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CIHE Perspective

This series of studies focuses on aspects of research and analysis undertaken at or in partnership with the Boston College Center for International Higher Education.

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C o n t e n t s

- 1 CIHE Foreword
- 2 Duke Kunshan University Foreword
- 3 Executive Summary

O v e r v i e w

- 5 Introduction
- 6 The Liberal Arts and Sciences in China
- 7 A Pivotal Moment

M a j o r F i n d i n g s

- 9 Make General Education Matter
- 10 Invest in Interdisciplinary Integration
- 12 Focus on Faculty Incentives
- 13 Embrace Innovative Pedagogy
- 15 Scale Quality Programs
- 16 Study Multiple Traditions
- 18 Conclusion
- 20 Meeting Participants

B e h i n d t h e S c e n e s

- 23 Re-inventing Liberal Arts Education in China in the Age of Smart Machines
Gang Chen, Jie Chen, & Ai
- 34 Liberal Education in China
Gang Chen, Jie Chen, & Ai
- 40 What is Liberal Arts Education in the 21st Century? An Exploration Starts with Chinese Universities and Goes Beyond China
Gang Chen, Jie Chen, & Ai
- 49 Institutionalizing Liberal Education in China: Obstacles and Challenges
Gang Chen, Jie Chen, & Ai

It is my great pleasure to present this eighth issue of CIHE Perspectives, a series of studies focusing on aspects of research and analysis undertaken and coordinated by or in partnership with the Boston College Center for International Higher Education (CIHE). This issue is a cooperation between CIHE and Duke Kunshan University (DKU), a joint venture of Duke University and Wuhan University. It is written by Kara Godwin, CIHE Research Fellow, and Noah Pickus, Dean of Undergraduate Curricular Affairs and Faculty Development at Duke Kunshan University and Associate Provost at Duke University. This Perspective addresses the obstacles and oppor-

The purpose of CIHE Perspectives is to serve as a resource for policy and research, but also to stimulate debate and interaction on key issues in international and comparative higher education. The growing global interest in liberal education, particularly as it pertains to the world's largest higher education system in China, is one of those key issues. I want to thank Noah Pickus and Kara Godwin for their contribution, and Duke Kunshan

tunities for innovative liberal arts and sciences initiatives in China by providing six key recommendations for the future. It builds on a meeting from June 2017 when twenty-six university leaders and scholars met at DKU to assess the significant growth in new liberal arts and sciences practices that are emerging as key factors in China's educational landscape. An appendix also includes four framing papers from that meeting.

In the last decade, Mainland China and Hong Kong have witnessed significant growth in university programs and schools that emphasize the liberal arts and sciences. The liberal arts and sciences prepare lifelong learners with broad, integrated knowledge and a sense of social responsibility. These features draw on China's deep cultural and philosophical traditions and are crucial to achieving three important goals: fueling an innovation economy, shaping wise and caring citizens, and cultivating graduates with a sense of purpose and passion.

The growth in liberal arts and sciences programs has happened both within Chinese higher education and as part of new joint ventures between Chinese and Western universities. But the real opportunity for China in implementing these initiatives goes beyond reforming its own universities. If China can implement and expand these programs in innovative and culturally relevant ways, it will shape liberal arts and sciences education reform throughout the world.

There are, however, significant obstacles to reform within China. These obstacles include general confusion over the meaning of the liberal arts; doubts about its value and relevance; the low quality and limited reach of current offerings; a lack of qualified faculty; formal metrics and incentives that hamper educational innovation; bureaucratic resistance; difficulties in scaling programs; the need for new ways of teaching about Chinese, Western, and other cultures, traditions, and values; and the fact that Mainland Chinese institutions are still overseen by important political forces that are ambivalent about the virtues of liberal arts and sciences educa-

Liberal Arts Education

Liberal arts and sciences is a holistic philosophy, a comprehensive way of thinking about education's purpose, goals, and delivery. Its aim is to prepare lifelong learners with broad, integrated knowledge and a sense of social responsibility. It includes a general education component, common courses taken by all students or those required in a breadth of disciplines, but is not limited to only these courses. Instead of concentrating solely on teaching disci-

their own success with general disregard for the wellbeing of others. With 75% of Chinese secondary school leavers now considering some type of tertiary training, a growing cross-section of the population thus has the potential to influence economic and social conditions.

RECOMMENDATION

During the last decade, general education curricular reforms have been an important step forward for Chinese universities. General education provides an opportunity for students to study in disciplines outside their major. It typically exists in two forms: a core curriculum, sometimes called the “common core,” or a distribution model. In a common core program, all students are required to take the same courses. The purpose of these courses is to provide a shared knowledge base for all graduates. A distribution model requires students to take courses from a variety of disciplines beyond their major. The requirements are “distributed” across humanities, social science, arts, and the sciences and typically involve introductory courses or those specially designed for the general education program, e.g., a biology course developed specifically for humanities students or a poetry class created for students in STEM fields.

In China, contemporary general education reforms originated during the cultural quality education (CQE) movement beginning in 1995. Top tier institutions like Peking, Tsinghua, and Zhejiang Universities, in particular, experimented with efforts to broaden undergraduate training beyond a focus on science and technology. In the next ten years, the movement expanded to include 61 national centers focused on CQE that have influenced over 100 institutions. Both types of general education, common core and distribution models, are growing in China. All Hong Kong public universities and increasingly many on the Mainland now require that students take courses outside of their primary discipline where they are at least exposed to a variety of subjects.

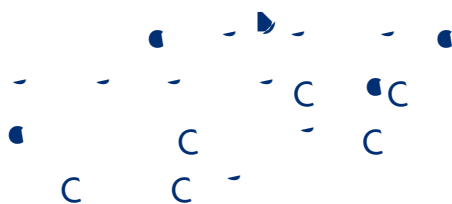
The University of Hong Kong’s Common Core program is an instructive example. To ensure quali-

ty courses taught by faculty who were invested in their new Common Core, academic leaders developed a comprehensive approach. They worked together with faculty members to discern learning outcomes and a broad rubric for the program. Individual faculty, however, had autonomy to design courses that they then submitted for review. In this way, academic leaders, who also maintained the program budget, were able to evaluate course development to ensure that courses aligned with the program’s common goals and that the content and delivery were of high quality.

General education also faces major obstacles in China, especially in terms of how students and their parents regard these new requirements. They are often seen as an encumbrance, rather than an enhancement, to meeting their educational goals. Students are under significant social and familial pressure to score well on the gaokao and get into the best Chinese university they are able. Once there, they are expected to engage in a study program that will result in lucrative employment after graduation. Science, finance, and engineering are highly favored majors. These pressures are bred in a culture of competition instilled in students from a young age and amplified by a secondary education system focused on exam preparation.

Competition is also fueled by China’s widening prosperity gap and a rising middle class. Increased access to higher education has meant that a growing number of parents now see a university degree as their primary vehicle for achieving greater familial economic stability. As Zha explains, these pressures are disproportionately salient for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Students and their families want to know how their child’s university de-

gree will lead to employment and social mobility. To many middle-class families, liberal arts and sciences and even general education can appear at best a frivolous luxury and at worst an obstacle to future success.



Many Chinese students thus understandably lack intrinsic motivation to study in general education courses and often do so without understanding the purpose of these courses or their relationship to their major. Chinese students also often feel overburdened with two curricula—a general education curriculum and their major field of study. As in the U.S., Postiglione, Ma, and Te show how this leads to a widespread disregard for general education courses as “extra” and not especially relevant learning, especially the many courses that are viewed as watered-down versions of more substantive disciplinary material. At the same time, students (and their parents) complain about the effect of receiving a low grade in general education courses that impacts their overall university record.

The first step in making LAS matter in China is therefore to focus relentlessly on improving the

quality of general education courses. Even if students understand the purpose of general education, that justification as well as student motivation will be undermined if course content and delivery are poorly developed. If it is to succeed, the fledgling curriculum reform movement in China will require significantly more attention and resources. It is also critical to recognize that general education in itself does not go far enough. It is limited as a reform model when common core or distribution curricula are developed in a vacuum or as independent from the rest of the curriculum.

Instead, a higher education system that can address future needs depends on a broader and deeper articulation of the value of education beyond general education courses and a major, one that speaks to the pragmatic concerns of students and parents. Continuing to simply offer general education courses, particularly if they are of low quality, encourages students to think of general and professional education as unrelated. Educators believe they are providing students with academic breadth, but students come to see that breadth as irrelevant. Instead, general education courses work best when designed in concert with disciplinary requirements and pedagogical reforms. To improve quality, academic leaders should consider integrating the curriculum, prioritizing teaching, and providing opportunities for faculty development—measures that align squarely with recommendations for liberal arts and sciences expansion in China.

The future demands problem solving that can only be achieved through integrated, interdisciplinary habits of thinking, a central tenet of liberal arts and sciences education. Although general education provides a *multidisciplinary* curriculum, it typically lacks the integration that delivers a truly *interdisciplinary* education. Like disciplinary boundaries established in Germany and overemphasized in the West today, content and student experience

of the various subjects is siloed. Students also lack understanding about how courses connect to them personally. If focused predominately on general education, China’s progress toward tertiary reform is playing catch-up in a losing game with a curriculum design that, as observed in the U.S. and other countries, does not achieve broad, creative, and critical thinkers on its own.

There are, however, some universities in Main-

land China and Hong Kong that are experimenting with new ways to approach the liberal arts and sci

even government-mandated reforms take a long time to implement and are met with unpredictable bureaucratic challenges. However, the growth of interdisciplinary programming and an effective liberal arts and sciences philosophy depend on an academic culture that is deliberately integrated.

incentives and time to do so outside of their traditional discipline boundaries and obligations. Rather than being relegated to general education course instructors or deans leading a curriculum reform, an integrated environment is shared across academic departments and disciplines; transcends leadership,

For liberal arts to be effective, members of an academic community need to share a common LAS educational philosophy, a spirit of collaboration, and agreed-upon goals for student learning and development regardless of their role in the organization. Inter-faculty communication is crucial. Faculty will benefit from working together, but need to be given

skills, the time and opportunity for them to improve their pedagogy, enhance their course design techniques, or create new courses is in constant competition with the activities that will help them to prosper in the academy. China does not have a clear policy on role differentiation, in particular setting different expectations for research-intensive institutions and other universities that have a different balance between research and teaching. Academic research and investment in research infrastructure has become paramount in China, and publishing in high-ranking English journals is more important than any other faculty responsibility. Chinese faculty are sometimes even incentivized by large cash bonuses for publications in certain journals. There is, Postiglione, Ma, and Te conclude, a perception by many Chinese university faculty that LAS is supported as a theory but not as a practice. Institutional metrics and incentive structures thus hamper pedagogical innovation and the ability of institutions to deliver on the promise of LAS in China.

Academic leaders and educational authorities can leverage LAS to educate more creative socially conscious graduates by assessing the tension be-

ing students. Integrating a robust measure of teaching quality among mixed incentives such as cash bonuses, professional development, and tenure advancement could be instrumental to developing a pedagogy-focused institutional culture.

Of equal importance are strategies for helping faculty advance their skills. Making faculty development opportunities and training a priority is critical. This might include hiring faculty development and pedagogical experts, leveraging experienced faculty instructors to assist more junior faculty, formalizing regular faculty conversations about teaching, and providing research incentives for faculty who contribute to the scholarship of teaching and learning. In order to make development opportunities—as well as a positive pedagogical culture—a reality, institutional strategic goals should include priorities for teaching. For those priorities to be effective, they also need to be supported by aligning faculty incentive structures.

the articulated learning outcomes.

Reverse design can also be key to mobilizing faculty. In implementing LAS reforms at the University of Hong Kong, for example, of Hong Kong, for example, education leaders engaged faculty in deciding together what they wanted graduates to be able to do. Answers to questions like this informed a distinctive approach to building and sustaining a core curriculum. And being involved in the articulation of end results and designing the means for reaching those results invested faculty in the reform process. It increased the propensity for faculty to see the initiative as shared intellectual property in which they had a stake and agency.

Innovative pedagogy must also extend to a student's overall holistic development. In China, LAS presents an unfamiliar learning environment in which students are expected to engage in substantial amounts of writing, class discussion, close reading of original texts, and interaction with their peers and instructors. Chinese students are most accustomed to—and comfortable with—lectures and exam preparation. Greater curriculum flexibility, rather than a strictly assigned list of requirements, also means that students must decide for themselves which courses to take and how to supplement their formal education with co-curricular activities.

For students to participate successfully in an LAS environment requires increased planning and assistance in and outside of the classroom from faculty who have the time and inclination to do so. Small classroom settings reflecting the Confucian model offer an opportunity for discussion-based pedagogy. Faculty and students can interact in person and, via new technologies, at a distance. These small group interactions also increase the potential for academic and personal mentoring. Similarly, for all these reasons, students will benefit from strategic plans that broadly incorporate the role and skill development of guidance counselors and faculty or non-faculty academic advisors.

As opposed to simply preparing students for employment, holistic education focuses on developing the whole person. Students' optimal maturation during university exceeds what happens in the classroom and what they learn during their major. The co-curriculum, which includes the learning experiences such as programs, activities, projects, and internships that extend beyond a student's academic studies, is an essential means to this end.

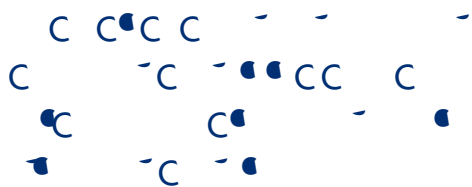
To be effective, it is important to offer more than a variety of out-of-classroom activities. The co-curriculum works best when it is intentionally designed with opportunities for students to explore how their non-academic experiences can be purposefully integrated with the formal curriculum. As many experienced Western LAS programs still struggle to fulfill this aspiration, there is a key opportunity here for China's LAS reforms to be influential globally. Co-curriculum programming that is

well integrated into the formal curriculum can be a central mode in which students develop an entrepreneurial orientation, learn about problem-solving and team work, and experience directly the power of following their creative passions.

This approach is especially important in China where students come to university focused on their academic pursuits, but not having experienced significant opportunities for developing a sense of personal efficacy and agency. Co-curricular programming offers unique opportunities in which

students make personal contributions to their academic community. The more voice students have in shaping the school's environment as well as their personal development, Zhao observes, the more they will grow their individual capacities for independent thinking and good decision-making. Innovative pedagogical practices, beyond ideas of active learning and incorporating technology, will be essential for creating strategies to integrate the curriculum, co-curriculum, and whole-student development objectives.

make crucial LAS innovations scalable at the same time as it introduces those innovations.



A key factor in going to scale will involve leveraging new technology to develop quality educational experiences. Already, students can access more than 300 interactive general education courses from their phones. New technology also makes it possible to create a more global experience even for institutions that do not enroll a diverse student body. It enables students to interact with non-Chinese peers and academic communities anywhere in the world. And equally important, it allows for program design that leverages the best instructors and researchers around the globe.

All these new possibilities benefit from extensive experimentation and careful evaluation, both for their effectiveness and quality and for their impact on the larger system of higher education. But if LAS education is to reach beyond a small, elite group of students and institutions, new pedagogical paradigms and new educational technologies will need to be a central part of the strategy. Significant investment of financial resources as well as time and expertise is crucial. Innovative LAS reforms and student learning need to be prioritized equally with technical disciplines, research infrastructure, and incentives to attract the top faculty—all activities that contribute directly to China's goals of providing world-class education. Balancing all these priorities is central to creating time and space for faculty to focus on strategic pedagogy and intentional curriculum and co-curriculum design. Acknowledging and embracing the risk—and potential—of educational experiments is the first step in making LAS investment a worthwhile strategic priority.

The liberal arts and sciences are not a one-size-fits-all prescription for educational reform. To succeed, reforms must be relevant to contemporary and local conditions. In China, as elsewhere, there is a need to integrate that which is uniquely local or national and, at the same time, examine the role of the nation and its graduates in a global society. By embracing a liberal arts education, China can draw on its own cultural heritage and engage in a comparative discourse. It can focus on perspectives within its heritage while attending to traditions from outside of China.

The intersection of local and global forces could, in fact, lead to a distinctive focus in China on twin goals: cultivating informed and engaged local citizens knowledgeable about Chinese perspectives, who are at once skilled in navigating global identities and commitments. This approach highlights the intersection of local, national, and global challenges and traditions.

It contrasts with existing educational approaches that are rooted either solely in individual national agendas or in abstract notions of global citizenship.

There are, of course, deep tensions built into this kind of an educational philosophy. The local and the global both pull and push on each other. Local and national traditions and commitments can easily outweigh concerns for other, more distant individuals and communities. Simultaneously, concern for the global can sometimes mean a diminution of diversity of thought, local traditions, and contextual needs. There is a long tradition of wrestling with these tensions in China, the West, and elsewhere: the delicate dialectic between the universal and the particular that is at the heart of many ethnic groups, religious and intellectual traditions, and national projects.

In China, Confucianism is a central and long-standing tradition that wrestles with these issues of

criticism manifest in higher education? The tensions between the contextual and the critical, between the local and the global, are illustrated by ongoing debates over required courses in Chinese history, politics, and culture. These courses are often described as narrow, ideological propaganda in which teachers provide only a single, accepted view of complex issues. If so, this approach calls into question whether an LAS philosophy can function legitimately in China. As Kirby asks: "Can liberal education exist in a politically illiberal system?" "Perhaps," he answers,

*But as Cai Yuanpei argued a century ago, not in a
country where the degree of freedom, China's
is so different from the liberal and democratic
world. The students are all forced to learn
the prescribed curriculum, and they must learn
it in a limited way. The history of their
education is a general education in the*

well as reasonably timed reforms. Without compromising focus on high quality outcomes, new LAS initiatives can be developed incrementally with agile steps that also allow for incorporating feedback and making adjustments. The value of experimentation is that new ideas can be tested and optimized over time. These experiments are necessary, possible, and will pay substantial dividends. Experiments should be embraced as opportunities; they are a chance to try multiple approaches to LAS and to share the results with the broader global education community.

The recommendations above are intended for internal consideration in China. But from a global perspective, China is especially well situated to show other countries three things: new ways to meld the liberal arts philosophy with pre-professional education; to develop a truly interdisciplinary, integrated education (blending across disciplinary as well as curricular/co-curricular boundaries); and to produce innovative pedagogical practices that ensure quality and engender scalability.

These recommendations will require astute strategic planning and ample human and financial resources. Humanities, arts, and social science de-

partments will need to be strengthened with the same vigor that fueled China's central government to enhance research for the purposes of climbing world rankings. The liberal arts and sciences are not an alternative to the current preference in China for finance, engineering, and science. On the contrary. Quality LAS education will in fact result in *be er*

hane Director of the Kenan Institute for Ethics (KIE) at Duke University and the founding Director of the Institute for Emerging Issues (IEI) at North Carolina State University. At Duke, he focuses on strategic planning, learning innovation, and policy engagement. At DKU, he led the design of an innovative, interdisciplinary, and problem-based undergraduate curriculum and is responsible for hiring a new faculty, implementing the curriculum, and developing innovative pedagogical approaches. Pickus has taught at

BACKGROUND

These papers were written and shared in preparation for the Liberal Arts Innovation in China working meeting that took place in June 2017. The above CIHE Perspective report was developed as a result of that meeting. In addition to making brief reference to the papers in the report, we also provide them here for background information.

AUTHOR	TITLE	PAGES
Yong Zhao	Reinventing Liberal Arts Education in China in the Age of Smart Machines	23-33
William Kirby	Liberal Education in China, Past and Present	34-39
Qiang Zha	What is Liberal Arts Education in the 21st Century? An Exploration Starts with Chinese Universities and Goes Beyond China	40-48
Gerard Postiglione, Ying Ma, & Alice Te	Institutionalizing Liberal Education in China: Obstacles and Challenges	49-59

tion is on the past of liberal arts, instead of the future. It is, however, both necessary and possible to invent a new one. Even the West, the homeland of liberal arts, has recognized the need to reinvent liberal arts. For example, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (n.d.) has put forth new visions and definitions of liberal education for the 21st Century.

Second, the success of WeChat is in very significant ways a success of deep understanding of the Chinese context, economically, psychologically, and culturally. For example, the voice messaging feature that brought WeChat's initial victory over other platforms is an excellent measure to overcome the diffi-

later life. For individuals to create meaningful and valuable products, services, ideas, or works, they need to reach the Pro-C level, which requires purposeful nurturing, time, efforts, and discipline. Thus the new liberal education must have explicit plans to nurture creativity.

Pa i n and S reng h-dri en Per nali a i n

Each and every human being is born unique on a host of dimensions: physically, cognitively, and psychologically (Gardner, 1983; Gardner & Hatch, 1989; Reiss, 2000). Their experiences also add to this uniqueness. Through a process called nature via nurture, some innate traits are enhanced and others are subdued. As a result, each individual human being is a unique combination of strengths and weaknesses in their abilities, with different personalities, passions, interests, desires, and experiences.

The uniqueness or individuality of humanity has been generally ignored at the best or actively suppressed at the worst in the industrial model of education that aims to impart a prescribed homogeneous set of skills and knowledge deemed useful for existing jobs. But today, it is the uniqueness that differentiates humans from machines. Sameness is no longer valuable and no student is an average student (Rose, 2016). Every student has an individual pathway, individual context, and individual set of abilities. Thus education should reorient itself from suppressing uniqueness to enhancing individuality. We should no longer aim to provide the same curriculum to a diverse population of students. The new liberal education should thus be personalized to support the discovery and development of passions and strengths for each student. Curriculum and learning activities should be driven by the passion and strengths of individual students. They should be co-designed with individual students instead of externally prescribed and imposed upon them.

Gl bali ed Cam

There is no doubt that the world is globalized—interdependent, interconnected, and integrated on a global scale. Citizens today are not only members of a local community or nation, but also of the global

community because their actions and wellbeing affect and are affected by others beyond their local communities. Moreover, birthplaces are not likely to be the same places many children will live and work when they grow up. Thus developing global competency that enables everyone to participate in the global society and contribute positively to the globalized human community has become a necessity (Council on International Education Exchange, 1988; Reimers, 2009; Zhao, 2009, 2016).

The new liberal education must include, as one of its outcomes, the development of global competency. An effective way to develop global competency is to live and learn globally. Fortunately, technology has made it possible for students to engage in global interactions on a daily basis from anywhere on the globe. For example, a course can easily enroll students from many different locations on earth. Thus the new liberal education requires educational institutions not as local physically bounded entities, but as global campuses.

Global campus thinking provides another needed benefit: institutions do not have to rely on their local staff to offer all courses to students. Already there are international organizations that offer online courses for students across the world. This helps alleviate the concern over shortage of qualified faculty and staff to meet the needs of all students, especially when following a personalized approach.

A Ne Pa ad,

In my 2012 book *World Class Learner: Educating Creative and Entrepreneurial Students*, I put forth a three pillar model as a new education paradigm that aims to prepare students for the Age of Smart Machines. The three pillars are student autonomy, product-oriented learning, and globalized campus. Each pillar is about the three essential elements of education: what to learn (curriculum and school culture), how to learn (pedagogical approach), and where to learn (learning environment) (see Table 1).

Wha : S den Agenc and A n m

Students should have agency and autonomy over their learning experiences in the school. They should

be treated as full members of the learning community and thus have voice in the rules that govern the school's social environment, curriculum and staff that make up the school's intellectual environment, and facilities and equipment that are part of the physical environment. They should be working with faculty and staff to co-design their personalized learning plans.

High School: Product-oriented Learning

Product-oriented Learning (POL) is a pedagogical approach designed to enhance the entrepreneurial mindset and creativity in students by engaging them in creating high quality works that solve worthwhile problems. POL requires all learning is

to education because the same approach can cause disastrous consequences on a large scale as well, if China wishes, it could start massive transformation in the education sector within the authoritarian and centralized system.

Fifth, many Chinese students, especially those who succeeded at the gaokao, have learned to be compliant and obedient. They have learned not to be creative and pursue their passion or interest. Many of them do not know why they want to study something beyond the prospect of getting a job that pays well. Many view this as an obstacle to liberal education. However, it can be a great opportunity. Because of their test-prep experiences before college, the students can appreciate and enjoy experiences that respect their passion, strengths, and creativity and help them create value for others, which enhance their sense of genuine accomplishment.

However, while China has the opportunity to reinvent liberal education in China for China and the world, the opportunity can be easily lost without thoughtful strategies and clear plans. Below are some of my recommended strategies:

First, liberal arts programs need to move away from being elite and impractical. They should be proud of being able to educate all sorts of students instead of just “the best” few. Liberal arts programs may consider admitting students using a broader set of indicators than just test scores, or better yet, for those programs that select students from already admitted students, use a random approach such as lottery.

Second, liberal arts programs should reach out to entrepreneurship initiatives on campus and work collaboratively.

Third, students are powerful change agents. Liberal arts programs should enlist students as teachers, collaborators, and leaders instead of treating them as just recipients of instruction.

Fourth, liberal arts programs should seriously consider the use of technology to enhance their delivery of education and student engagement.

Fifth, liberal arts programs should not try too hard to change existing faculty. Instead, efforts should be placed to think creatively about how to use

existing faculty in ways that support the new paradigm of education, in conjunction with other resources such as students, technology, and new recruits.

Finally, liberal arts programs should reach out to governments to seek more freedom. Perhaps liberal arts programs can be established as “special economic zones” that Chinese government often uses for bold experiments with policies.

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ics, science, and business, though not at the expense of China's educational tradition. Zhang's famous Exhortation to Study () published in 1898, argued that "Chinese learning" (education in the classics) had to remain the foundation, while "Western learning" was for "practical matters" ().

By 1928, however, Wuhan University had become one of China's first comprehensive, national universities, with a distinguished and internationalized Faculty of Arts to match those in Law, Science and Engineering. Wuhan University enjoyed a strong history of growth before 1949, and then it was nearly destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. Today it is again a major comprehensive university, with a faculty of nearly 4,000 teaching a student body of 34,000 undergraduates and 21,000 graduate students. Ranked in 2016 as fourth among Chinese universities by the University Ranking of China (sponsored by the Chinese Universities Alumni Association), it has become the indispensable partner of the new liberal arts college at Duke Kunshan University, of which Wuhan University's former president, Liu Jingnan, is the Chancellor.

Or take the case of Tsinghua University. Tsinghua was founded as an imperial academy in 1911, the last year of the last emperor of the last imperial dynasty. The history of Tsinghua mirrors the story of higher education in modern China.

Founded by the Qing court as *Qinghua Academy* () near the site of the *Qinghua Garden* (), an imperial garden of the eighteenth century, Tsinghua began as a preparatory school in the arts and sciences for students selected to study in the United States, funded with Boxer Indemnity Funds remitted from the United States. By 1925, Tsinghua was itself a college of liberal arts and sciences and home to China's leading Institute of Chinese Studies, the *Guanghua Institute* (). Its famous "four tu

omy and be places for an “education with a worldview” (). He stressed the importance, as had Wilhelm von Humboldt, of *Bildung*, that is, of broad, humanistic learning as the foundation of both teaching and scientific research (in the sense of *Wissenschaft*) (Weston, 2004).

When Cai Yuanpei assumed the presidency of Peking University in 1917 his inaugural address declared, “People outside the university...observe that all who study here have it in their minds to become officials and get rich.” Students, he said, should devote themselves to learning, not in narrow specializations but in the humanities and natural sciences. Cai’s presidency, which overlapped with and helped to define the New Culture movement of the May Fourth era, saw the rapid growth of the humanities at “Beida”(), as Peking University was popularly called, and phased out the business and engineering divisions (Weston, 2004). He recruited to the Beida faculty the scholars Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao, who would be instrumental in introducing Marxism to China. He recruited also to this “national university” the philosopher Hu Shi, a student of John Dewey at Columbia, who had written, “For a country to lack a navy or an army is not a cause for shame; [but] a country without a university, a national library, museum, or art gallery, should be ashamed” (Weston, 2004, p. 30). It was in the tradition of this intellectually vibrant and diverse Peking University that its students would play dramatic roles in challenging successive Chinese governments in the liberal and patriotic public demonstrations of 1919, 1935, and eventually 1989.

Today, a century after he assumed the presidency of Beida, an elite liberal arts college named for Cai Yuanpei sits at the heart of Peking University. In Yuanpei College () a select group of Peking University students choose (and can change) their course of study in the liberal arts and sciences in an intimate educational setting.

A sense of the liberal arts as central not only to individual growth but also to national salvation can be found in the history of National Southw

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artistic crystallization of the political aspirations of the Communist party.” (As the twentieth-century writer Lu Xun once observed, all art may be propaganda, but not all propaganda is art.)

A third trend, set out first in the Nationalist period but taken to dramatic extremes in the Communist era, is the intrusion into universities of political propaganda masquerading as science. In each era there have been politically required courses, first of the Three People’s Principles of Sun Yat-sen, and then of Marxism, Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, and beyond. These courses have been at once curricular and extra-curricular, not part of the regular course load but required nonetheless. As President Xi Jinping has said, “The world cannot have a second Harvard, Oxford, Stanford, MIT, or Cambridge, but it can have famous Chinese schools like Beida, Tsinghua, Zhejiang University, Fudan, and Nanjing University.” To achieve that goal, the Party Secretary of Peking University, Zhu Shanlu, noted in early 2015, “We must hold high the flag of the advanced spirit of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics, and closely link the goal of nurturing and promoting Core Socialist Values.” “Universities,” Zhu continued, “must grasp the right to the leadership, management, and discussion of ideological work tightly in our hands....We must successfully manage the battlefield, manage our troops.” While “academic research has no boundaries,” he concluded, “classroom lecturing must have discipline” (

).

Zhu unwittingly captured the dilemma and challenges facing Chinese higher education from the late nineteenth century to the present. Many of China’s greatest intellectual traditions are rooted in the humanities and the broader liberal arts. The past one hundred years has witnessed the rise, and fall, and now return of institutions devoted to liberal education. Perhaps the most important revolution in Chinese higher education today is the fact that even under the leadership of engineers, leading institutions have come to believe (once more) that an education without the humanities is incomplete. This is a recognition that in an age still consumed with “wealth and power,” that as

countries vie for power and individuals seek to accumulate, an education that stresses the values that make for a strong, and even harmonious, human community are more important than ever, hence the creation of Yuanpei College at Beida and the approval and support of a liberal arts college at Duke Kunshan University.

Over the past decade, many mainland universities, together with those in Hong Kong and Taiwan, have competed to introduce general and liberal education programs that open opportunities for learning across the humanities and social sciences. They stress the education of the whole person, not just training the specialist, with the aim to ensure that graduates are curious, reflective, and skeptical learners—people with the capacity for innovation and lifelong learning. Just as many American educators believe (not wrongly) that young Chinese are better educated in math and science than their American counterparts, many Chinese educators believe it is the West, and particularly the Americans, who are “innovative” and “creative thinkers” while the Chinese (somehow despite all their ancient inventions and modern revolutions) remain “traditional,” “rule-bound,” and “rote learners.” Presidents of Chinese universities have taken their American counterparts at their word and have devoted enormous effort to craft curricula for general and liberal education in a Chinese context.






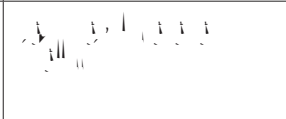
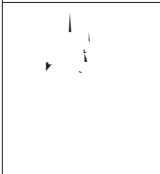
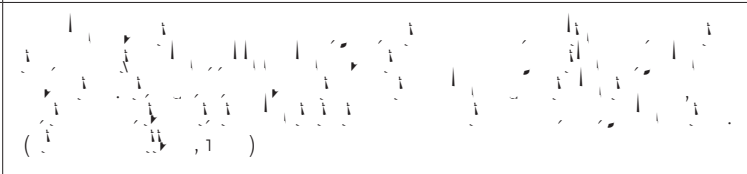
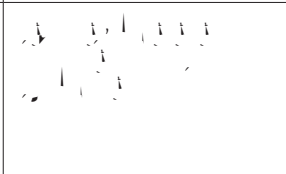
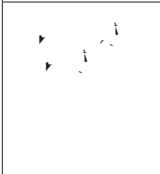
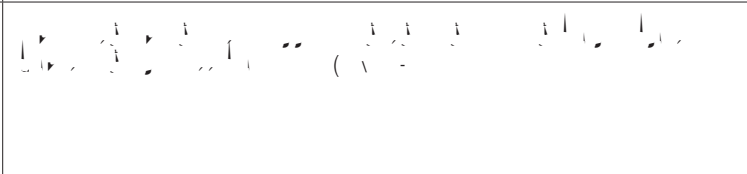
But the tensions set out by Zhang Zhidong in the late nineteenth century remain. In Chinese government policy today, a new version of “Chinese learning” is often given official pride of place over “Western learning.” At least in Zhang Zhidong’s day people knew what Chinese learning—a deep education in the classical cannon—meant. Today it is “socialism with Chinese characteristics” and the “guiding role of Marxism in ideology,” according to the recent Minister of Education, Yuan Guiren. (The assumption that Marxism is not “Western” must be the subject of another essay.) In beginning an ideological surveillance of universities that continues to this day, Yuan argued in 2015 against the proliferation of “Western values” and textbooks in Chinese universities. It was better, he suggested, to study the theories of President Xi Jinping (“Education minister warns against ‘wrong Western values,’” 2015).

This leads to a final question: can liberal education exist in a politically illiberal system? Perhaps, but as Cai Yuanpei argued a century ago, only with a significant degree of autonomy. German universities in the nineteenth century had many political pressures, but they were the envy of the world in part because they also had traditions of institutional freedom that fostered and (at times) protected creative thinkers. China's universities today boast superb scholars and among the world's best students. But these students are also forced to sit through required courses in Party ideology, and they must learn a simplified version of the history of their own country. Even with new programs of general educa-

This paper initially attempts to identify and showcase the “best practices” regarding liberal arts education in Chinese universities, but soon gets stuck in a struggle to sort out various definitions and the concomitant connotations as to this particular type of curriculum. In the context of China and beyond, there is a variety of conceptions associated with such a curriculum in question, e.g., liberal arts education, liberal education, general education, humanist education, whole-person education, holistic education, classical education, and *Ting hi* education and perhaps *Guo xue* (Chinese national learning) as well for the Chinese educators, as showcased in Table 1. Such equivocalness might be even vividly portrayed in Figure 1, a “word cloud” generated from a piece of text concerning some of the conceptions aforementioned. Admittedly, there is a massive overlap among these conceptions, in terms of nurturing students’ critical thinking ability and cultivating the whole person, indicated by prominence of the words such as “students,” “education,” “liberal,” “learning,” “abilities,” “values” in Figure 1. Yet, they also carry different emphases. For example, liberal arts education typically stresses a humanistic appreciation of knowledge and renders students well versed in classic literary works, philosophy, foreign languages, rhetoric, logic and so on, while general education requires a broad survey of courses that foster students’ ability to think beyond their areas of specialization, and encourages students to make connections across disciplines, as well as between formal course instruction and informal learning experiences outside the classroom. In Figure 1, there are some other words, e.g., “international,” “world,”

“understand(ing),” “multicultural,” “relations,” “global,” “citizenship,” and “interdisciplinary” that are observed with considerable visibility but quite divergent from those words of high prominence.

As such, this paper needs to deviate from its original goal to identify the best practices of liberal arts education in Chinese universities, and towards a modified one of making out what kind of liberal arts education the universities in China and elsewhere would need in the 21st century. Specifically, now it intends to address such core questions: 1) Why do we (still) need a liberal arts education curriculum? 2) How do we define an effective or ideal liberal arts education curriculum? Or, what is an effective/ideal liberal arts education curriculum supposed to bring along? 3) What is the major challenge now facing liberal arts education? Or, should an effective/ideal liberal arts education curriculum evolve with time/context? If yes, what needs to be taken into account in the 21st century? 4) What would a 21st century liberal arts education curriculum look like?

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includes the ability to engage in a critique of one's society, and to ultimately challenge the society to actualize its own highest ideals. Thus two things need to be noted here: 1) self-cultivation is a lifelong process, and 2) self-cultivation is achieved through a unification of selfhood and identity within the broader society. Drawing on the notion *Bildung* as a conceptual framework, an effective/ideal liberal arts education should essentially empower the individuals' self-cultivating ability, and take into account the social changes when reconfiguring such ability.

The Meaning of Self-Cultivation in the 21st Century Liberal Arts Curriculum

From there, this paper deliberately argues that, while rooted in cultivation of humanism (that emphasizes the value and agency of human beings, and prefers critical thinking), an effective/ideal liberal arts education curriculum in the 21st century must take into account those fundamental and significant changes that closely relate to education in current as well as future society, and such changes arguably include the massification of higher education, an increasingly knowledge-based economy, and the accelerating trends of globalization. The expansion/growth of higher education has an explicit bearing not only on equality and equity in education but also on organization and delivery of curriculum. The liberal arts curriculum, which used to cater to elite students and prepare them to exercise leadership in society, now is supposed to address the needs of non-elite and underprivileged students and thereby empower them in their life and social mobility pursuits. Hence, the discourse of social justice ushers in the pressure and challenge for liberal arts education to help address educational equality and equity along with higher education expansion and differentiation in China and elsewhere. A knowledge-based economy renders the students to pursue and devalued

Regarding social justice, since the late 1990s, Chinese higher education has experienced a massive expansion in terms of enrolment size and participation level. The participation rate in higher education among the appropriate age cohort reached 42.7% in 2016 (Ministry of Education, 2017), and now up to 75% of high school leavers would have the opportunity to have some form of higher education,

comes tremendously stratified, witnessing a few dozen universities sitting on top of the pinnacle and resourced way better than other peers. Most new enrolments, unfortunately, go to a large number of low-echelon provincial universities, which in turn results in a kind of dilemma in terms of expansion for differentiation and stratification. Then, how could liberal arts education fit in this scenario, and benefit the majority of students, especially those in non-elite local institutions? Arguably, if still confined to elite universities, liberal arts education might be held responsible for reinforcing university (and ultimately social) hierarchy, and producing the so-called “refined egoists” (Wei, 2012).

In this regard, the AAC&U vision of the 21st century liberal arts education serves as a guideline or a principle, as illustrated in Table 2. The central notion in the AAC&U vision is that liberal arts edu-

As such, China's tradition of *h* *an*

Essentially, neo-Confucianism that used to prevail in *h* *an* advocates maintaining a balance between the value of the collective and of the individual, and does call for attention to and respect for individual development and liberal tendencies. Neo-Confucianism is not merely about self-cultivation. Rather, it advocates transforming or renewing the society at large, along with one's pursuit of internal establishment or sagehood. Simply put, neo-Confucianism is concerned with what humans are meant to do, and why that is a natural and good thing to do. William Theodore de Bary absorbed such educational ideas in neo-Confucianism into Columbia University's Core Curriculum, when serving as provost at the university in the 1970s. Arguably, those neo-Confucian notions have distinguished Columbia University's Core Curriculum from the general education practices in other Ivy League peers and elsewhere, in the sense that, while many general education curricula are meant to familiarize students with basic approaches to knowledge in different disciplinary areas of modern studies, Columbia's Core Curriculum stresses bringing out every student's self-awareness and informed reflections, via a dialogue with the great minds. Through the Core Curriculum, the students are expected to understand what they ought to do, who they ought to be, and engage with sciences and humanities in humanly meaningful ways (Chung, 2016). When reforming liberal arts education, universities in China and elsewhere should not forget what Professor de Bary drew from neo-Confucian perspectives and brought to the Core Curriculum in Columbia University.

Another salient feature of the 21st century is that our life anticipates fast changes and increasing uncertainties, and this situation is certainly being actuated and accelerated by a progressively knowledge-based economy, which in turn demands lifelong learning and advancing our knowledge and skills. In this context, the university is obliged to prepare students for such complexity and uncertainty, which requires a strong ability to fashion and adapt their knowledge and skills to various and varying life and professional situations. Arguably this pertains greatly to one's cognitive ability; as such cognitive education should be incorporated into liberal arts

education curriculum. Cognitive education is a kind of education that seeks to improve the cognitive skills of the students in order that they can lead a constructive life. Perhaps Hargreaves (2000) specified what cognitive education might help students when putting forward the abilities that students need to function effectively in a knowledge-based world: meta-cognitive skills; ability to access, select and evaluate knowledge; ability to develop and apply various forms of intelligence; ability to work and learn effectively, and in teams; ability to create, transpose, and transfer knowledge; ability to cope with ambiguous situations and problems; ability to learn to redesign themselves and their career; and ability to choose and fashion relevant education and training. Arguably, some of these abilities may go beyond what cognitive education is about, and further to the level of metacognition, which concerns “thinking about thinking” and using information and strategies to think better and solve problems. Often, metacognition has been described as the self-correcting nature of thinking, i.e., the mental process of being aware of monitoring, supervising, organizing and making decisions re one’s own thinking process. Some scholars go further and maintain that brain or mental research outcomes should be employed to underpin our curriculum design in the university. A number of liberal arts education colleges in the US have practices to embed their students’ intellectual and linguistic training in brain science-driven curriculum (Zhao, 2017). While some educators have realized and recognized the necessity and importance of cognitive education regarding students’ lifelong learning and professional development needs, there are not many courses that are developed and tailored towards such needs. Many instructional and learning paradigms that were effective and efficient for transmitting the knowledge, skills and dispositions and needed for industrial economies are still prevailing, and will not produce these desired results, as envisaged and outlined by Hargreaves and other researchers and thinkers.

Globalization is certainly a meta-trend in the world that conditions many discourses in our life and society, including the university sphere. As the

world becomes increasingly interdependent and an increasing number of concerns become shared by the world as a whole, it becomes evident that global education, i.e., education for global citizenship and for a shared global future, becomes a logical (perhaps even inevitable) response. Global education focuses on the interrelated nature of human culture and life. A global approach, with the world as it is and each country and region rich in history and culture, points to the pedagogy dependent on cross-disciplined inquiry that encompasses a deeper understanding, broader knowledge base, and emphasis on the interconnectedness of knowledge. The primary focus of global education falls on developing the students’ self-awareness and critical thinking; helping them see themselves in the hopes and dreams of others and comprehend that there exists an equality of being, and an understanding of “the other” with the confidence to recognize that we are “the other” for all those we encounter. Arguably, global education is essential for recognizing equivalent experience, and carrying an unobstructed vision of equality among all in a globalized world, thus should enter liberal arts education curriculum in the 21st century. Dale’s (2000) Globally Structured Agenda for Education might provide a vision for how to integrate global education in liberal arts education curriculum, which comprises such principal components as “learning to live together in the global village,” “learning to know (knowledge in specific areas),” “learning to do (preparing for the unforeseeable future),” and “learning to be (aesthetics, responsibility for community goals, reasoning, creativity)”. Notably, he even put global education before other components on his agenda. Indeed, globalization has incredibly impacted and affected our lives and society, which in turn challenges and calls for students and educators to make connections between global and local issues. In this sense, many tensions that will underlie such a curriculum, e.g., those between global and local perspectives, universal and individual orientations, traditional and modern aspects, competition and equality of opportunities, expansion of knowledge and human capacity, as well as spiritual and material elements.

Hence, the liberal arts education curriculum for the

and nurture leading, great minds among them. Another and perhaps more influential example is the Stanford 2025, a ground-breaking paradigm shift for university education. In particular, it pledges to flip “the axes of knowledge and competencies so that skills became the independent variable of a Stanford education.” Instead of building foundations solely in a unique discipline, students are to master skills and competencies, which became building blocks that could be “rearranged” and translated across a myriad of work contexts throughout their lifetimes. For this sake, Stanford University is to launch undergraduate teaching hubs built around core competencies such as Scientific Analysis, Quantitative Reasoning, Social Inquiry, Moral and Ethical Reasoning, Aesthetic Interpretation, Creative Confidence, and Communication Effectiveness, etc. Also,

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the key areas of knowledge for economic development. Years later, however, sustaining China's economic rise came to be viewed as hinging on a broader form of higher education that could spur innovation by drawing on the humanities and social sciences (Kirby & van der Wende, 2016; Postiglione, 2016).

Nevertheless, culture follows power. With the expressed desire for the country to take more of a guiding role in the global order, contemporary university policy has come to align more closely with indigenous culture and political exceptionalism. In fact, China's universities have been on a run. They are first in the world in the number of students in higher education and third in the number of foreign students, after the US and UK. Excellence initiatives such as the 211, 985, and 2.0 projects have led to a rise in the number of Chinese universities that are world ranked. The top ranked universities recruit students from schools in Shanghai where students

structional innovation is considered inadequate for helping China avoid the middle income trap.

In the meantime, government has begun to formulate policies to reform undergraduate education, raise quality of teaching and research, and improve mechanisms of assessment and evaluation. It has also begun to gradually cede more autonomy to universities in determining the requirements for the awarding of degrees (Postiglione & Chen, 2016). It has permitted universities to deepen international linkages, while insisting it guard against threats to educational sovereignty. At the same time, China's universities have begun to project soft power around the world.

As the world's second largest economy continues to build a massive system of higher education, there is ample discussion about creating a unique and exportable university model to parallel the Beijing Consensus. What a Chinese model of higher education will mean for the world is beyond the scope of this paper. However, a partial answer can be found in how it manages implementation and development of liberal education.

Liberal Education

Liberal arts continues to enter university curriculum in many parts of Asia (Godwin, 2013; Kirby and van der Wende, 2016; Jiang, 2014; Li, 2009;). It has begun to affect the traditional over-specialization of undergraduate education. While there still remains a strong bias toward STEM disciplines, the interest in liberal arts higher education has brought the humanities and social sciences to the fore in a new way.

Liberal arts colleges are a distinctively American form of higher education, distinguished by small class size, residential character, generalist curricula, open intellectual atmosphere, and professors who take a special interest in students' education. These can be found in Asia if they are established in highly open societies. For example, Lingnan University of Hong Kong has defined itself as a "liberal arts university," distinguished by its interdisciplinary curriculum, small classes, a vibrant campus life, and rich international exposure.

Although a large research university, the Uni-

iversity of Hong Kong has a special focus on liberal arts higher education through its Common Core Curriculum (CCC). The CCC aims to broaden student perspectives and to develop the intellectual, social, and innovative skills needed to address the complexities of 21st century life. HKU's CCC also aims to have students articulate a broader perspective and a deeper critical understanding of the complex connections between issues of profound importance. It provides an intellectual atmosphere for students to better navigate the similarities and differences between them-

mind, it requires a multitude of perspectives, ways of thinking, methods, and knowledge content anchored in a variety of disciplines....the foundation for learning how to interpret, interrogate, or make new knowledge framed in the constructs of various fields" (2016, p. 9). Since they use the term "liberal education" to refer to all forms of non-specialized curriculum in which students have a degree of free choice, this raises questions in the case of China, since non-specialized courses also include required courses that may not be intended to liberate the mind in the way in the way that Godwin and Altbach use the term "liberal education."

China's curriculum reform is a work in progress, as was liberal arts higher education when it was first advocated in the US in the 19th Century. In China's case, the cultural quality education (CQE) movement in higher education (*enh a hi jia* {

}) began in the late 1990s. It was officially ushered in by Zhou Yuanqing (Ministry of Education's director of higher education and soon to be vice minister) in 1995 at a meeting in Wuhan's Huazhong University of Science and Technology. The meeting intended to broaden the thinking about the intellectual range of study in universities, and especially the promotion of humanities and social sciences.

As China's transition from a planned to a market economy gained speed in the mid-1990s, universities were still dominated by the specialized soviet curriculum model. The CQE movement called for the promotion of a more humanistic education, one that cultivated sensitivities, competence and character. Based on the *C l ral Q ali Ed ca i n O line f r C llege S den*, top tier institutions such as Peking, Tsinghua and Zhejiang Universities began experimenting in 1995. The following year, 32 CQE national centers were established, encompassing 53 top research universities. To solidify the movement, a national conference was held at Tsinghua University in 2005 on the 10th anniversary of CQE movement. The Ministry of Education added 61 centers encompassing 104 more universities.

By then, there was a great deal of rethinking about the purpose of higher education and the "idea" of the university, as well as its uses. The conceptual discussion had implications for the classroom, cam-

Xie, A. & Postiglione, G. A. (2015). Guanxi and school success: An ethnographic inquiry of parental involvement in rural China, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 37(7), 1014-1033.

INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION (IHE)

<http://ejournal.bc.edu/j/index.html/ihe>

International Higher Education (IHE) is the flagship quarterly publication of the Boston College Center for International Higher Education. Launched in 1995, *IHE* features the contributions of distinguished scholars, policymakers, and leaders, who are well-positioned to offer critical perspectives on key issues and trends that shape higher education worldwide. This publication—which is translated into Chinese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese—presents insightful, informed, and high-quality commentary and analysis on trends and issues of importance to higher education systems, institutions, and stakeholders around the world. Each edition also includes short abstracts of new books and other publications of relevance to the global higher education community.

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<http://insidehighered.com/blog/world-view>

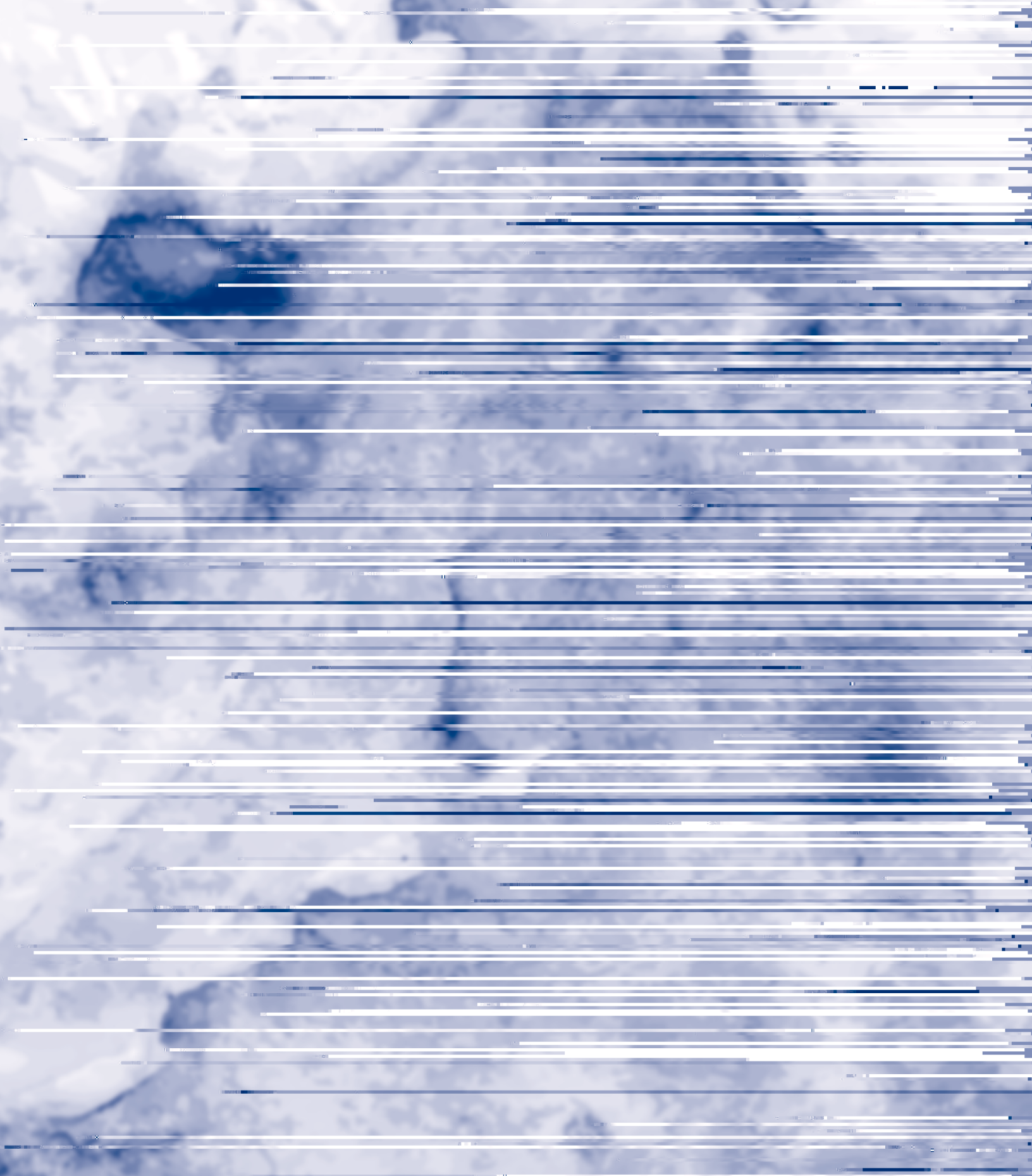
The World View, published by InsideHigherEd.com, has been the blog of the Boston College Center for International Higher Education since 2010. *The*

World View features the regular commentary and insights of some one dozen contributors from North and South America, Europe, Asia, and Africa, offering truly global perspectives by global analysts.

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<http://www.insidehighered.com/newsroom/Page/International-Brief-for-Higher-Education-Leader.aspx>

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