

EDUTROPOLIS: AN EMERGING 21ST CENTURY PARADIGM

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The United States is fortunate in having a productive mix of colleges and universities. Columbia University and Santa Fe Community College are good examples of the range of institutions. The former is a multi-purpose, undergraduate and advanced degree research campus located in dense Manhattan. Columbia draws its students and faculty from an international pool of exceptionally qualified candidates and scholars. Santa Fe Community College is situated on the edge of a desert in New Mexico, serving a regional population seeking programs and courses that will improve their lives and advance their position in a competitive society. These contrasting images are a kind of warning sign that indicate that any generalizations about American higher education are fraught with imprecision and ambiguity. There are too many variables to formulate a universal concept that captures so many institutional distinctions and so much differentiation. Warning aside, some broad profile of the current situation in the United States is both necessary and desirable before plunging into the central theme of our paper: *Edutropolis* – An Emerging 21st Century Paradigm linking campus and community.

HIGHER EDUCATION PROFILE

Educationally, the United States is a two-class nation, 1998-1999 statistics. Twenty per cent of the population has an earned college or university degree and forty-six per cent of adults in the United States have had at least one year of higher education. Paradoxically, while participation rates in higher education have soared, the quality of our primary and secondary school educational system is apparently deteriorating. Ten per cent of the population is illiterate.

Higher education is a fundamental economic and cultural resource in the United States. During this past century, colleges and universities have been the primary source for advances in science and technology, both in terms of research and its application in industry, agriculture, transportation, communications and medicine. Nearly all our living Nobel Prize winners have been associated with American colleges and universities. Since the early 1950's higher education has produced many of our writers, musicians, artists, architects and designers. Campuses also provide the amateur and professional athletes who compete successfully worldwide.

The United States has 4,000 accredited colleges and universities (1999). They enroll about 14 million students, of whom 58 per cent are women. A third of the students currently enrolled in American degree programs are part-time students. Many are raising families and hold full-time jobs. Significantly, a fourth of the college and university students are more than thirty years old.

Not included in this summary are an estimated 1.5 million adults, retired and well educated, who are participating in on-campus educational activities, enrolled in courses with other students but not seeking credit for their work. The latter is also an example of a proven technique for advancing friendly town/gown relationships. Good will is generated when qualified elders fill the seats in under-subscribed courses at a modest fee.

In economic terms, the overall financial picture is unprecedented. Higher education expenditures totaled \$180 billion in 1997, or 2% of the Gross National Product. On average, students pay in tuition and fees about twenty-five per cent of the annual costs for higher education, which total about \$13,000 per student. No decline in this level of investment in human capital at the local, state or national level is forecast or expected.

THE EMERGENCE OF *EDUTROPOLIS*

That support for higher education will continue to be an important economic and social factor in America's economic and social development, transcending partisan politics, is clear in recent national trends, public policy debates, and national and state elections.

As to the future, and the conference theme, Campus and Community, here is my hypothesis as it relates to the American scene.

One: higher education will be a necessary activity for social, cultural, and economic advancement in the 21st century.

Two: significant populations will be living in metropolitan areas composed of core cities, suburbs and outlying areas; eighty per cent according to demographers in the U. S. Census Bureau.

Three: the concept of campus and community has to be extended to embrace more than town and gown. It has to include *the network of all the institutions* of higher education in the metropolitan area so as to take advantage of their synergistic relationships.

Four: That network, largely adventitious and unplanned, is beginning take shape in metro regions with a high participation rate in higher education.

Five: I call the emerging form, the 21st century paradigm, *Edutropolis*; blending two words education and metropolis.

EDUTROPOLIS DEFINED

Edutropolis is a metropolitan-wide network of post secondary institutions serving and supporting a multiplicity of educational, social, economic and cultural missions.

Those missions include the traditional triad of teaching, research and community service, *and also*, increasingly, community advancement and enhancement; i.e. community development.

EXPECTATIONS

I would expect the *Edutropolis* phenomenon to continue to be a prominent and consequential factor in community development for several reasons. Higher education is an engine for regional growth and an anodyne for the disturbing oscillations in technological change. Higher education is increasingly a source of personal cultural and aesthetic satisfaction. Once exposed to higher education in its multitudinous forms and formats, there is both will and reason among a significant population group to continue to participate in college and university activities and endeavors. Higher education is becoming a major contributor to the quality of community life. Its presence is affecting the physical forms in the precincts surrounding the individual campus and, through its synergistic influence, affects the overall regional setting.

EDUTROPOLIS EXEMPLIFIED

Metropolitan Boston is as an instructive example of how *Edutropolis* is forming, and its constituent and defining characteristics. The following descriptions illustrate the phenomenon.

Metro Boston has a population of 3,600,000 million people. About 300, 000 people are enrolled in degree programs at 57 accredited institutions of higher education. Nine of these are public institutions and forty-eight are private. By most standards, twelve of these institutions would be ranked as having an international reputation, seventeen are well-regarded national institutions, and twenty-eight are essentially organized and managed as regional and local institutions.

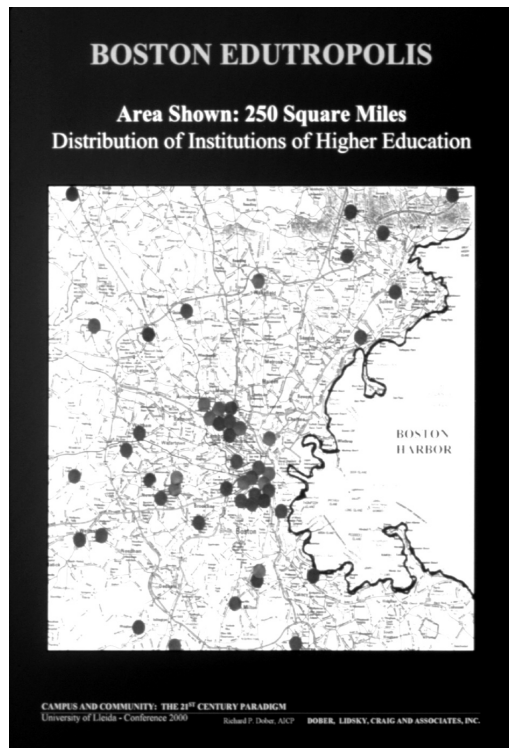
Broadly categorized, the institutions differ in purpose by the degree programs offered:

- Associate (32)
- Bachelor's (42)
- Master's (42)
- Doctorate (18)
- Post-doctorate (9).

They also can be differentiated by some of their educational specialties:

Art and Design: 6 institutions
Business and Management: 6 institutions
Education: 5 institutions
Engineering and Technology: 6 institutions
Law: 6 institutions
Library Science: 1 institution
Medical and Dental: 6 institutions
Music and Dramatic Arts: 5 institutions
Optometry: 1 institution
Pharmacy: 1 institution
Theology: 6 institutions.

FIGURE 1.
*Distribution of College and University Campuses
in the Boston Edutropolis.*



Geographically about a third of the schools are in the core area, the remainder being distributed throughout the region. The location pattern is adventitious, reflecting three and half centuries of uncoordinated but vibrant entrepreneurship. Historically in the Boston region it would appear that every social cause, religious sect, and economic agenda from the Pilgrim days forward has sought (and in many cases succeeded) to crown its existence with a college or university campus.

INSTITUTIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT

This rich history of sectarian interests and variations in mission, size and location, and educational specialties has, increasingly in recent years, permitted the colleges and universities to offer to the public an interesting range of activities and events that contribute to the quality of community life. Where once, in the main, the campus was inward looking, serving teen-agers and young adults, the broader missions and demographics identified earlier have affected its outlook and involvement with an enrichment that has substantial results beyond the campus boundaries.

For example, most of the Metro Boston college and university cafes, bookstores, forums, museums, theaters, arenas and stadiums welcome the public to share their facilities, programs and activities. Institutionally supported public radio and television have widened access to information and ideas. Some institutions run medical and dental clinics, offer legal aid, sponsor housing for the needy, and provide instruction and mentoring at primary and secondary schools seeking assistance. College students spend significant time helping the elderly, the disabled, and the dispossessed. Institutions provide part-time and seasonal job opportunities. For every professor and researcher there is an additional person serving in some support capacity: professional, managerial, technician, operator, clerical, and janitor.

PHYSICAL IMPACT

Town and gown conflicts continue to exist. In many Metro Boston areas young, energetic, East Coast students seem to live on West Coast time, occasionally upsetting the rhythm and quietude of nearby family life in the neighborhoods both share. Institutions in a growth mode compete with neighbors for land ownership and land use. Colleges and universities are non-profit institutions, and some do not pay a fair share of taxes for local services and infrastructure. Overall the benefits outweigh the drawbacks. Especially in the older metropolitan core cities where pockets of obsolescence and decay are being erased or ameliorated by institutional development.



FIGURE 2

Emerson College Opera House, Boston, Massachusetts. An obsolete theater at the edge of the city core is purchased and renovated for the College's theater and opera training programs and related public performances.

Source: from the author

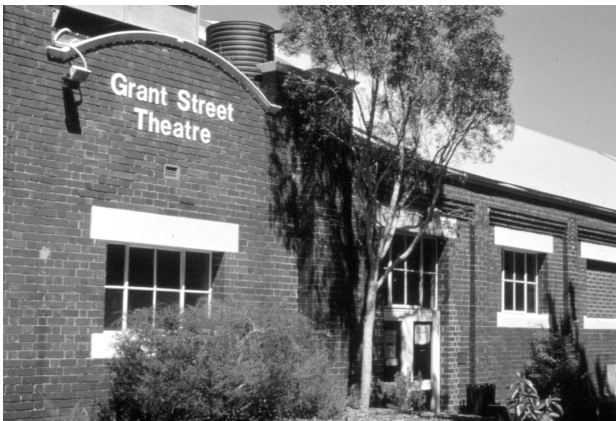


FIGURE 3

Workshop Theater, Victoria Arts College, Melbourne, Australia. An obsolete warehouse is added to the campus and the building redesigned as a college workshop theater.

Source: from the author

In Boston, Suffolk University and Emerson College have recycled out-of-fashion office buildings at the edge of the central business district into student residences. Adjacent to its new housing, Emerson purchased an abandoned movie house for its opera and theater programs. In East Cambridge, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology has helped to transform an out-dated industrial area (factories, processing plants, warehouses and trucking terminals) into a splendid contemporary mix of campus and community. The physical form of the new precinct includes the conservation of older residential, housing for all income groups, new facilities serving the private science and technology sectors, and the conversion of old industrial buildings into new uses.

For MIT the latter actions included a candy factory reconstructed as a cancer research center, a bean and ketchup warehouse redesigned into a publications center, and a light-industry fabricating plant converted into graduate student housing. The transformation is expected to accelerate when a railroad spur line adjacent to the MIT west campus boundary is placed underground along with a new mass transit line. The upper level of the right-of-way will become a landscaped boulevard constructed to serve and symbolize these substantial changes.

POLICY ISSUES

A scanning of institutional presence and productivity in Chicago (Illinois), Atlanta (Georgia), Denver (Colorado) and the Twin Cities (Minnesota), would suggest the *Edutropolis* phenomenon is evident also in those metropolitan areas. And overseas, our recent experience would suggest that *Edutropolis* can be detected in cities such as Toronto, Canada and Melbourne, Australia.

In the main, this aspect of campus and community development (which we label the *Edutropolis* factor) is unplanned and uncoordinated in terms of public policy and management. This raises some interesting questions. Should we consider higher education (like water, highways, and mass transit) a fundamental metropolitan infrastructure element? If so, can partnerships and consortiums be organized to rationalize and coordinate collaborative efforts among metropolitan-wide colleges, universities, governments, and public and private agencies? What can be done to optimize contributions that educational institutions are making and can make to the quality of community life and to economic development at the regional level?

A healthy model (campus and community intertwined in *Edutropolis*) would respect the institutional independence and the distinctiveness of each institution and the districts in which they are located, but would also seek the synergy and potential of a coordinated metropolitan plan for taking full advantage of their presence and purpose. How to accomplish that goal is not yet clear; but I think a disciplined effort is worth launching in terms of articulating some specific desirable outcomes and the means to achieve the extraordinary benefits that *Edutropolis* appears to be yielding.

