

Cite as: Wright, D. A. (2016). Review of Higher education: A worldwide inventory, research centers, academic programs, journals and publication. *Journal for the Study of Postsecondary and Tertiary Education*, 1, 67-71. Retrieved from <http://www.jspte.org/Volume1/JSPTev1p067-071Wright2439.pdf>

Review of “Higher Education: A Worldwide Inventory of Research Centers, Academic Programs, and Journals and Publications”

Dianne A. Wright

Florida Atlantic University – Davie Campus, Davie, FL, USA

dwright@fau.edu

Rumbley, Abtatch, Stanfield, Shimmi, Gayardon, and Chan’s *Worldwide Inventory* (2014) is a far cry from the first “*Directory of Higher Education Programs*” that I developed for the ASHE Council for the Advancement of Higher Education Programs (CAHEP) in 2004 (Wright, 2004). This initial CAHEP Directory of Higher Education Programs was a spiral bound paper directory that is now provided electronically by CAHEP. Secondly, though not mentioned in its title, the CAHEP directory was, for the most part, limited to higher education programs in the United States. This limited perspective identified just only over 200 higher education administration, management, and leadership programs, including general higher education administration programs, student affairs programs, and related other higher education programs with various other higher education concentrations. This is now compared to what are over 450 higher education programs that have been identified by authors Rumbley, Altbach, Stanfield, Shimmi, Gayardon, and Chan (2014), worldwide. Also, while the intent was to use the initial CAHEP directory as a resource for higher education program directors and researchers, Rumbley et al.’s 2014 *Worldwide Inventory* provides much more; not only in terms of the inventory’s higher education academic program, research center, professional organization, journal and periodical publication listings along with contact information, location, focus areas, and number of faculty, researchers, or professional staff, but also a substantive analysis of the existing landscape of higher education as a field of study, policy analysis, and research globally. Examples include a history and current trends in the field of higher education, the positioning of the field of higher education around the globe, with a particular focus on its steady growth and prominence in China, followed by growth in the United Kingdom, Africa, Japan, and Latin America, and a focus on the importance of increased understanding of the critical role that higher education plays in the economic and social development of countries around the world.

Like many other publications preceding it, the authors continue to describe higher education as a

Material published as part of this publication, either on-line or in print, is copyrighted by the Informing Science Institute and Preeminent Leadership and Research Solutions, LLC. Permission to make digital or paper copy of part or all of these works for personal or classroom use is granted without fee provided that the copies are not made or distributed for profit or commercial advantage AND that copies 1) bear this notice in full and 2) give the full citation on the first page. It is permissible to abstract these works so long as credit is given. To copy in all other cases or to republish or to post on a server or to redistribute to lists requires specific permission and payment of a fee. Contact Publisher@InformingScience.org to request redistribution permission.

relatively new field of study and, particularly from the focus of this work, worldwide. My only disappointment was the authors’ statement, that “higher education is a field without a clear, intellectual, methodological, or disciplinary center”, a statement that seemed unnecessary, particularly considering all of the other descriptors of the field throughout the work that evoked a field with a sense of clarity, intellectualism, methodological design (albeit it varied),

Book Review. Editor: Sydney Freeman, Jr.

Submitted: January 11, 2016; Revised: January 13, 2016; Accepted: January 13, 2016

and with a center representative of multidisciplinary and/or interdisciplinarity, foci that are now recognized by other disciplines, and higher education in general, as a focus of strength and sustainability. For instance, the authors are very clear in noting that “the scholarly study of higher education has emerged as a field of research and professional training in universities worldwide” (Rumbley et al., 2014).

On the other hand, one of the most significant contributions that the authors make has to do with language; simply how we refer to our programs, what we call what we teach and research, what we do, i.e., higher education administration, management and leadership. Another significant insight the authors provide is that higher education administration, management, and leadership programs, with the exception of the United States in large part, are not all located in Colleges of Education. Rather, for example, the United Kingdom and Australia have begun higher education concentrations in Schools of Management. Such an organizational structure may be worth at least some thought in other countries such as the United States, particularly considering the often second class status of many Colleges of Education where Higher Education programs are most often located.

The authors go on to provide a perspective not only in terms of where we are now, but also provide several recommendations on how study of and in the field of higher education, from a worldwide perspective, can move forward in terms of providing greater understanding of the extent, growth, and global complexity of field. Overall this publication provides the profession with an excellent compendium of information, particularly for those who do research and study in the field of higher education.

The book contains six chapters and begins with an introduction describing the book's purpose as providing researchers, policymakers, and others with an overview of where higher education training and research is taking place around the world, scope of these activities, and indications about the areas in which different actors are choosing to focus. It goes beyond Wright and Miller's (2007) edited book titled, *Training Higher Education Leaders & Policy Makers: A Graduate Perspective*, which is a compendium of perspectives regarding the appropriate role for colleges and universities in the preparation of individuals for productive careers in higher education, and Freeman, Hagedorn, Goodchild, and Wright's (2013) *Advancing Higher Education as a Field of Study: In Quest of Doctoral Degree Guidelines* that presents debates on the need for guidelines and standards for higher education administration academic programs.

Rumbley et al.'s work builds on two past research projects and their resulting publications (Altbach, Bozeman, Janashia, & Rumbley, 2006; Altbach & Engberg, 2000). It also builds on the “Shanghai Statement” issued by the Boston Center for International Higher Education after organizing the November 2013 “International Higher Education Research and Policy Roundtable” in Shanghai, and makes more visible the broad spectrum of actors engaged in the field of higher education across the globe. According to the Boston Center for International Higher Education (2014), higher education research centers, as well as academic programs devoted to educating the next generation of higher education leaders and specialists, are central to the future of the higher enterprise globally.

Chapter One. In the first chapter, titled *Knowledge for the Contemporary University: Higher Education as a Field of Study and Training*, Philip Altbach provides a brief history of advanced study at the postsecondary level beginning in Europe in the 11th century, with the establishment of universities in Bologna and Paris. He notes that there were “no institutions devoted to the study of higher education or educating those who are responsible for university leadership or management until the 20th century” Altbach (2014, p.7). The latter is now necessary, he contends, as higher education has moved from universities that served an elite and small age cohort of students to massification and, along with it, increased responsibilities. As such, leaders and administrators

of institutions and systems require expertise about the expanding size and scope of the higher education enterprise. More specifically, as Gmelch and Buller (2015) have more recently noted, postsecondary institutions need skilled management and leadership.

I found interesting Altbach's comparing the contemporary university to a large business enterprise, which he contends is misleading. The difference, he notes, primarily is higher education's long tradition of shared governance, self-management, and its "quintessential" focus on the public good, playing a major role in social mobility.

Altbach interweaves perspectives on higher education funding in general and then specifically as they describe the funding of higher education programs as tenuous. Along these lines, he also considers the funding of research centers, training programs, and other related agencies and organizations, with academic programs generally receiving their funding from their sponsoring university, more multifaceted. Though difficult to access, it would be interesting to consider a comparative analysis of the funding support related to each of these entities.

This chapter goes on to cover a range of topics, any one of which could have been a chapter unto its own including Higher Education's Needs in Terms of Data, Analysis, and Training; Institutional Research; the Emergence of Higher as An Academic Field; Academic Degree Programs; as well as Non-Degree Leadership; International Research and Organizations; and Quality Assurance and Accreditation among others.

This chapter ends with a conclusion describing the emergence and development of higher education as a viable and important field of research, scholarship, training, and professional concern: a far cry from earlier publications related to the study of higher education where higher education continued to be described as a field not having yet found its way. Many might disagree with Altbach's contention, however, that the field is not scholarly, as many in the field do conduct at least what they consider scholarly work, and that the field does not have a set of concerns for research and study.

More specifically, the authors appear to contradict themselves. Is not doing scholarship being "scholarly;" publishing research in scholarly journals; both of which the authors give credence to in other parts of the book.

Also, the authors own extensive list of topics included in this chapter serve as a contradiction of the authors' statement that the field does not have a set of concerns for research and study.

Chapter Two. In chapter two, titled "*A Global Inventory of Research, Training and Publication*," the authors present their global inventory of higher education research centers, academic programs and journals/publications, built purposefully on two previous iterations of a similar inventory. The chapter recognizes the diverse actors involved in this work globally and provides a greater understanding about these research centers, academic programs, and publications communities. Basic criteria for inclusion in the inventory of Higher Education Centers or Institutes, Academic Programs, and Journals/Publication are reflected, as well as how these criteria were determined and criteria delimitations based on the scattered landscape of work being done in the field. The authors then move to what they refer to as *from inventory to insight*, providing focal points and areas of expertise amongst higher education professionals. Not surprisingly, very real imbalances are found in terms of the geographic distribution of these organizations and activities, and English dominates as the language of communication in the field. The United States, for instance, has the largest number (70 percent) of higher education academic programs; though there are several hundred Chinese universities providing education in the field of higher education today. Only 6 programs were identified in Africa (4 in South Africa, 1 in Mozambique and one in Uganda), 3 in Latin America, and 1 in Egypt.

Interestingly, while student affairs programs seem to dominate in the United States, when looked at from a global perspective, they are listed among the least commonly cited specializations or expertise area, with comparative or international studies at 42.9 percent; administration, management or leadership at 41.9 percent; economics, financing or funding of higher education at 33.6 percent; quality assurance, assessment, or accreditation at 25.8 percent, and student affairs or student development at 9.7 percent.

Also interesting was a key finding that 1 in 5 (20.7 percent) of the inventory respondents indicated that curriculum and instruction, or teaching and learning, was a particular area of interest or expertise for their center.

Other key findings include the United States, China, the United Kingdom, and Japan having the largest number of research centers/institutes, whereas the Middle East and North Africa, and Latin America are woefully behind in terms of hosting research centers/institutes. In addition, a significant proportion of higher education journals/publications is produced in the United States – 36.1 percent, followed by the United Kingdom (12.1 percent), China (9.6 percent), Japan (9.6 percent), Australia (3.2 percent), and Canada (3.2 percent).

Inventory results provide great insights for higher educationists positioned to determine where their expertise might best be a commodity outside of their own institution or organization and/or for purposes of collaboration, support, or encouragement.

In describing the road ahead, the authors acknowledge that while the insights revealed are significant, more work needs to be done in order to refine understandings of the higher education network around the world. Examples put forth include a better sense of the role of centers focused on the scholarship of teaching and learning, as well as the varied groups of organizations increasingly offering leadership training and professional development; more complete and nuanced information about the range of programs, centers and journal/publication activities in China; and hybrid/fully on-line academic and professional development programs. Also, the authors note that the increasingly popular adoption of open source journals can also improve access and communication significantly.

Chapter Three. In chapter three, the authors provide a guide to the use of the inventory through the use of an alphabetized and user-friendly listing of the three sections of the book (i.e., centers/institutes, academic programs by country and then by name of institution that offers the program, and alphabetized journals).

Chapters Four through Six. In chapter four, the authors' worldwide inventory of higher education research centers are listed, followed by their worldwide inventory of higher education academic programs' listing in chapter 5, and worldwide inventory of higher education journals and publications' listing in chapter 6.

Summary. This work is significant in many ways. It expands on seminal works in the field such as Dressel and Mayhew (1974), Fife and Goodchild (1991), Wright and Miller (2007), and Wang (2010).

The potential to learn from one another, based on the information provided and a project of this sort, is great.

References

- Altbach, P. G. (2014). Knowledge for the contemporary university: Higher education as a field of study and training. In L. E. Rumbley, P. G. Altbach, D. A. Stanfield, Y. Shimmi, A. de Gayardon, & R. Chan, (2014). *Higher education: A worldwide inventory of research centers, academic programs, and journals and publications* (3rd ed.). Lemmens Media: Bonn.
- Altbach, P. G., Bozeman, L.A., Janashia, N., & Rumbley, L.E. (Eds.). (2006). *Higher education: A world-wide inventory of centers and programs*. Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
- Altbach, P. G., & Engberg, D. (2000). *Higher education: A worldwide inventory of centers and programs*. Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press.
- Boston Center for International Higher Education. (2014). The need for research and training for the higher education enterprise: The Shanghai Statement. *International Higher Education*, 74(Winter). 2-3. Available at <https://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ihe/article/view/5460>
- Dressel, P., & Mayhew, L. (1974). *Higher education as a field of study. The emergence of a profession*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Fife, J., & Goodchild, L. (1991). *Administration as a profession. New Directions in Higher Education*, 76. Jossey Bass.
- Freeman, S., Hagedorn, L., Goodchild, L., & Wright, D. (2013). *Advancing higher education as a field of study: In quest of doctoral degree guidelines*. Sage Publishers.
- Gmelch, W. H., & Buller, J. L. (2015). *Building academic leadership capacity: A guide to best practices*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Rumbley, L E., Altbach, P. G., Stanfield, D. A., Shimmi, Y., de Gayardon, A., & Chan, R. (2014). *Higher education: A worldwide inventory of research centers, academic programs, and journals and publications* (3rd ed.). Lemmens Media: Bonn.
- Wang, X. (2010). *Higher education as a field of study in China*. Maryland: Lexington Books.
- Wright, D. A. (2004). *Directory of higher education programs*. Compiled by Dianne A. Wright, Chair 2004-2009, ASHE Council for the Advancement of Higher Education.
- Wright, D., & Miller, M. (2007) *Training higher education leaders & policy makers: A graduate perspective*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Biography



Dianne A. Wright is a graduate of Florida State University and currently serves as an Associate Professor of Higher Education Leadership and Finance Policy at Florida Atlantic University. She previously served as Visiting and Tenured Associate Professor at the University of Akron, and held higher education leadership positions at the University of Akron, West Virginia University, and Florida State University. She has also served as the Chair of Association for the Study of Higher Education's (ASHE) Council for the Advancement of Higher Education Programs (CAHEP), 2004-2009. Previous to her academic career, Dr. Wright served as a Policy and Budget Analyst for the State of Florida. She is the author and editor of several books and publications, including *Training Higher Education Leaders & Policy Makers: A Graduate Perspective*, and *Advancing Higher Education as a Field of Study: In Quest of Doctoral Degree Guidelines*.