

## *Preface*

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THE ESSAYS brought together in this volume were initially presented at the Princeton Conference on Higher Education, held on the Princeton University campus in March 1996. Though the essays cover a considerable range of subjects, they are clustered around the topics of accountability and the nature of the relationships that exist, or should exist, either between the contemporary university and the society it serves or among different elements of the academic community.

### **The University Overall**

Frank Rhodes's essay, "The University and Its Critics," confronts a number of the contemporary criticisms—informed and uninformed—of the American university (e.g., fragmentation, trivialized scholarship, political correctness), considers how the American university has changed over recent decades, and suggests a number of principles that in part respond to the criticisms but in any case would enhance the vitality and social usefulness of these institutions. Rhodes underlines the importance of viewing scholarship as a public trust, taking seriously the university's obligation for service, and the characterization of teaching as a moral vocation. The essay concludes with a more tactical view: a kind of action plan designed to restore public confidence by reasserting control over an increasingly fragmented curriculum, rekindling the bonds of community within the university, and giving greater evidence of the university's ability to articulate and implement its priorities.

Martin Trow's essay, "On the Accountability of Higher Education in the United States," begins with a careful articulation of what is meant by accountability and responsibility to others and then proceeds to deal in detail with current forms of academic accountability, both internal and external, and a set of alternatives (e.g., trust versus market mechanisms) or supplements to current practice. One of the most powerful parts of the essay deals with what universities ought to consider regarding their own programs of internal accountability or quality control.

### **The Presidency**

Harold Shapiro's essay, "University Presidents—Then and Now," is (in the opinion of the other author of this preface) a fine blend of the

personal insights of a man who has served with distinction as president of both a public and a private university and an historical account of changes over time in the day-to-day lives of university presidents. Based on study of the archival records of four university presidents—Wayland (of Brown), Eliot (of Harvard), Angell (of Michigan), and Wilson (of Princeton)—the essay points out the obvious and less obvious ways in which the functions of the office have changed in direct response to far broader changes in society and in society's assumptions about the role of universities. Shapiro is particularly interested in the ethical aspects of the role of president and argues persuasively that "in the more complex modern university, this ethical dimension of presidential leadership has evolved from a more strictly delimited and almost rule-governed activity into a more diffuse but no less significant role of helping to set the moral tone for the academic community—and beyond—via one's choices, policies, actions, and words." In Shapiro's view, there has been a tendency for modern presidents to neglect the task of providing this more subtle yet all-embracing kind of moral leadership—a loss that he believes we must begin to repair.

In her companion essay to Shapiro's, Hanna Gray combines her skills as an historian, her experiences as president at Yale and Chicago, and her sage and witty observations of the human condition. The result is an arresting contribution that is both great fun to read and highly instructive. She recounts, with particular effect, speeches of two of her predecessors at Chicago, Harper and Hutchins, to demonstrate that modern-day notions of the limitations on the power of the president and the need for consultation are in fact far from new. The alleged "giants" of yesteryear certainly knew the meaning of the word *constrained*. Gray is particularly eloquent in discussing the reasons why it would be "inappropriate for presidents to see the function of moral guidance as their rightful role" and why those who "deride" the presidents' "pusillanimous caution" would be infuriated if the president did, in fact, do what they ask. In her view, the president's major role is as an "enabler," and the virtue to be defended above all others is intellectual integrity.

## The Faculty

Henry Rosovsky and Inge-Lise Ameer's essay, "Professional Conduct of College and University Teachers," focuses on the important but much neglected issue of the need for a shared code of conduct for college and university professors. The authors' concern is the apparent lack of agreement among college and university teachers about

appropriate standards of professional conduct toward students, colleagues, and others. The authors speculate about the source of this deficiency and the lack of any formal or informal instruction in these matters and then move on to suggest how the professoriate might in fact remedy this situation. The essay concludes with some appropriately provocative and interesting case studies that provide useful illustrations of the issues at hand.

Amy Gutmann's essay titled "How Can Universities Teach Professional Ethics?" focuses on the difficult practical issue of how a college or university might, in fact, structure instruction in professional ethics for professors. Gutmann's thoughtful and challenging essay provides an excellent articulation of the difficult issues—conceptual as well as practical—that one would encounter in actually implementing the Rosovsky-Ameer program. She then proceeds to offer her own action agenda, which consists of three items: first, the serious efforts that must be made to articulate and then incorporate the ethics of higher education in our institutional rules and procedures; second, the development of rigorous but broad-based courses in practical ethics in the undergraduate curriculum; and third, the provision of equally rigorous but more specialized courses in professional ethics to future members of the professoriate (i.e., graduate students).

Oliver Fulton's essay, "Unity or Fragmentation, Convergence or Diversity," discusses the change in internal conditions, understandings, and aspirations at universities—particularly among the university and college faculty—that resulted as higher education in Europe entered the "mass higher education era." The data underlying this analysis, which focuses on the United Kingdom, western Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden, are drawn from the 1992 Carnegie survey of the academic professions. The Carnegie survey covered fourteen countries, including the United States. The author is particularly interested in the differences, if any, that these changes in circumstances may have generated by country, by academic discipline, by institutional type and sector, or by national system. The essay therefore focuses primarily on the changes in the internal life of the university that may have been caused by the great expansion of this sector. The specific issues addressed concern the value orientation of the faculty, faculty involvement in teaching and research, faculty involvement in governance, and the overall levels of satisfaction of university faculty. The results are mixed in the sense that while differences in response are clearly visible in the various countries, further analysis may be required to understand the full nature and causes of these discrepancies. Clearly, however, the null hypothesis of "no difference" seems an inadequate explanation of the data.

## The Planning and Oversight of Science

Daniel Kevles's essay, "A Time for Audacity," is much more than a call for the community of scientists, particularly university-based researchers, to put forward a new vision of the role of research and development as America faces the post-Cold War era. The essay begins by providing a fascinating historical perspective on the research partnership between the American government and the community of research performers—particularly the university sector—which has been so crucial to both America's continued leadership in science and technology and the shape and growth of American higher education in the post-World War II era. The author then provides a detailed analysis of developments in more recent years that serve as a necessary prelude or set of initial conditions for consideration of the feasible options in the years ahead, both for the scientific community and the government. Kevles concludes by pointing to the crucial role the scientific community has played in helping shape U.S. public policies in previous times of change and calling for similar efforts today.

Frank Press's essay focuses on the shifts that have taken place in the past few years, giving special attention to how the two major political parties have shifted—almost interchanged—their perspectives on federal responsibility for the vitality of the nation's research and development base. Press concludes with a set of well-thought-out and provocative suggestions regarding a mechanism for obtaining an optimal allocation of federal research resources in a time of budget austerity.

Maxine Singer's essay addresses two particular implications of the current situation: the extraordinary set of opportunities that has been created by the scientific advances of recent years and the increasing internationalization of the scientific enterprise. Singer also worries about the capacity of the different scientific disciplines to set internal priorities and also participate in effective and responsive communication with the general public. Taken together, the Kevles, Press, and Singer essays provide a valuable range of insights that can stimulate and guide the current national discourse on the planning and oversight of science from the perspective of public policy.

We wish to thank the authors of this volume for their thoughtful contributions to the Princeton Conference on Higher Education, and to our better understanding of the evolution of higher education.

William G. Bowen  
Harold T. Shapiro

## *Contributors*

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Inge-Lise Ameer is a doctoral candidate at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

William G. Bowen is president of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and president emeritus of Princeton University.

Oliver Fulton is professor of higher education at Lancaster University in Great Britain.

Hanna H. Gray is professor of history at and president emeritus of the University of Chicago.

Amy Gutmann is Laurance S. Rockefeller University Professor of Politics at Princeton University.

Daniel J. Kevles is J. O. and Juliette Koepfli Professor of the Humanities and Director of the Program in Science, Ethics, and Public Policy at the California Institute of Technology.

Frank Press is principal of the Washington Advisory Group, trustee, and the Cecil and Ida Green Senior Fellow at the Carnegie Institution of Washington.

Frank H. T. Rhodes is president emeritus of and professor of geological sciences at Cornell University.

Henry Rosovsky is Geyser University Professor Emeritus at Harvard University.

Harold T. Shapiro is president of and professor of economics and public affairs at Princeton University.

Maxine Singer is president of the Carnegie Institution of Washington.

Martin Trow is professor of public policy at the Richard and Rhoda Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley.