



Interactivity Foundation

Special Report

*The Future Of
Higher Education
In Post-Communist States*

Policy Possibilities for Public Discussion

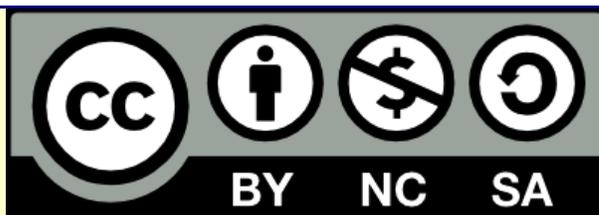
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*The discussions that were the basis of this report were cooperative and exploratory.
No statement in the report can or should be attributed to any single participant.
There are policy possibilities in this report that few if any of our participants would endorse,
but which they nonetheless think are useful for public discussion.*

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CONCEPTUAL POLICY POSSIBILITIES

FOR PUBLIC DISCUSSION

A. Nurture Integrity

This possibility would nurture the integrity of the educational system with the aim of eliminating corruption and improving the quality of all aspects of the educational process. It would institute procedures for quality assurance; create a fair merit-based system that rewards the productivity of students, teachers, and administrators; and require periodic evaluations of the system as a whole. It would try, in this way, to develop the professional, social, and personal responsibility that is necessary to eliminate corruption.

B. Create a Culture of Freedom

This possibility would try to create a culture of freedom in the university by providing more freedom to students and faculty wherever possible. But it would also hold students and faculty more responsible for their decisions and actions.

C. Reach Out to the Community

This possibility would encourage universities to play a more active role in public life by devoting more of their resources to serving their local communities and by creating a curriculum that simultaneously emphasizes higher education in the arts and sciences, job training, and service learning. It would, in this way, try to bridge the gap between theoretical and practical education by expanding and strengthening our universities' working relationships with businesses, state-owned enterprises, NGOs, government agencies, and other external stakeholders in their local communities.

D. Aim at Financial Autonomy

This possibility would focus upon developing and implementing a wide range of activities for raising funds for higher education and using them effectively. It would, in this way, try to both achieve financial autonomy for our universities and create a reputation for their honest and responsible use of money.

E. End the Brain Drain—And Begin a Brain Gain

This possibility would develop a favorable social environment in our countries and universities that would motivate and encourage our students, professors, and qualified professionals to return home after studying and working abroad. It would also try to attract the best students, professors, and qualified professionals from other countries to study and work in our universities.

F. Promote Classical Higher Education—Not Job Training

This possibility would promote the classical ideals of higher education both as the basis for a student's future self-development and self-realization and as a way to ensure happiness and satisfaction in his or her personal and professional life.

G. Democratize University Management

This possibility would introduce a democratic structure of university management to increase faculty oversight of university budgets, curricula, strategic development, hiring policy, identification of priorities, and other governance issues. It would also ensure that faculty and students have both a voice and a vote in their university's governance process.

THE IF DISCUSSION PROCESS

Public policy discussions too often focus upon the specific actions that governments might take to address a problem instead of the broader conceptual possibilities that might inspire them. This is unfortunate, since the wise choice of a public policy requires an exploration of a wide range of conceptual possibilities—including the different concerns, questions, beliefs, values, goals, and interests that might motivate them. The Interactivity Foundation (IF) believes that governments too often act without considering a wide range of conceptual possibilities for public policy, and that citizen discussions of contrasting possibilities can help to improve both our public policy choices and our own ability to make them. IF thus supports discussion projects that are designed to explore, develop, articulate, and test contrasting conceptual possibilities for public policy in selected areas of concern. We believe that our discussion projects, and the conceptual possibilities that we develop in them, can help citizens to explore an area of concern with their neighbors and make individual choices about which policy possibilities might be worthwhile to pursue.

The aim of IF is *not* to recommend or advocate specific policy possibilities or actions. It is to improve public policy by encouraging citizens to participate in democratic discussions about their public policy concerns—and about the different conceptual policy possibilities for addressing them. The policy possibilities that we present in our reports are developed by citizens in confidential ‘sanctuary’ discussions for use by their fellow citizens. We hope that they will help to stimulate and aid such discussions, and that they will provide a conceptual springboard for citizens who wish to explore the different policy possibilities and goals that we might want to achieve as a society.

In 2011, with the support of IF, eight young university professors from post-communist Europe and Asia participated in a four month IF ‘mini-project’ in Washington DC to explore the future of higher education in post-communist states, and the different conceptual possibilities for public policy pertaining to it.

Our project on the future of higher education in post-communist states was conducted in cooperation with the Research Program in Social and Organizational Learning at The George Washington University, which provided space for our discussions. Participants included university professors from Albania, Russia, Armenia, Kazakhstan and Georgia who had come to the United States under auspices

IF tries to improve public policy choices by helping citizens discuss public policy possibilities that address their public policy concerns.

of the United States State Department’s Junior Faculty Development Program, The Fulbright Scholar Program, and the Open Society Institute’s Faculty Development Fellowship Program to learn about new teaching methods that they might use back home. These professors met with us, both individually and as a group, for over 50 hours to explore concerns that people in their countries might have about the future of higher education in post-communist states, to develop policy possibilities pertaining to them, and to learn how the IF Discussion Process might be used to facilitate student-centered discussions in their classrooms.

This report describes several of the contrasting conceptual policy possibilities pertaining to the future of higher education in post-communist states that the professors developed during their discussions. It also describes their concerns about higher education in their home countries; their thoughts about the actions that might be taken to implement each of the conceptual possibilities that they developed; and their ideas about the practical consequences that those actions might have for individuals, groups, institutions, and society at large. It does not, however, recommend any of the possibilities that it presents—or any of the actions that might be taken to implement them—for anything other than public discussion. There are possibilities in this report that few, if any, of the professors would endorse, but which they still thought should be part of the public discussion about the future of higher education in post-communist states.

THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN POST-COMMUNIST STATES

Higher Education has been a perennial area of concern in civilized societies around the world. But it has become a special and growing concern for the members of post-communist societies as a result of the collapse of the former Soviet Union. Higher education at the best universities in their countries used to be highly competitive with—if not superior to—higher education in the West. But today, most people believe that universities and university graduates in the post-communist states can no longer seriously compete with universities and university graduates in the West. Whereas their best universities once produced world-class scientists whose achievements were recognized around the world, the members of Europe's and Asia's post-communist societies now worry that their universities, their university graduates, and their societies are falling behind. Some people believe that this decline is primarily a financial problem, and could be reversed by providing more funds for higher education. Others believe that it is due to an erosion of integrity, morality, and quality in those societies. And still others believe that it is more a matter of values and traditions, and that the values and traditions of democratic open societies are simply more conducive to higher education than the values and traditions of the closed and still very authoritarian societies of post-communist states. Indeed, the State Department and the Open Society Institute have brought the professors in this project to the United States with the idea that exposing them to the values and traditions of an open society will help improve higher education in their countries.

This is the context in which the future of higher education in post-communist states emerged as the area of concern for this project. But it also emerged in the context of the Bologna Process, which has led many universities in the post-communist countries of Europe and Asia to restructure their curricula in ways that make them more like universities in Western Europe and America.

The Bologna Process is a reform of European higher education that attempts to standardize academic degrees in Europe so that students are able to transfer their academic credits to other universities throughout Europe. It aims to create a 'European Higher Education Area' in order to promote mobility, attract students and staff from Europe and other parts of the world, and help universities compete on an international level. Forty-seven countries currently participate in the process, including twenty-seven members of the EU. The professors in our project did not discuss the Bologna Process at length during the project. But it was always present in their discussions, and seemed to form a backdrop for the concerns that they explored and the possibilities that they developed. They generally agreed that it is good to give students and faculty greater freedom and mobility to study and work abroad. But they also agreed that it contributes to the 'brain drain' in their countries, and that it can be misunderstood and abused. Some professors, especially the older and more established ones, worried that its incentives might lead faculty, administrators, and students to accept new academic requirements, curricula, and teaching methods that they might not want to adopt if left to their own devices. Indeed, some of them seem to think that it might actually weaken their system of higher education instead of strengthening it.

But what is higher education? What is it now? And what might it be in the future? What are its different dimensions? What are its proper goals? What beliefs, values, goals, and interests might people associate with it? What kinds of curricula and programs are best suited for achieving those goals? What concerns might different people—such as teachers, students, parents, employers, and government officials—have about higher education, and the future of higher education? What are some of the different possibilities for public policy that would address those concerns? And how might our universities and our system of higher education evolve and develop in the 21st century?

INTRODUCTION

These questions reflect broad concerns about higher education that are fundamental for the future of higher education everywhere in the world. The professors in our mini-project used them as springboards for their discussions about the future of higher education in the post-communist states.

The professors did *not* try to *define* the term ‘higher education’—let alone once and for all. Nor did they strive for consistency in using it. They instead said many different and seemingly contradictory things about higher education. They said that the aim of higher education is to teach our young to think critically and to make judgments of their own; that it is to prepare them to fill the needs of the job market; and that it is to make them ready to participate in community life as practical researchers and community leaders. They said that universities should be places where we develop theoretical knowledge to solve our scientific problems; that doing this requires theoretical instruction and reflection, conducted in isolation from the immediate cares of the real world; and that the special job of the university and higher education is to provide such a space. They said that universities should provide an open atmosphere in which students and teachers feel free to explore new ideas and to say what they think. But they also said that universities should not be ivory towers, that they should hold their professors and students responsible for what they say and think, and that they can and should try to interact with the communities that surround them. They said that their universities should strive to reward merit and to provide incentives for their faculty and students to work harder and better than they currently do. They said that universities need to convince the state to provide them with more money so that they can provide quality education to their students—and that they need to become financially autonomous and independent from the state. They said that too many of their students are not prepared for serious academic work at the university level. But they also said that no student, regardless of their academic potential or achievement, should be denied the opportunity to pursue a higher education simply because they are unable to pay for it.

The professors worried about the quality of education in their universities at every level. They worried, in particular, about the corrupting effect that the pursuit of money has had upon it. They talked at length about academic corruption—not only cheating and plagiarism, which they said is widespread among students and teachers, but also teachers taking bribes for high grades, nepotism, and corruption in university finances. They said that their universities are poorly funded, that their classrooms are over-crowded, that their books and teaching methods are out-dated, and that professors’ salaries are such that they often have to work several jobs to make ends meet. They worried about what they should teach to prepare their students for an increasingly global job market, how they should teach it, and who they should teach. But they also worried that their universities often seem more oriented toward making money than providing a high quality education.

The professors described many concerns that people might have about the future of higher education everywhere. But when we asked them to choose the ones that they thought were most useful for public discussion in their countries, we found that they could all be clustered into several broad concerns, namely: that the quality of higher education in their countries is much lower than the quality of education in the West; that corruption is now endemic at every level of the educational system; that professors and students lack academic and personal freedom; that their universities lack the money to provide a quality education, and too often waste the little money that they have; that universities are too often isolated from their local communities, to the detriment of the university and community alike; that too many of their best young teachers, students, and professionals have left their countries to teach, study, and work abroad; that their university management is often out of touch with what it is managing; that there is a tendency to replace higher education with job training; and that there are very few incentives at all within the system for professors and students to work harder—or, indeed, for anyone to do anything to improve higher education in the post-communist states.

There were several major concerns that the group described during the course of their discussions. They repeatedly said that:

- *Universities in the post-communist states do not do enough to foster professional integrity and responsibility among their students and faculty, and corruption is endemic at all levels of higher education as a result*
- *Universities in the post-communist states have lost their integrity and no longer focus upon the quality of higher education, or quality in general, as one of their primary goals*
- *Universities in post-communist states have not developed an atmosphere and environment that would allow their faculty and students to engage in the free exploration and development of ideas that is, or should be, characteristic of higher education*
- *Universities in post-communist states are too often ‘ivory towers’ isolated from the external communities in which they are located—and the educational programs that they offer do not adequately prepare their students for meaningful employment in the real world as a result*
- *Universities in post-communist states do not have the financial resources necessary to compete with universities in the West, and all too often waste the little money that they have*
- *University management, and especially Ministries of Education, in post-communist states are too often out of touch with the real problems that teachers and students face*
- *The knowledge and skills that students acquire in the universities of post-communist states do not meet the current job needs of their societies, let alone the job needs of the future*
- *Too many of the best young students, professors, and qualified professionals are leaving the post-communist states to seek better opportunities in the West*
- *There are virtually no incentives for anyone working within the systems of higher education in the post-communist states to improve the quality of what they are currently doing*

THIS REPORT

The following pages describe the contrasting conceptual possibilities that the professors in our project developed for public policy pertaining to the future of higher education in post-communist states. They also describe the possible actions that might be taken to implement each possibility, and the likely effects that those actions might have upon individuals, groups, institutions, and their societies at large. **We want to emphasize that this report does not advocate the adoption of any of these policy possibilities for anything except thoughtful consideration and discussion.** It instead describes policy possibilities that the professors thought might be useful for public discussion in their countries, along with their possible practical consequences and the concerns, values, interests and beliefs that inspire them. It contains possibilities that none of the professors would be willing to endorse as public policy in their home countries, but which they nonetheless think should be part of their countries’ public policy discussion.

Our reasons for presenting this material may thus be different from what you expect. Most public policy reports recommend actions that governments should take to solve problems in current public policy. They are written to overcome opposition and secure support for those actions. This report is different in that it assumes that higher education is a perennial area of concern, but does not presume that our current policies are broken and need to be repaired. Some of the possibilities in the report may differ from current policy. But others are no doubt consistent with it. We do not present them to forge a consensus for action—or even to foster a debate about which is the best or most useful to adopt. We present them instead with the hope of deepening your understanding of the governance concerns and possibilities pertaining to the future of higher education in post-communist states—and that this will help you to make more thoughtful policy choices. We have, in describing each possibility, thus suggested reasons why you might *not* like it—and we have tried to point out other policy possibilities that you might prefer if you don’t.

INTRODUCTION

It is pointless, and even counter-productive, to try to compare or evaluate the possibilities in this report in terms of any one concern, policy issue, or concept of higher education. Some of the possibilities may be consistent with each other. Others are mutually exclusive. But they each present an approach that merits your exploration, consideration, and discussion.

We want to emphasize that each possibility in this report is described in broad conceptual terms, and that we have made no effort to describe the many qualifications and exceptions that we would need to make to them if we were to actually adopt any one of them as our policy. It may be useful, for this reason, to emphasize that *we do not intend any of the possibilities in this report to be understood as being, in any way, absolute, unqualified, or complete*. It seems clear, on the contrary, that we would have to work out the details of each of the possibilities were we to ever adopt it as our actual policy toward higher education. We know the devil is in the details. But we believe that they are best worked out as the need arises in the real world. We also want to emphasize that we do not intend the possible implementations and possible effects that we list after each possibility to be necessary, complete, certain, or even consistent with each other. You can usually implement a policy in many different ways, and its actual effects will depend upon how it is actually implemented. The professors often disagreed about how to implement a possibility and about the effects that it might have. And you will no doubt think of different ways to implement each possibility, and different consequences that it might have for individuals, groups, institutions, and society at large as well. We have nonetheless included their thoughts about them in this report

- partly to illustrate how a discussion about conceptual possibilities might lead to a discussion about possible actions and their possible consequences in the real world
- partly to give you a better idea of what the professors who developed these possibilities were thinking about, and
- partly with the hope of stimulating further discussion about the conceptual possibilities themselves.

Finally, we want to emphasize that this is a *special* IF report, and to explain the various ways in which it is special. Here, the first thing to say is that by calling it a ‘special report’ we do *not* mean to suggest that we attribute any special authority to it, or the people who developed it, or to the policy possibilities that it presents. We regard it as a special report, on the contrary, because the project that produced it differs in significant ways from the projects that we usually conduct at IF. It is a special report, first of all, because it is the result of an IF ‘mini-project’. Unlike our regular projects, the discussion time in this project was severely limited, partly by the fact that the professors would be in the United States for only a few months, and partly by the fact that they had many other things to do while they were here. Unlike our regular projects, the policy possibilities in this report were developed by only one panel of discussion participants—whereas our regular reports present possibilities that are developed by two panels that conduct their discussions separately, and are brought together only toward the very end of the project to meld the possibilities that they have developed separately. Unlike our regular IF projects, the discussion sessions that produced these policy possibilities were not all facilitated by an IF Fellow, but by their participants, who were learning how to facilitate IF-style discussions so they can use our discussion process as a teaching method in their courses when they return home. We could have very easily spent three or four hours of discussion for every hour of discussion in this ‘mini-project’. We would have done so in a regular IF project. And we no doubt would have developed the possibilities in this report further if we had done so in this project, or if we had two separate panels, or if an IF Fellow had facilitated all of the discussions—though it is impossible to know exactly how they would be different. Finally, it is a special IF report because, unlike our regular reports—which, as the product of confidential ‘sanctuary’ discussions, guarantee anonymity to the panelists who produce them—we have published the names of the people who produced the possibilities in it in accordance with their request. These are the reasons why we call it a ‘special IF report’.

We know that the conceptual possibilities in this report are not the only policy possibilities pertaining to the future of higher education in post-communist states. But we hope that they are provocative and worthy of your attention and careful discussion. We hope that you will find them interesting, that you will understand them in the way that we intend them to be understood, that they will stir your imagination and cause you to think about other conceptual possibilities pertaining to the future of higher education in post-communist states, and that you will discuss them with your friends and fellow citizens in the cooperative spirit in which we developed them.

As you consider the possibilities in this report and discuss them with others, you may wish to ask yourselves some of the following questions:

- What are the values that motivate this particular possibility?
- Why might someone hold those values?
- Why might someone be opposed to them?
- What goals is this possibility trying to achieve?
- Why might someone have those goals?
- Why might someone be opposed to them?
- What actions might we take to implement this possibility were we to adopt it?
- What effects might those actions have upon individuals, groups, institutions, and society at large?
- How might they affect you personally?
- What are the strengths of this possibility?
- What are its weaknesses?
- Who would be likely to benefit from the adoption of this possibility?
- Who would be likely to benefit from its rejection?
- What other approaches are available for pursuing the values and goals that inspired this possibility?
- Who might be more likely to benefit from choosing those other approaches?
- Who might be less likely to benefit from choosing those other approaches?
- What actions would we likely take to implement this possibility, given current political realities, were we to adopt it?
- What effects would those actions likely have upon individuals, groups, institutions, and society at large?
- How effective would this possibility be in achieving its desired ends if we were to adopt it?
- What would you do to strengthen this possibility?
- How would you compare this possibility to each of the other possibilities in this report?

NURTURE INTEGRITY

This possibility would nurture the integrity of the educational system with the aim of eliminating corruption and improving the quality of all aspects of the educational process. It would institute procedures for quality assurance; create a fair merit-based system that rewards the productivity of students, teachers, and administrators; and require periodic evaluations of the system as a whole. It would try, in this way, to develop the professional social, and personal responsibility that is necessary to eliminate corruption.

Do you believe that our universities have lost their integrity as institutions of higher education? Do you fear that corruption is so widespread and tacitly accepted that it permeates each and every aspect of our educational system? And do you feel that the way to improve the quality of higher education is to reward students and teachers who are more productive than others?

This possibility flows from a concern that our societies' newfound preoccupation with money has taken hold of our universities, that they are now directed more toward turning a profit than providing quality education, and that corruption of one form or another now pervades every aspect of our system of higher education. It also flows from a belief that our universities cannot compete with the best universities in the West, and from a concern that our students are not learning the knowledge and skills our society needs, let alone the knowledge and skills they need to compete in an increasingly competitive global job market. Today, our universities use out-dated textbooks, technology, and teaching methods to teach out-dated courses in classrooms that are out-dated and over-crowded too. Today, our teachers are too over-loaded with work to develop new courses, or to learn new methods of teaching them. And today, there are very few incentives for anyone within our universities to improve the quality of what they are doing. This loss of integrity may be due to the old communist ideology that rewards people equally regardless of the quality of their work, or to a general breakdown of honesty in our society. But this possibility maintains that we must strengthen the integrity and quality of our system of higher education—and that the first steps toward doing so is to reward people for the quality of their work, and to eliminate corruption at all levels of the academic system.

Rewarding people equally might make sense in a world in which everyone had the same knowledge and talent, and put the same kind of effort into their work. But this is not the world in which we actually live. Instead of motivating people to put more effort into their work, it only deprives those who could perform better if they tried a little harder of any reason to do so. It also has a tendency to foster corruption at all levels—first, because the idea that all people deserve the same rewards regardless of the quality of their work is fundamentally dishonest and, second, because people who get the same rewards regardless of the quality of their work will either ignore the quality of their work or seek out other ways to get ahead.

Today there are very few incentives for anyone within our system of higher education to improve what they are doing.

Other Perspectives. But even if you agree that we need to strengthen the integrity of our system of higher education, you may still think that rewarding merit exclusively is not the way to go. You may feel that everyone has a right to higher education, and that no one should be deprived of an education just because he or she is unable to pay for it. Or you may feel that it is easier to develop your knowledge and talents if you come from a rich family—and that education could too easily become a merit-based system of rewarding the rich. If you are inclined to think this way, then you may think that universities should forget about rewarding merit, and even about eliminating corruption, and focus instead upon giving all students an opportunity to get a higher education, regardless of their ability to pay for it and regardless of the quality of their academic work.

Possible Implementations

We could—

- Improve our admissions system so as to accept only students who are academically prepared to study at the university level
- Create an understandable, clear, and concrete merit-based system to reward professors and students
- Create a zero-tolerance student honor code and student court system to try students who are suspected of cheating by their peers
- Support and reward students and faculty who try their best and do not resort to cheating
- Develop both internal and external quality assessment processes for regular evaluation of the university, its management, departmental programs, faculty, and students
- Create competitions and other opportunities to reward people from an early age for merit and achievement in a wide range of activities
- Introduce and use a total quality management process in universities
- Familiarize academic staff and students with modern teaching methods and research by actually using them in their classrooms

Possible Effects of These Actions

These actions could—

- Improve the quality of education and reduce corruption by accepting students who are prepared to study at the university level
- Enable professors to make enough money to make ends meet in an honest way, instead of tempting them to take bribes from students
- Create a culture of honor; make students take responsibility for their actions; deter students from becoming plagiarists and cheats
- Reduce corruption among students and faculty by providing positive reinforcement
- Focus the attention of faculty, students, and university management on the quality of higher education; lead to international accreditation of our universities
- Help to instill the competitive spirit and the idea that we should reward merit within all members of the society from an early age
- Focus attention on the production process and away from people’s ambitions and feelings
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning, thereby improving the overall quality of higher education at the university level

For Further Discussion...

- Do you think that our universities have lost their integrity and no longer have the objective of offering a high quality education as their primary goal? If so, why so? If not, why not? And if so, why do you think they have lost their integrity?
- Do you believe that people who do the same kind of work should be rewarded equally, regardless of how well they do it? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- Do you think that improving the quality of higher education is primarily a university problem, or primarily a societal problem? And in either case, what do you think we need to do to solve it?
- Do you think that improving the quality of higher education is primarily a matter of offering the right incentives to students, faculty, and university management to try to improve what they are doing? If so, why so? If not, why not? And if not, what do you think we need to do to improve the quality of higher education?
- Do you think that teaching evaluations and other ‘quality assessment processes’ do what they are intended to do? If so, why so? If not, why not? And if not, how would you evaluate the integrity and quality of higher education?
- Do you believe rewarding merit is more likely to benefit the rich, or the poor, or that it is completely neutral with regard to wealth? And why?

CREATE A CULTURE OF FREEDOM

This possibility would try to create a culture of freedom in the university by providing more freedom to students and faculty wherever possible. But it would also hold students and faculty more responsible for their decisions and actions.

Do you believe that education at the university level should encourage students to think for themselves, and should train them how to do it? Do you feel that it is difficult for professors to offer such encouragement and training when they feel that their own freedom to do these things is at risk? And do you worry that this kind of ‘academic freedom’ is now under attack from many different forces both in and outside the university?

This possibility flows from a belief that the purpose of higher education is to teach students how to think for themselves and that, in order to achieve this goal, universities need to provide an open atmosphere in which students and teachers feel free to explore new ideas and to say what they think. It also flows from a concern that such a free and open atmosphere does not yet exist in our universities. Instead of encouraging students and faculty to explore new ideas and to say what they think, our universities more often condition them—via grades, scholarships, grants, academic honors, jobs, salaries, and job promotions—to say what they think their superiors want to hear. Today, ‘higher education’ in many universities largely consists of learning how to recognize and defer to the ‘accepted’ academic authorities. Critical thinking and classroom discussions are often discouraged, regardless of how we might praise them as ideals. And many students and professors still feel a deeply embedded fear of being punished for saying what they really think. Today, academic freedom is ‘purely academic’. Students and professors who do not get the message often find it impossible to remain in the university or to advance in their chosen careers. And the result is the mediocrity and stagnation we currently find in even our best universities. This possibility would try to reverse this trend by creating and fostering a culture of freedom in our universities that would reward the exploration and development of new ideas instead of punishing it.

Cultivating a culture of freedom is the key to nourishing higher education and innovation in the post-communist states. But the culture of freedom that this possibility envisions does not mean that anything goes. Greater freedom, on the contrary, only comes with greater responsibility. This possibility would generally permit students and professors to study what they want, to explore new ideas, to say what they think, and to challenge the currently accepted authorities. But it would also hold them more responsible for subjecting what they think and say to greater critical scrutiny, both from themselves and from their peers.

Instead of encouraging students and professors to explore new ideas and to freely say what they think, our universities have conditioned them through the distribution of grades, scholarships, academic honors, salaries, grants, jobs, and job promotions to say only what they think their superiors want to hear.

Other Perspectives. But even if you agree that our universities do not encourage students and professors to think for themselves and to say what they think, you may not agree that it is such a bad thing. You may think that these freedoms are great for developing scientific theories and innovations, but that most of our students will more likely go into fields in which saying what they think might place them at a disadvantage. Or you may think that the future of higher education in the post-communist states has many other objectives—such as meeting requirements for integration into the Bologna Process and the EU—besides academics and academic freedom. Or you may simply think that the point of higher education is not so much to explore new ideas as to gain expertise and skills in an established field. But if you are inclined to think any or all of these things, then you may also think that what we need is not so much a culture of freedom as a culture of hard work.

Possible Implementations*We could—*

- Allow students to take more independent study courses and to create their own academic programs so they can study what they truly want to study
- Introduce a curriculum of student-centered discussion courses, transforming students into facilitators and professors into research models and academic mentors
- Give students a voice in faculty councils and take their opinions into consideration
- Conduct more anonymous faculty feedback surveys
- Establish a joint-decision-making process with input from faculty, university management and the Ministry of Education
- Institute a democratic system of management with direct elections on all levels
- Start an international association of university professors to lobby on behalf of professors and academic freedom
- Start an open forum blog about 'Freedom in Our University' on the university's website
- Create an open forum in which students and faculty can engage in critical discussions about their ideas and actions with their peers

Possible Effects of These Actions*These actions could—*

- Result in more interested and highly motivated students, and in graduates who have a greater diversity of knowledge and skills than our current graduates have
- Motivate students to take a more active role in their own education; train students better for team work jobs in the real world; result in better trained students and happier professors
- Prepare students to be active members of their communities; lead to better faculty decisions
- Help to inform university management about the real concerns of faculty
- Result in better governance of the university as a result of faculty input about the real 'situation on the ground'
- Help to develop a culture of freedom by giving students and faculty a voice and a vote
- Give international support to faculty who are brought up on charges that violate their academic freedom
- Encourage students and faculty to say what they really think
- Help students and faculty to take greater responsibility for their ideas and actions by thinking through them more carefully

For Further Discussion...

- How would you describe a culture of freedom? What are its essential features? And how would you create a culture of freedom?
- Do you agree that our universities, and our society at large, need a culture of freedom in order to flourish? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- Do you believe that education at the university level should largely consist in encouraging students to think for themselves, and in training them how to do so? If so, why so? If not, why not? And if not, what should it be?
- Do you think that it is possible to train students to think for themselves? If so, why so? If not, why not? And if so, what would such training involve?
- Do you think that professors generally feel free to say what they think? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- Do you think that 'academic freedom' is now under attack from forces both in and outside the university? And if so, what are some of those forces, and what kinds of pressures might they exert?

REACH OUT TO THE COMMUNITY

This possibility would encourage universities to play a more active role in public life by devoting more of their resources to serving their local communities and by creating a curriculum that simultaneously emphasizes higher education in the arts and sciences, job training, and service learning. It would, in this way, try to bridge the gap between theoretical and practical education by expanding and strengthening our universities' working relationships with businesses, state-owned enterprises, NGOs, government agencies, and other external stakeholders in their local communities.

Do you worry that our universities too often isolate themselves from the external communities in which they are located? Do you feel that they could enrich their students' learning experiences, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen their local communities by integrating instruction and reflection with community service? And do you think that reaching out to their local communities in this way would also help their students to find meaningful jobs in their communities when they graduate?

This possibility flows from a belief that the one of the most important goals of a higher education is to prepare students to participate in the life of their communities as active and engaged citizens, and from a concern that our universities are missing opportunities to prepare their students for participation in community life by offering a purely theoretical education that ignores both practical learning experiences and meaningful community service. This possibility would aim at taking advantage of such opportunities. Instead of conceiving of higher education as theoretical instruction and reflection conducted largely in isolation from the cares of the outside world, it would redesign university curricula to actively seek out practical 'learning-by-doing' experiences in community service. And instead of evaluating the quality of higher education in terms of the theories their students learn, it would measure its success by the practical things that students do to help their communities. It would thus aim at transforming the university from an ivory tower into a place where students, professors, and people from the local community come together to solve the most pressing practical problems of their communities.

Far from training esoteric scholars in abstract academic fields, this possibility would aim at developing practical researchers and community leaders who are ready, able, and willing to work with businesses, local governments, state-owned enterprises, NGOs, government agencies, and other stakeholders in their local communities to acquire the practical knowledge and skills to make their communities, and the world at large, a better place to live.

This possibility would transform the university from an ivory tower into a place where people can learn the practical knowledge and skills they need to help them make the world a better place to live. It would thus encourage universities to cooperate with businesses, state-owned enterprises, NGOs, government agencies, and other stakeholders in their local communities.

Other Perspectives. But even if you agree that we need community leaders who have the real life experiences and skills to address the practical problems that our communities face, you may feel that this is not, and should not be, either the goal of *higher* education or the job of a *university*. You may think, on the contrary, that there is also a pressing need to develop theoretical knowledge to address our scientific problems; that doing so requires theoretical instruction and reflection, conducted in isolation from the immediate cares of the real world; and that the special job of the university and higher education is to provide it. If you tend to think this way, then you might also think that our universities should continue to promote the classical ideals of higher education instead of trying to play a more active role in community life.

Possible Implementations	Possible Effects of These Actions
<p><i>We could—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct joint surveys of market demand for university graduates to develop curricula that reflects the interests of government, business, and their local communities • Organize cooperation on practical projects between faculty, students, and community leaders • Analyze service learning projects developed by foreign universities and introduce them into our curricula • Assign students to do service learning projects to improve how local organizations function • Support doctoral student research oriented toward solving practical problems in their local communities • Develop ways to commercialize research results • Provide short university courses for industry leaders in the community • Create volunteer unions in universities and volunteer community service opportunities • Develop community initiatives and provide university participation and support for them 	<p><i>These actions could—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjust curricula to meet real market demands and requirements; lead to the development of a new curriculum that would prepare students to be more useful members of their communities • Improve the quality of education; help students to find meaningful employment in their local communities after they graduate • Help students learn how to combine theory with practice so they can play an active role in the public life of their communities • Increase students' self-confidence by giving them more practical experiences • Raise additional money for doctoral programs; help to find practical real life applications of our available knowledge • Help to raise additional financial resources to improve the quality of higher education • Improve relations between universities and industries in the community • Help to improve university facilities; promote student involvement in community life • Improve community initiatives and relations between universities and local communities

For Further Discussion...

- Do you think that universities currently isolate themselves from the external communities in which they are located? And if so, why do you think they do it?
- Do you think that reaching out to their local communities in the way this possibility envisions would help universities to achieve their current goals, or that it would introduce an entirely new set of goals for universities to achieve? And why?
- Do you think that teaching civic responsibility and integrating theoretical instruction and reflection with practical community service are among the proper aims of higher education? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- Do you think that reaching out to their communities in the way that this possibility envisions would help students find meaningful jobs in their communities when they graduate? If so, why so? If not, why not? And would it make any difference to your disposition toward this possibility if it did not?
- Do you think that the adoption of a curriculum devoted to service learning would change the relationship between students and their professors? And if so, how?
- Do you agree that universities should restructure their curricula in the way this possibility envisions to reach out to their communities? If so, why so? If not, why not?

AIM AT FINANCIAL AUTONOMY

This possibility would focus upon developing and implementing a wide range of activities for raising funds for higher education and using them effectively. It would, in this way, try to both achieve financial autonomy for our universities and create a reputation for their honest and responsible use of money.

Do you think that our universities need more money if they are ever going to be able to offer a high quality education? Do you worry that they often seem to use the little money that they do have ineffectively? And do you believe that they would function better if they were both more financially independent and more responsible in their use of funds?

This possibility flows from the belief that our universities simply do not have enough money to function properly on a day-to-day basis, let alone to provide quality world-class higher education, and from a concern that they do not always use the little money that they do have very wisely. It also flows from a concern that government will not be able to provide them with it, and would put unacceptable strings on its use if it could. This possibility maintains that the situation will improve only if our universities can become financially independent. It would thus seek ways for them to become financially autonomous, and ways for them to use their funds more effectively. Regardless of where you look, our universities are impoverished compared with universities in the West. People are underpaid and overworked. Buildings are old and in poor repair. Textbooks are out-of-date. And technology, when it exists at all, is antique. This possibility would try to find ways to raise funds to improve the situation. It would try, first of all, to create a culture in which fundraising is seen as good, necessary, and normal instead of bad, wrong, and shameful. Universities would identify possible mechanisms that they can use to raise funds—and possible donors to target. They might, for example, decide to charge tuition to students who do not pay any tuition, and raise tuition on students that do. They might try to raise more funds from alumni, parents, local businesses, non-profit international funding agencies, and international corporations with the aim of eventually becoming financially independent.

But regardless of how we raise money, the key to this possibility will be in learning how to use it wisely. Here, this possibility maintains that faculty oversight of university budgets and spending is essential for the wise use of funds. Such oversight would ensure that there would be rational differences between the salaries of university managers and university professors; that there would be differences in the salaries of professors based upon their experience, research, publications, and the results of their teaching; that funds would be paid to teachers for writing textbooks and traveling to conferences; that scholarships would be given to talented students; and that sufficient money would be spent on purchasing better equipment, new textbooks and journals, and on developing a more attractive learning environment.

This possibility flows from the belief that our universities simply do not have enough money to function properly on a day-to-day basis, let alone to provide quality world-class higher education, and from a concern that they do not always use the little money that they do have very wisely. It would thus seek ways for universities to raise more money, and ways for them to use the funds that they raise more effectively, in an attempt to eventually achieve financial autonomy.

Other Perspectives. But even if you agree that universities should try to raise more money and spend it wisely, you may think that it is unrealistic to think that they will be able to draw water from a well that is dry. You may also think that it is wishful thinking to think that faculty oversight of university spending will transform our universities into world-class institutions. And you may think that we need to find ways to improve the quality of higher education in our universities without relying upon an influx of more money.

Possible Implementations

We could—

- Allow state universities to raise money and to decide for themselves how to use it
- Raise money from university alumni, and involve them in improving their universities' facilities and resources
- Create a culture of rich people donating money to universities
- Create 'research parks' with 'business incubators' at universities
- Develop university websites and sell space on them to private businesses, NGOs, and state organizations to advertise themselves and their products
- Organize university research conferences for investors to interest them in investing in university research projects
- Increase university tuition and fees on all students
- Create and sell a wide variety of university 'logo' products
- Create a quality financial system to improve financial management and develop faculty oversight of the university's budget to use university funds more effectively

Possible Effects of These Actions

These actions could—

- Make state universities less dependent upon the state and more responsible for themselves
- Create more active alumni communities and associations; improve our universities' facilities and resources
- Help raise money for universities and improve their financial situations
- Transform our universities' research into new businesses
- Help universities raise money and achieve financial autonomy; associate universities too closely with certain businesses, NGOs, and state organizations
- Attract potential investors to support university research projects, thus freeing up university funds for other things
- Bring tuition and fees into closer alignment with the actual costs of higher education
- Raise awareness of and loyalty to the university; bring in extra money
- Result in more efficient use of university funds; eliminate corrupt practices in the management of university funds; totally backfire, if faculty turn out to be corrupt and inefficient managers

For Further Discussion...

- Do you believe that our universities need more money in order to offer a truly high quality education? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- Do you worry that our universities often seem to waste the little money that they have instead of using it wisely? And if so, what would you do to improve the way they use money?
- Do you think that faculty oversight of university spending would help to improve the way our universities use money, or only make it worse? And why?
- Do you believe our universities would be better off if they were financially independent from the state? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- Do you think that trying to raise funds for education would provide students with the kind of education they need in today's world, or that it would ultimately distract them from getting it? And why?
- Do you believe that the quality of education ultimately depends upon the money that we spend on it? If so, why so? If not, why not?

END THE BRAIN DRAIN— AND BEGIN A BRAIN GAIN

This possibility would develop a favorable social environment in our countries and universities that would motivate and encourage our students, professors, and qualified professionals to return home after studying and working abroad. It would also try to attract the best students, professors, and qualified professionals from other countries to study and work in our universities.

Do you believe that we are both subsidizing the West and impoverishing our own future by allowing our best and brightest students, faculty members, and young professionals to go abroad? Do you fear that they will almost inevitably try to emigrate once they see what the West has to offer them? And do you feel that we must find a way to reverse this trend if we are ever to flourish again as a society?

This possibility flows from a belief that the future of our countries depends entirely upon the talent of the people who live and work in them, and from a concern that many of our best and brightest students, professors, and professionals are leaving their home countries to live and work abroad. This ‘brain drain’ results in a decreasing intellectual potential for both our universities and our countries, which in turn reinforces the brain drain by weakening our universities’ ability to get the resources that they need to attract good students and to provide a world-class education. But this possibility also flows from a concern that it is difficult to solve the brain drain problem on the university level alone. Trying to keep our students, faculty, and young professionals at home by investing in our universities’ physical environment—in buildings, new technologies, equipment, and the like—and by increasing the salaries of our faculty members is a way of treating the symptoms of our problem instead of their underlying cause. A more general and effective policy for a national education system is necessary. This possibility would thus not only try to reverse the brain drain. It would also try to develop an open social environment that fosters creativity and innovation in an effort to attract talented students, faculty, and professionals from other countries to aid in our transition to a truly free and open society.

Far from forbidding our students, faculty, and young professionals the exit visas they need to study and work abroad, this possibility would facilitate their travel abroad and use whatever we can learn from it to develop incentives that would make them want to return home and make it more attractive for talented foreign students, faculty, and professionals to study, work, and live here too.

This possibility flows from a belief that the future of our countries depends entirely upon the talent of the people who work in them, and from a concern that many of our most talented students, professors, and young professionals are leaving their countries to live and work in the West.

Other Perspectives. But even if you agree that we need to find ways to reverse the brain drain and to encourage a brain gain, you may also feel that talk about developing a social environment that would both make our students, faculty, and young professionals want to return home, and make talented students, faculty, and young professionals from other countries want to study, live, and work here too is an empty promise unless we can actually come up with the goods. You may feel that trying to develop a more open society by sending our best and brightest abroad inevitably puts the cart before the horse, that we need to develop an environment that fosters creativity and innovation to attract foreign talent, and that it may be necessary to keep our best and brightest at home in order to do this. If you are more inclined to think this way, then you may also think that we should focus more upon developing incentives to keep our best and brightest at home, instead of trying to get them to return after they have left.

Possible Implementations

We could—

- Use total quality management methods to increase the quality of university education
- Have universities pay their most talented students and professors to study and work abroad, and then use their knowledge and experience to improve conditions at home
- Have universities collaborate with NGOs and foreign universities and institutions in an academic foreign exchange program
- Introduce new rules to promote university faculty solely on the basis of their experience studying and working abroad
- Offer tax free status to university faculty and professionals who have studied or worked abroad
- Give scholarships and tax free status to students and professors from the West who study and work at our universities
- Get western universities to give credit for courses their students take at our universities even if they pay only our tuition costs
- Absolutely defend free speech and academic freedom of professors and students
- Introduce Western technology, including computer software to organize online conferences, in our universities

Possible Effects of These Actions

These actions could—

- Increase motivation for teachers to work and students to study at their home universities
- Motivate talented students and professors to return home to work in their home countries, instead of finding some other ways to leave their countries and stay abroad
- Raise our universities' images and quality; make their professors and students more loyal; benefit all parties to the academic exchange
- Give our university faculty who are studying and working abroad powerful professional incentives to return home
- Give our university faculty and professionals who are studying and working abroad a powerful financial incentive to return home
- Offer powerful financial incentives to attract students and professors from the West to study and work at our universities
- Provide a powerful financial incentive for western students to take less expensive courses at our universities
- Result in a more open atmosphere in our universities and society
- Give professors and students who have worked and studied abroad an incentive to stay home, or to return home

For Further Discussion...

- Do you agree that the fact that many of our best students, professors, and young professionals are working and studying in the West poses a threat to the future of our countries? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- Why do you think that our best students, professors, and young professionals try to leave our countries?
- Do you believe that we are subsidizing the West and impoverishing our own future by allowing our best and brightest students, faculty members, and young professionals to go abroad? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- Do you fear that our students, professors, and young professionals will almost inevitably try to emigrate once they see what the West has to offer them? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- Do you think that it is possible to reverse our 'brain drain'? And if so, what can we do to reverse it?
- Do you think it is possible to attract foreign students and professors to study and teach at our universities? And if so, how would you do it?

PROMOTE CLASSICAL HIGHER EDUCATION— NOT JOB TRAINING

This possibility would promote the classical ideals of higher education both as the basis for a student's future self-development and self-realization and as a way to ensure happiness and satisfaction in his or her personal and professional life.

Do you believe that universities today have forgotten the classical goals of higher education? Do you feel that they are now far more concerned with immediate gratification, 'networking', job placement, and making money than they are with achieving those ideals? And do you worry that today's students are being trained in narrow areas that, while perhaps suitable for the kinds of jobs that exist in business and industry today, may leave them totally unprepared to transition into the kinds of jobs that business and industry may need tomorrow?

This possibility flows from a belief that a good classical education is best suited to develop well-informed and resourceful people who are able to combine both broad knowledge and knowledge of specific areas with generic skills of reasoning and critical thinking in a flexible way to address the ever-changing situations that they find in life. It also flows from a concern that the pressures of finding meaningful employment after graduation have led our students and universities to pursue the kind of education that will enable graduates to fill the immediate needs of the job market. Today, universities seem less inclined to uphold the traditional values of higher education, and more inclined to redesign their curricula to fit whatever they perceive as the current needs of the job market. This is not so much higher education as it is job training. And it might not be so bad were the jobs and skills that our businesses need today a good predictor of the jobs and skills that they will need tomorrow. The result, however, is that university students are increasingly trained in narrow specialties that may get them jobs upon graduation, but often leave them unprepared and unable to adapt when the needs of the job market change. This possibility would try to reverse this trend in higher education in an attempt to prepare students who are better able to adapt to new challenges in their lives.

Far from seeking the advice of business leaders to redesign our university curricula to suit their needs, this possibility would promote the ideals of higher education both as the basis for a person's future development and self-realization, and as a way to attain happiness and satisfaction in his or her personal and professional life. Students would not be trained in a narrow field, but in a broad and classical way that would enable them to make their lives more fulfilling. This possibility would thus aim at satisfying the ever-changing needs of an ever-changing job market by endowing students with the critical and creative mental skills that will enable them to adapt to it. And it would encourage universities to develop active, informed, and involved critical thinkers that are vital for a more innovative and democratic society.

Today, universities seem less inclined to uphold the traditional values of higher education, and more inclined to redesign their curricula to fit whatever they perceive as the current needs of the job market. This is not so much higher education as it is job training.

Other Perspectives. But even if you generally agree with the classical goals of higher education, you may think that a classical higher education is a luxury that our students and universities can no longer afford. You may think that our jobs have become far more specialized in recent decades, and that they thus require workers who are more specialized too. Or you may think that the job market has become increasingly competitive as a result, and that our universities will need to teach the skills that students will need to compete for them if they are going to survive in today's world. But if you agree with these ideas, then you may also think that universities need to adapt their concept of higher education to the changing realities of the 21st century.

Possible Implementations

We could—

- Explain the value of classical education to high school students, incoming university students, and their parents
- Launch an aggressive advertising campaign to raise public awareness about how classical education gives students greater flexibility in the job market
- Resist the temptations and international pressures to develop a practical job-training curriculum focused on narrow specializations
- Develop a long-term strategy to focus on the classical values of higher education while meeting the needs of the job market
- Promote a liberal arts curriculum structured around reading, analyzing, and critically discussing world classics and original sources in the humanities, arts, and sciences
- Create separate non-university job-training schools for students who are not interested in pursuing classical higher education
- Offer different degrees and certifications for classical higher education and job-training
- Create faculty/student discussion clubs and start a discussion in the university about what higher education should be
- Hold more essay contests, debates, discussion sessions, poetry and literature evenings

Possible Effects of These Actions

These actions could—

- Raise public awareness about the value of classical education and make more students interested in pursuing it
- Persuade people that classical education is more valuable and useful than job training; produce graduates who can adapt more easily to the changing needs of the job market
- Help us save the programs that we have in our universities for the study of humanities, arts, and sciences
- Create a more favorable environment for promoting the classical ideals of higher education
- Develop our students' minds and their ability to read difficult texts, to think for themselves, to think critically about difficult issues, and to make their own judgments about them
- Improve both classical higher education and job-training courses; make students and faculty happier at both kinds of institutions
- Clarify in the public mind that there is a difference between the two
- Let students and faculty say what they think about the suggested reforms in higher education
- Create a society where classical higher education and intellectuals are respected

For Further Discussion...

- Do you believe that there is, or should be, a difference between job training and a university education? If not, why not? And if so, how do you think they differ, or should differ?
- Do you believe universities are currently focused too narrowly on job training? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- Do you agree that a broad liberal arts education prepares students better for the job-market than specific training in narrow specialties? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- Do you think that the primary value of higher education is its ability to prepare students for the job market? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- Do you agree that our current educational system is not in tune with the real job market needs of the future? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- Would you prefer to have a classical higher education, or good job training? And why?

DEMOCRATIZE UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

This possibility would introduce a democratic structure of university management to increase faculty oversight of university budgets, curricula, strategic development, hiring policy, identification of priorities, and other governance issues. It would also ensure that faculty and students have both a voice and a vote in their university's governance process.

Do you think that the people who manage university affairs are often out of touch with what they are supposed to be managing? Do you worry that the people they manage have gotten used to telling them what they want to hear, and that they are now too fearful of possible retributions to tell them what really needs to be done? And do you think that the only way to improve the situation is to democratize university management by giving faculty, students, and other stakeholders a real voice in the university's governance and decision-making processes?

This possibility flows from a concern that the people who manage universities have lost touch with conditions on the ground, that they are now more concerned with making money than with improving higher education, and that they are thus making decisions that are detrimental to the proper function of universities. It also flows from a belief that the people who are directly affected by management decisions are in the best position to make them, and a concern that management is typically unreceptive to what they say unless they say what it wants to hear. This possibility would aim at improving the management of our universities by creating a democratic structure for managing university affairs. It would thus provide faculty and students with both a voice and a vote in their university's governance and decision-making processes. Including faculty and students in their university's decision-making processes would result in more satisfied and loyal faculty and students. It would also result in better decisions. And it would enhance the democratic atmosphere in the university by making the rationale for these decisions more transparent. This policy would consider faculty and students as partners in the university's governance process. It would seek their advice about what they think a higher education is, or should be, and by trying to meet their overall expectations.

Democratizing university management in this way would better prepare our students and faculty for the kind of democratic governance that is useful for both learning and collective decision-making. It would balance majority rule with respect for the interests and rights of minorities. And it would eventually enhance the general democratic atmosphere in our society by developing and strengthening leadership skills in our young.

Including faculty and students in their university's decision-making process would result in more satisfied and loyal faculty members and students. It would also result in better decisions. And it would improve the democratic atmosphere in the university by making the rationale for these decisions more transparent. It would, in this way, better prepare our students for the kind of democratic governance that is useful for both learning and collective decision-making, and it would generally enhance the democratic systems in society by developing and strengthening the leadership skills of our young.

Other Perspectives. But even if you agree that university management is generally out of touch with what it is managing, you might not agree that democratizing university management is the right way to go. You may think that, whatever else might be said in its favor, democracy does not have a very good reputation for efficient management. You may think that students are not yet ready to manage themselves, let alone the affairs of a university. And you may think that allowing university faculty to oversee budget decisions will only lead to battles in which faculty try to get the most that they can for their own department. If you think any or all of these things, then you might also think that there must be a better way than democracy to improve university management.

Possible Implementations	Possible Effects of These Actions
<p><i>We could—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute a democratic system of management with direct elections on all levels • Conduct joint decision-making meetings with representatives of the Ministry of Education, university faculty members, and university management • Establish a clear and transparent structure for university decision-making procedures • Require university management to present more detailed and transparent financial reports to faculty • Maintain transparency in faculty performance reviews, promotions, and pay raises • Create a blog or wall to post comments about management decisions • Hold meetings with university management, faculty, and students about the quality of teaching and learning • Promote the ideas of democracy, freedom, and self-governance via the university’s newspaper, TV, and discussion clubs • Form an international association of university professors to lobby on behalf of the academic freedom of university professors 	<p><i>These actions could—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop the process of decreasing democracy in our universities • Inform the Ministry of Education of the real conditions on the ground; enable the Ministry to focus upon building institutions rather than course content • Clarify the decision-making process; ensure its transparency; restore confidence in it • Result in better financial management; result in even fewer faculty members reading the reports due their greater detail • Prove to be counterproductive, if people fear retribution for what they say • Provide an opportunity for open discussion; help university management get feedback • Inform university management of conditions on the ground; result in an improvement in the quality of education • Better prepare students to make their own governance choices about the kind of society in which they want to live • Enable elite professors in our society to join their international counterparts in promoting the ideas of democracy and freedom

For Further Discussion...

- Do you agree that the people who manage university affairs are often out of touch with what they are supposed to be managing? And if so, why do you think they are out touch?
- Do you believe that management often encourages the people it manages to tell them only what they want to hear? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- Do you think that including faculty, students, and other stakeholders in a university’s governance and decision-making processes is more likely to improve university management or make it more difficult? Explain your answer.
- Do you believe that democratizing university management would result in better management decisions? If so, why so? If not, why not?
- Do you believe that the people who are directly affected by management decisions are always, or usually, in the best position to make them? If so, why so? If not, why not? And if not, then who might be in a better position to make them—and why?
- Do you agree that democratic governance is useful for learning? If so, why so? If not, why not? And what, in any event, is democratic governance?

ON CONTRASTS AND CHOICES

AMONG THE POSSIBILITIES

There are many contrasts among the seven conceptual possibilities in this report, and many choices that you would have to make in order to adopt any of them. Some of these contrasts and choices concern the nature of higher education. Others concern the purpose of higher education and role that money plays in it. Still others concern the way in which universities should be governed, the kind of environment they should foster, the moral values that should inspire them, and the value that we should place upon them. And still others concern the things we could do to realize the different concepts of higher education that inspire them. We will not attempt to describe all of the contrasts that exist between these seven possibilities and all of the choices that they might call upon you to make. But a few examples of the more salient ones might help you to recognize others, and to better understand the possibilities that we have described and the need to choose among them.

Create a Culture of Freedom, Reach Out to the Community, Nurture Integrity, and Promote Classical Higher Education—Not Job Training each give different answers to the question *‘What is the nature, purpose, and goal of higher education?’* **Create a Culture of Freedom** says that higher education should encourage students to think for themselves, and should train them how to do it. **Reach Out to the Community** says that higher education should combine theoretical education and practical education so as to prepare students to accept leadership roles in their communities. **Nurture Integrity** says that higher education should prepare students to compete for jobs in an increasingly global job market. And **Promote Classical Higher Education—Not Job Training** says that higher education should combine knowledge of the classics and knowledge of specific areas with reasoning and critical thinking skills to prepare students to both pursue their own self-realization and to adapt to the changing situations in the world. It is difficult to see how someone can consistently adopt all of these possibilities at once. You must, instead, choose among them.

Create a Culture of Freedom, Democratize University Management, and Nurture Integrity would each try to improve higher education in the post-communist states, but they would do so in different ways. **Create a Culture of Freedom** would try to improve it from the bottom up, by increasing faculty and student freedom to explore and develop new ideas. **Democratize University Management** would try to improve it from the top down, by ensuring that faculty and students have a say in governance decisions. And **Nurture Integrity** would try to improve it by reversing the old communist emphasis upon equality and equal treatment, creating incentives for people to work harder and better, encouraging competition at all levels in the society, rewarding professors and students who excel, eliminating corruption, and introducing quality assurance techniques and measures for all aspects of the education process. Some of the possibilities may not actually conflict with each other, but they each propose a different approach to improving higher education in the post-communist states—and some of them would require significant changes in some of the most deep-seated beliefs, mental habits, and values that govern people’s actions in post-communist states. This, perhaps, is most true of **Aim at Financial Autonomy**. Its idea of raising money and using it wisely may seem too obvious to even mention for Westerners. But the people who developed it said that they would have to create a culture in their universities in which fundraising activities are regarded as good, normal, and necessary, instead of bad, wrong, and shameful.

We should also point out that each of the conceptual possibilities might be regarded as presenting at least two possible policy choices. For you might choose to accept it *or* reject it—*or* to modify it in some way to make it acceptable. But quite aside from that, we have included an ‘Other Perspectives’ section in the description of each possibility that suggests some reasons why you or other people might oppose it, and which conceptual possibilities you might prefer if you do oppose it.

These are just a few of the ways in which the conceptual possibilities in this report contrast with each other, and just a few of the choices that you would have to make to adopt any of them. There are, of course, numerous other ways in which the possibilities overlap with each other. Indeed, the professors who developed this report actually talked about improving the quality of higher education, eliminating corruption, and rewarding merit as separate possibilities through most of the project—only to combine them in the end as symptoms of a much deeper concern. Some of the possibilities, as we have already said, are consistent with the others and could probably be adopted together with any or all of them—**Nurture Integrity** and **Aim at Financial Autonomy** come to mind—though even here, you might have to decide which is the chicken and which is the egg. But we hope that pointing out their differences will assure you that they are not planks in a unified political platform for public policy pertaining to the future of higher education in post-communist states.

We hope that these contrasts, and the need to choose among the conceptual possibilities in this report, will help to stimulate and enhance your exploration of both higher education as an area of concern, and the conceptual possibilities for public policy pertaining to it that we present here. We also hope that you will enjoy discussing these possibilities—and any others that they might lead you to develop—with your families, friends, and neighbors. And we hope that you will carefully consider each of the possibilities in this report, and many more of your own, before deciding which of them, if any, you might like to pursue as public policy.

An Open Invitation To Further Discussion & Interactivity

We hope that you will use this report to carry forward the discussion begun by our project panels.

We have developed a citizen discussion process that may be useful for groups interested in discussing the ideas presented in our reports or in discussing matters of public interest more generally. We have also developed facilitation and discussion guidebooks to assist in the planning and conduct of these discussions. These materials, as well as copies of this and other Interactivity Foundation reports, may be downloaded from our website (listed below). You can obtain additional printed copies of any of our publications (at no cost) by sending us a request that briefly indicates their intended use.

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Finally, we welcome your comments, ideas, and other feedback about this report, its possibilities, any of our publications, or our discussion processes.

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