." He asked, "Is the traditional, Humboldtian model of higher education still viable with 50% participation in higher education?"

Parting words

The seminar ended with the affirmation of a shared commitment to the transformational power of higher education and to continuing this discussion: These five challenges can be tackled through international cooperation and dialogue. The 15th Transatlantic Dialogue demonstrated the power of networking and international exchange while emphasising a key message. As summarised by a US participant, "higher education can do more, not by speaking more loudly, but by re-establishing trust with its communities, and by promoting democracy." This necessitates not only delivering on its mission but also modelling good governance and principled leadership. Ethics and integrity are more important than ever before to the future of higher education and its standing.

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Transatlantic Dialogue participant list

Appendix

Higher education and its communities: openness, democracy and engagement

The 15th Transatlantic Dialogue

European University Institute, Fiesole, Italy (Florence)
1-4 July 2018

Canada

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Elizabeth Cannon, President, University of Calgary, Alberta
Sophie D'Amours, Rector, University of Laval, Quebec
Paul Davidson, President and CEO, Universities Canada, Ontario
Patrick Deane, President, McMaster University, Ontario
Philip Landon, Vice President, Universities Canada, Ontario
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Peter Ricketts, President, Acadia University, Nova Scotia
Robert Summerby-Murray, President, Saint Mary's University,
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Vianne Timmons, President, University of Regina,
Saskatchewan

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Ulrike Beisiegel, President, Georg August University of
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Paul Boyle, Vice Chancellor, University of Leicester, United
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The 15th Transatlantic Dialogue took place in July 2018 at the European University Institute in Florence, Italy. Organised by the European University Association, the American Council on Education and Universities Canada, the event gathered around thirty university presidents, vice-chancellors and rectors from Canada, Europe and the United States. It offered a timely opportunity for transatlantic comparisons and a rich dialogue among peers about the role that higher education can play in a politically disrupted world. Participants discussed how universities can best serve their students and their communities while upholding the values of openness and democracy. They also examined the civic role of universities and how the contribution of higher education institutions to the political and social debates can be strengthened.

The Transatlantic Dialogue series is a long-standing joint initiative by EUA and its transatlantic partners. It brings together university leaders from both sides of the Atlantic to engage in in-depth discussions on current and shared opportunities as well as on the challenges faced by universities in advancing higher education, research and innovation. The Transatlantic Dialogue is vital to EUA's efforts to foster exchange and cooperation with universities and university organisations in other parts of the world. The first Transatlantic Dialogue was held in 1989 in the United States.

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