

# THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

IN THE UNITED STATES.

## A CITIZEN DISCUSSION REPORT

Edited by Tim Steffensmeier
With Developmental Assistance from Jeff Prudhomme

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## The Future of Higher Education in the United States

Copyright © 2012 Interactivity Foundation, some rights reserved Editor: Tim Steffensmeier, Kansas State University Copy Chief: Chana Garcia

Art Director: Calida Garcia Rawles

	TYPICAL POLICY REPORTS	<i>IF</i> CITIZEN DISCUSSION REPORTS
WHY	To make or influence immediate decisions	To provide a starting point for exploratory discussions
WHAT	<ul><li>Analysis of a problem</li><li>Recommendations for solutions</li></ul>	<ul><li>Areas of concern</li><li>Diverging possibilities</li><li>Possible outcomes</li></ul>
WHO	<ul> <li>Experts and representatives of interest groups</li> </ul>	Expert-specialists and citizen-generalists
HOW	<ul> <li>Public discussions</li> <li>Decisions made by compromise or consensus</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>In "sanctuary"</li> <li>Freedom to speak openly</li> <li>Focusing on ideas, not personalities or participants' interests</li> <li>Decisions made through convergence while preserving contrasts</li> </ul>

# Thinking About the Future of Higher Education as an Area of Public Policy Concern



In the United States, we tend to agree widely about the need to provide universal access to education from K–12. But what does society want and expect from education that begins after high school?

Who should receive higher education? How should we make decisions about who gets access to higher education? Who decides what counts as "higher education"? What, if anything, should be done to stop education systems from widening social disparities? How might we manage the benefits, or harms, that could be created by educational institutions? Who should benefit from higher education? Who should be accountable for the benefits or quality of higher education?

Should higher education be oriented to the common good? Or, should it be designed to produce individual excellence or individual advancement? To what degree should higher education be focused on issues and problems shared by a community? To what degree should it be focused on playing a major role in the individual development of people? What role should it play in our economy?

With the many advances in communication technology, how might new media and new technologies impact higher education? How might we better create and deliver educational content in these new media? How might these new media impact the cost-effective delivery of higher education?

Notes:	

How might we measure the quality of higher education? How might we know what is working and what isn't? What might success look like for all involved in higher education? Who might be accountable for achieving this success? Who might control, and be answerable for, the content and quality of instruction?

Questions and concerns such as these animated a yearlong citizen discussion project of the Interactivity Foundation: The Future of Higher Education in the United States. Sixteen residents of Manhattan. Kansas, met in two small groups on a monthly basis in 2010-2011 to discuss the long-term future of higher education in the United States. The goal was to develop broad policy possibilities that could overlap, complement, or contradict one another. These policy possibilities are intended to serve as "conversation starters" for other group discussions around the country and on various college campuses. The group of citizens who developed these possibilities did their best to start with an open mind about what "higher education" could be, so there was no attempt to define higher education. They essentially considered higher education to be any education beyond post-secondary levels or beyond what we normally refer to as high school.

The participants focused primarily on higher education in the United States; however, they found it difficult to talk about an education system that starts and stops at national borders.

# Thinking About the Future of Higher Education as an Area of Public Policy Concern



The Interactivity Foundation supports the creation of policy possibilities through a citizenbased discussion process. Typically, two panels of citizens (an expert and a generalist group) meet for approximately one year to have productive and enjoyable discussions. These sessions yield a series of contrasting policy possibilities that are detailed in this discussion guide.

At the end of a yearlong discussion process, the two groups of panelists gathered as one large joint discussion panel. That conversation created the policy possibilities that are presented on the following pages. As you proceed through these possibilities, you might feel awash in ideas. The participants who helped form this discussion felt the same way. Yet, as the six possibilities emerged, the value of a slow-moving, deliberative process became evident to all involved.

In these policy possibilities, we hope you explore the tension between global and local aspirations alongside the many purposes of higher education. You might wrestle with how we can assist people in "learning how to learn." As citizen discussants, we'll feel we have succeeded if these possibilities get you thinking and talking about how our society might approach and deliver higher education for generations to come.

## **Policy Possibilities at a Glance**

The policy possibilities summarized below respond to many concerns. In general, policies A–D outline different goals for higher education; they are concerned largely with the purpose of higher education. Policies E and F address the relationship higher education has with a community. These two policies are concerned primarily with accountability and

access issues.

access issues.	Motive		A attack	
Possibility	Concerns	Vision	Action	
A. Career Training	<ul><li>Economic competitiveness</li><li>Unemployment rates</li></ul>	<ul> <li>A higher education system that prepares people for special- ized work</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Business and education stakeholders form partnerships</li> <li>Identify natural talents</li> </ul>	
<b>B.</b> Education for a Better World	<ul> <li>Shared problems left unaddressed</li> <li>Addressing conflict with excessive force and/or violence</li> </ul>	A higher education system that aims to improve the common good	<ul> <li>Integrate curriculum around problems</li> <li>Engage civic/societal groups to participate</li> </ul>	
C. Innovation Labs	<ul> <li>Lack of critical think- ing in learning</li> <li>Antiquated ideas being applied to new circumstances</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>A higher education system that increas- es the capacity to innovate</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Foster an experimental culture of learning</li> <li>Design evaluation methods to gauge innovation</li> </ul>	
<b>D.</b> Guided Learning for Well-Being	<ul> <li>Imbalance toward         "book" learning</li> <li>Inadequate social         skills to interact with         diverse people</li> </ul>	A higher education system that develops balanced individuals	<ul> <li>Create mentor system</li> <li>Embed experiential learning into core curriculum</li> </ul>	
E. Community- Focused Education	<ul> <li>Accountability in higher education</li> <li>Inability to address and solve local problems</li> </ul>	A higher education system that serves, and is accountable to, local communities	<ul> <li>Establish a governing board with community and educational members</li> <li>Create funding model for many to have a stake in the outcomes</li> </ul>	
<b>F.</b> One-World Education	<ul> <li>Barriers to access higher education</li> <li>Differing standards that prohibit collabo- ration between higher ed. institutions</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>A uniform higher education system accessible through- out the world</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Develop global curriculum standards</li> <li>Create enhanced digital learning tools</li> </ul>	

## **Policy A** Focus Higher Education on Career Training

A vision for a higher education system that prepares people for specialized work to more efficiently match individuals' unique skills and talents

Policy Vision:



This policy would focus higher education on the task of preparing people for work with highly specialized job training. The assumption here is that a person has natural abilities that suit certain types of work more than others. In this system of higher education, a person's natural abilities would be identified and cultivated so he or she might perform well at work. Only people equipped for highly specialized work would be admitted to this system of higher education.

Under this policy, primary and secondary school curricula would be streamlined with higher education goals and outcomes focused on career training. Learning would be measured by mastery of job- or career-related concepts and skills to allow adequate time for individuals to progress at their own pace. The emphasis is not on earning credits or maintaining a high grade point average; rather, this possibility is interested in the successful mastery of the competencies necessary to do a certain kind of work.

This policy's focus on equipping people for careers addresses the economic forces that drive much of human activity. It also appeals to the private self-interest of individuals to assure their chances of gaining access to a successful career track in the economy. Higher education then offers individuals the opportunity to contribute to a workforce in a manner that aligns with one's talents and aspirations. These talents would mesh with the overall needs of the greater economy. This policy reflects an understanding that higher education should contribute to economies measured by increased productivity and growth.





## **Notes:**

## **Policy A** Focus Higher Education on Career Training

## **Actions for Implementation:**

An important dimension to this policy possibility could be to establish an evaluation system to identify a person's natural abilities. This would help to identify, at an early age, the mind set and abilities of a young person. In preparation for higher education, an early intervention could be made to guide a young person down a particular educational track that is highly specialized to better match that individual's abilities.

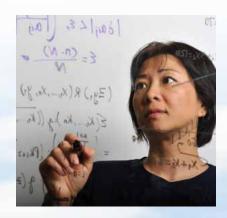
Given this policy's focus on career preparation, student instruction could come, in part, from experienced people in a given field. For example, in an apprenticeship or industry model, a major corporation might take on students and prepare them for this line of work. Another approach might be a public service model (think military and Peace Corps), where people learn specialized skills through public service. Finally, a family-based entrepreneurial model could create job opportunities for children in a family-run business. Investments would be made in learning to create new business opportunities.

To make this policy work, significant work would have to be done to engage key economic stakeholders in a conversation about the skills necessary to create a strong economy. This conversation would include business leaders and government policy makers.

Not all work requires highly specialized training that would be offered under this system of higher education. Therefore, other job-training programs would need to be developed for people who were not part of the higher education system.







Consequences:	Notes:
Developing a system of higher education to meet the economic needs of society could greatly impact what knowledge is created and the fields in which people work. Below are some of the more significant affects that could flow from this approach toward higher education. What other consequences for our society can you imagine?  • Stronger relationships would develop between employers and educational institutions.	
<ul> <li>More people would be doing what they were meant to do.</li> </ul>	
<ul> <li>The workforce would become more effi- cient and specialized.</li> </ul>	
<ul> <li>The emphasis on job training would lead to reduced unemployment.</li> </ul>	
<ul> <li>There might be fewer choices for people who desire a change in careers.</li> </ul>	
<ul> <li>With a focus on problem-oriented workers, there would be a loss of broad thinkers and well-rounded individuals.</li> </ul>	
<ul> <li>Lifelong learners would decline as people concentrated on work- force training.</li> </ul>	
<ul> <li>The systems that support the status quo would be harder to change.</li> </ul>	

## **Higher Education for a Better World**

A vision for a higher education system that aims to enhance the common good by pooling our intellectual resources

## **Policy Vision:**



Another vision for higher education is to harness our collective thinking ability to advance the human condition. This vision of higher education is one that would focus on creating a better world by solving the problems that hinder society. The goal is to create greater understanding of the major problems people face collectively. It is difficult to imagine addressing collective problems without acknowledging that we share one earth and that this earth has finite natural resources. These resources would need to be managed in a sustainable fashion to serve the common good. The working assumption for this policy possibility is that since we are all in it together, there needs to be a high degree of collaboration among people worldwide to address our common needs.

This approach to a higher education system would be shaped by a service mentality, where people learn by providing needed services. The notion that higher education should be in service for the betterment of humanity means that it would have to be open to, and immersed within, diverse cultures. This immersion would cultivate a sense of empathy. The higher education system would serve as the moral compass, aiming for the greater good of a society. The key point here is that this policy embraces an expansive and inclusive mission for higher education, one that is focused on service to the common good.

## **Actions for Implementation:**

**Notes:** 

An important dimension to this policy is that the higher education curriculum would be integrated and interdisciplinary. For example, literature and art would be woven into science, technology, engineering, and math courses. The thinking here is that real-world problems are complex, and addressing them requires that we weave together disciplinary approaches. Students might, for example, actively work to generate creative solutions for complex problems related to sustainability. Thus, a major reorganization of higher education would need to take place to create disciplines focused on problems instead of specialized content areas. For instance, one unit might focus on water resources, another on hunger, and another crisis management.



## **Higher Education for a Better World**

## **Actions for Implementation:**

Since a key focus of this approach is to connect learning to the complexities of the real world, instructional staff would be expanded beyond formal teachers or scholars to include those who have experience or firsthand knowledge about a given context or people. This might include, for example, nonprofit and nongovernmental (NGO) workers, whose on-the-ground experiences could assist in providing instruction. This would require a broad examination of the qualities necessary to provide good teaching.

Implementation of this policy possibility would require a blend of people who are scientifically trained and people of different social or civic groups. These people, working together, could establish the vision and goals for the curriculum.

This approach to higher education would connect it more closely to current events. Pedagogy might focus on teachable moments that illuminate the moral dimensions of this policy possibility. For instance, the democratic protests in the Middle East could be used as a teachable moment to raise the issue of public participation and democratic governance. Moreover, the interactions and issues alive within a class-room could be highlighted as a "case in point" to learn about a concept.

A higher education system that works for the common good within the constraints of sustainable resource management would open up a broader conversation about natural resource management and the role of education within an economic system based on sustainability.



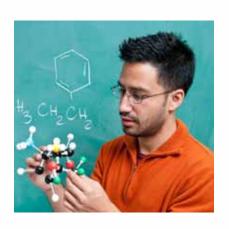
	Consequences:	Notes
th ur re	eveloping a higher education system at works to advance peace and nderstanding in a world with limited sources would result in multiple conequences. What other consequences or our society can you imagine?	
•	Focusing on the betterment of humanity might bring to the surface value conflicts about the different ways people or cultures might define "the good."	
•	The shift in economic priorities might lead to the United States losing economic and global power as some businesses and industries might not adapt.	
•	There may not be enough jobs for people with less skills and education.	
•	Impoverished places would be improved dramatically (e.g., clean water, sanitation, etc.).	
•	With a sustainability mind frame, worldwide populations might stabilize and/or shrink.	
•	People might become more complacent because there would be less emphasis on competing with other people.	
•	This system would decrease the power and stability of hierarchies as more people would be working at similar levels.	
•	Without a focus on markets and jobs, many people may not be working in paid jobs	

A vision for a higher education system that increases the capacity to innovate by fostering schools as laboratories of innovation

## **Policy Vision:**







This policy vision would focus on enabling innovation. Higher education would foster the new, facilitate breakthroughs, and incubate ideas to go beyond the known and expand the horizons of human knowledge and accomplishment. This policy possibility essentially sees the "university" as an idea lab. Imagine higher education institutions being composed of centers of innovation. These high-performing academic units would be designed to invent theories, products, and performances to name a few possibilities. Maximizing the environment for creativity would foster new discoveries and enable the crosspollination of ideas.

Colleges or universities as centers of innovation might be driven by broad, centrally organized objectives. These objectives might be aimed at achieving

a competitive advantage in the global marketplace, enhancing the security of the nation, or improving living standards or quality of life for the general population.

This possibility would work to deepen the capacity of students to be innovative. In this system, quality of performance or of the product of innovation would be the benchmark of success. The proof is in the pudding. Depth of understanding that enables new discoveries would be preferred over breadth of knowledge about a content area. The focus of this approach to higher education is not on repeating what is known. Rather, the focus is on creating something new. It is about discovering new knowledge and making applications in previously unforeseen areas. In this system, experimentalism is an idea that

would need to be deeply embedded in the learning culture. For instance, high rates of "failed" experiments would be considered necessary for learning and a key attribute of people learning and teaching in this system.	Notes:
Higher education as innovation opens up conversations about societal institutions that would be needed to educate people who may not have the capacity or desire to engage in this kind of learning. Much career and job training may fall outside the scope of higher education.	
Actions for Implementation:	
Under this possibility, schools would be known for the performance of their programs of innovation. The status and reputation of schools would be derived from the innovations or discoveries of their academic units—not their scholarly credentials.	
With this approach, higher education would be an exclusive experience for a portion of the available student population. The most creative, motivated, and smart students would be allowed access to these schools. And by "smart" we mean big thinkers who can create new ideas or envision new possibilities. Students would be evaluated on their ability to innovate.	
Evaluation methods would need to be	

designed to accurately gauge student progress toward learning outcomes.

#### **Actions for Implementation:**



These methods would not be the standard multiple-choice exam or an A-F grading scale. Rather, an evaluation process would need to be created that focuses on creative thinking and skill sets that lead to invention. Evaluation would also focus on the quality of the creative products or innovative discoveries made through the higher educational process. Only the strongest academic units, teachers, and students likely would find success in this system of higher education.

A group of researchers and students might compete to create centers of excellence in all disciplines. Departments and programs would compete with others to have the strongest offerings.

Putting this possibility into practice would entail an alignment with primary and secondary education. During these formative years of education, students would need to develop the basis for being able to innovate, i.e., a strong work ethic, creative and critical thinking skills, and collaborative social skills. This would allow students to enter higher education with the maturity to excel and innovate. Getting elementary and high school teachers to focus less on the content of subjects and more on ways to approach and solve problems would be important areas to consider for this possibility to actualize.

It was imagined that a central government would need to establish the primary funding mechanism for these centers of excellence. A national dialogue would need to happen on why innovation is a national strategy and how to develop appropriate levels of funding.

Higher education might look similar to a graduate school model of education in which students work closely with faculty members on research and teaching projects. Here, a group of faculty and students would interact in a robust manner. The system would have a high tolerance for failure since innovation requires risk of failure.

Consequences:	Notes:
Sharpening the objectives of higher education to innovate through centers of excellence would have many affects on society. What other consequences for our society can you imagine?	
<ul> <li>Like-minded folks would cluster together and creative thought would be stifled.</li> <li>Or, great minds thinking to the same end would innovate to produce.</li> </ul>	
<ul> <li>Fierce competition among centers would create territorial behaviors among stu- dents and faculty alike.</li> </ul>	
<ul> <li>People denied access to this higher edu- cation system may not see direct benefits and ultimately would call for reform to the system.</li> </ul>	
<ul> <li>Society could become highly stratified along education lines.</li> </ul>	
<ul> <li>Social loafing—people relying on those in authority positions to solve problems— would take place.</li> </ul>	
<ul> <li>Increased competition to test ideas would lead to higher-quality inventions.</li> </ul>	
<ul> <li>Specialized fields would emerge to approach problem solving in unique ways.</li> </ul>	

## Policy D Higher Education as Guided Learning for Individual Well-Being

## A vision for a higher education system that develops balanced individuals through mentor-based learning environments

#### **Policy Vision:**



This policy vision focuses on the full development of individuals' unique capabilities. Imagine students who are being educated in mental, spiritual, and physical well-being. This system of education would cater to their full development as individuals. The assumption is that higher education, particularly for students arriving straight from secondary schools, comes at a unique stage of human development. Students need to learn social literacy; this includes developing self-confidence, maturity, communication skills, and personal character. In other words, higher education is as much about developing a student's abilities to interact with others as it is about developing that student's knowledge base.

This policy possibility would strive to create self-actualized human beings through a balanced learning experience. This means that people would fulfill their potential and recognize that we all have many different aspects to ourselves. This approach is informed by a belief in the importance of individuality and the ways that each individual has unique potential. The idea, in part, stems from classical education's emphasis on developing a student's mind and body. It also has roots in spiritual traditions that promote mind-body-spirit connections.

To achieve personal growth and balance, this policy approach envisions a highly personal and individualized educational experience. This would take the form of a mentoring model of learning that would be more customized to the needs of individual students. The policy would promote instructor-learner relationships as mentor-student relationships, which are significant and personal at the core of the system of higher education. A mentor would be used to help guide a person through the process of learning.

A system of higher education based on selfactualization opens up many of the big questions that have confronted humans over the ages, primarily: What does it mean to live a balanced and fulfilled life? There are many different dimensions of living a fulfilled life that go into shaping this policy approach.



## **Actions for Implementation:**

T а b 0 te tl ir е anced approach to learning.

his policy possibility, which is focused on	
llowing individuals to fully flourish, could	
e implemented by creating a highly indi-	
idualized mentoring system. Mentors	
vould offer guidance for the development	
of an individual as a human being—not	
ust as an intellect trying to master con-	
ent knowledge in a given subject matter.	
Mentors would guide students through	
heir learning in ways tailored to that	
ndividual. In this system, spaces and	
experiences for student learning would	
e handpicked by a student's mentor.	
Mentors would be certified based on an	
bility to understand and facilitate a bal-	
nood approach to loorning	

## Policy D Higher Education as Guided Learning for Individual Well-Being

Establishing a pool of qualified mentors to guide students through their educational experience would be a major focus for enacting this policy possibility. Unlike an education system that is "sink or swim," mentors would be accountable for helping students successfully find their way within the system.

The social aspect of this policy is another important consideration. Higher education campuses would be places where students "mix it up" and experience people unlike themselves. The space would be designed to enhance social experimentation.

Aligned with the space for social development is a curriculum that cultivates social literacy in students. Focusing on the different ways of knowing via the mind, body, and spirit could provide a balanced base from which to

## **Actions for Implementation:**

interact with others. For instance, athletics would be recognized as an important learning experience available to all students. Or, students might "find themselves" through travel, developing a craft, or completing a service project. These examples would all be considered "courses" where experiential learning is the primary method of instruction.

Making this policy possibility a reality would require a shared commitment to higher education's focus on the holistic well-being of individuals. To enable this commitment, the policy requires broadbased conversations about what it means to live to one's potential and how higher education might support this. These talks would include an examination of cultural values that might be in competition with one another (e.g., economic productivity versus relational satisfaction).



Consequences:	Notes
An education system that promotes social well-being by focusing on a balanced approach to mind, body, and spirit could lead to cultural and economic shifts. What other consequences for our society can you imagine?	
<ul> <li>With a campus focused first on relational development, there might be a blurring of personal and professional boundaries. The mentor relationship would contribute to learning from teachers we care deeply about.</li> </ul>	
<ul> <li>There might be less risk taking by stu- dents. A student's possibilities might become constrained by the influence of the mentor.</li> </ul>	
<ul> <li>The focus on individual balance would diminish community development.</li> </ul>	
<ul> <li>Community relations would improve with more people being socially literate.</li> </ul>	
<ul> <li>Individual happiness would increase.</li> </ul>	
People would become more physically fit.	
<ul> <li>There would be more broad-based thinking to problems because fewer specialists would be available — thus, a decline in experts competing against other experts to solve problems.</li> </ul>	
Knowledge would be more personalized and lead to better student retention.	

## **Policy E** Focus Higher Education on Serving Local Communities

## A vision for a higher education system that serves the needs of local communities

## **Policy Vision:**

To whom is higher education accountable? This policy approach would make institutions of higher education accountable to local communities. Instead of serving the individual needs of students first, higher education would be designed to address the problems and opportunities articulated by the surrounding communities.

This policy approach seeks to integrate institutions of higher education into their home communities. It seeks to enable greater input from community members, including a measure of local control. It is motivated by a sense that "we're all in this together" and that we should use our shared resources, including our higher education institutions, to address shared community needs.

Higher education would be accountable to people who have the most to gain or lose from its actions. This approach would help close the actual or perceived "town and gown" gap that exists between residents of college or university towns and those who study and work at those colleges or universities.

How might we determine the community to whom higher education institutions are accountable? We might imagine a higher education institution to be dedicated foremost to contributing to the benefit of the state in which it is located (much as was articulated by the Wisconsin Idea from the early 1900s). Or, we could envision an



education system or institution as serving an urban area, a region, or countywide initiatives. In this way, how a "community" is defined becomes an important aspect to this policy possibility, particularly when some in education circles might think of their institution as a "learning community" a group of people focused on a shared intellectual venture. The community might mean the people who are officially part of an organization. And community has been used to refer to anyone who has a direct stake in the success or failure of higher education. These varying definitions suggest that people are loyal to, and engaged in, multiple levels of community at any given time. These different senses of community are important to the design and implementation of community-focused education.

## **Actions for Implementation:**

This policy could be enacted with a stakeholder model of governance. In this model, educational institutions would be governed by a blend of educational experts and community citizens. The stakeholder group would design a process where education and community interests are used to determine the vision and goals of the institution. Possible policy dimensions might include:

- Exploration on how to engage the public and stakeholders in on-going processes that include dialogue and deliberation.
- Determination of accreditation standards in terms of deciding what success looks like and how standards will be measured and upheld.
- Analyses of what a community needs from higher education and realistic outcomes to expect from this learning.
- Identifying a process to determine the geographic boundaries that are connected to a higher education institution and thinking about how these boundaries might incite competition among neighboring communities would be important.



Notes:

## **Policy E** Focus Higher Education on Serving Local Communities

## **Actions for Implementation:**

This policy asks all institutions of higher education to mimic the original mission of land-grant universities: to serve the people of a state. This would apply even to private institutions, at least in so far as they receive public support or subsidies. Putting this motto to practice would require great degrees of collaboration between education and community stakeholders. For instance, the community and university would need to figure out a way to enable input and share control of the budgeting process.

Implementation also includes a process for setting priorities and standards for curriculum and teaching/research. Community members and education experts would need to figure out a process by which educational institutions could be evaluated on how well they accomplish their goals to serve the community. These stakeholders would have to decide the balance of power. In other words, who has final authority when high-level decisions are made?

Funding sources are another consideration with higher education systems that serve local communities. Does local control mean that the cost burden would also be local? Moreover, funding could be tied to how well a given educational institution met the needs of the community. The "ranking" of these institutions could be determined by this same benchmark.



	Consequences:	Notes
ar w gl tia th flo	tructuring a higher education system round local communities at a time then digital technology is making the obal world smaller has many potental consequences. Below are some of the more significant affects that could low from this approach toward higher ducation. What other consequences it our society can you imagine?	
•	Community citizens, having a sense of the situation on the ground, may know more about evaluating learning than educational experts.	
•	With communities wanting direct results from the educational institutions, there might be less academic freedom to pursue topics and research outside the determined scope.	
•	Educational institutions would be more practical and less idealistic with the community in charge. They would be proficient at addressing immediate and short-term problems. Yet, the degree to which resources would be provided for long-term projects and cultural issues is questionable.	
•	Educational institutions could serve as local economic development engines.	
•	Difficulty and conflict could arise from people in the community and employees of higher education who have interests and loyalties that are not aligned with the local community. This stems from the fact that places are made up of multiple co-existing communities.	
•	Competition might increase between nearby institutions because proximity would make it easy to compare and contrast results	

## **One-World Education**

A vision for a uniform higher education system accessible worldwide.

#### **Policy Vision:**



To what community is higher education accountable? This policy possibility responds by expanding our global vision. Higher education should be connected to the citizens of the world. This policy approach also responds to a question of access: Who gets to participate in higher education? This policy would create an international higher education system that could be accessed by students worldwide. Higher education would be organized around a uniform global curriculum. That would allow students to move from institution to institution and take the same curriculum or enter into the same program of studies.

The policy possibility is shaped by the desire to remove barriers from higher education, particularly barriers of geography and overly idiosyncratic admissions or transfer standards. Enhancing freedom of mobility is a key value for this approach to higher education. Being able to move across the world and receive transferable credits with similar course content opens up the possibilities for higher education. Not only would students and teachers be able to physically move about the world to learn, but courses would also be available via distance educational methods. A virtual, or "Google University" of sorts, could be available online for those without the means or desire to physically travel.

In terms of admission standards serving as obstacles, this higher education system would universalize those standards and open up admission to any student who has the motivation to learn. Expanding the global pool of learners would help make higher education an experience more people could share. Just as technology is making information widely available, this policy would enable high-quality instruction to follow suit.

#### **Notes:**







## Policy F

## **One-World Education**

## **Actions for Implementation:**

This policy could take shape by envisioning higher education as a network of learning modules. These modules could be delivered in face-to-face settings or via high-tech media. This approach delivers educational content to any would-be learner through systematic indexing of content knowledge that includes multiple forms of learning (text, video, etc.). In various communities around the world, there would be campuses offering students the chance to interact and learn with others in a face-to-face setting. In addition, other communities would offer support networks that would provide instructional assistance and learning spaces. For instance, a local library might provide spaces for people to work and get face-to-face assistance.

By opening up the system internationally and using online delivery methods, an educational program could be customized to a particular student's needs similar to a home-schooling model of education. Students will demonstrate that they know how to learn and apply their learning in a beneficial way.

Other issues involved in implementing this policy include:

- An international cooperative body would need to be formed to establish the parameters for the system. This body would include education and digital computing experts.
- The content for a particular subject area would be developed by disciplinary organizations with a focus on producing and delivering specialized knowledge.
- At the local level, a school of instruction could be started by a group of concerned citizens or taken on by large-scale universities.
- In this system, foundations and nongovernmental organizations might lead the way by funding spaces for instruction.



Consequer	ices:	Notes:
Universalizing admission required and creating an open system of heducation throughout the world volkely change the landscape of heducation. Below are a few potensequences of this policy. To other consequences for our societ you imagine?  • Affordability — The model could potensave lots of money spent on brick-and tar campuses and redirect expenditure supporting students' academic succession.	igher vould igher ential What y can  ntially d-mor- es to	
<ul> <li>People would become more connecte emphatic with and about others arour the world. They would develop auther connections with others based on mu interests.</li> </ul>	nd ntic	
<ul> <li>An increase in online learning might I diminished social interactions.</li> </ul>	ead to	
<ul> <li>A customized education would increa an entrepreneurial spirit in people and result in more customizable products produced.</li> </ul>	<u></u>	
<ul> <li>People who need structure and who a self-starters might become frustrated disengaged from online learning.</li> </ul>		
<ul> <li>There may not be a mechanism to tea students how to "learn how to learn."</li> </ul>	ch	
<ul> <li>In the first stages, the one-world curri would expand knowledge because the tent base would grow. For instance, a history would be fair game for inclusi- into the curriculum. However, over tin curriculum might stifle innovation becall people would be learning from the model.</li> </ul>	e con- Il world on ne, the cause	

