

The Declaration of the 2013 Global Universities Summit to the G8

“Universities and Economic Growth”

Introduction

Higher education has, for many centuries, been in the vanguard of an international outlook on the world. Universities enabled academics and students to exchange ideas and spread innovations long before the current system of economic globalisation emerged. Since the end of the Second World War, universities have become a crucial element of the system of economic globalization, acting as both a source of expertise and, increasingly, as economic engines in their own right.

But this system is now under evident stress, and the cure is beyond the capacity of any single national government, institution or actor.

The 2013 Global University Summit has explored the relationship between universities and economic growth. This relationship is founded upon the core contribution to economic development that almost all higher education institutions make as educators of students, equipping them with the skills and knowledge they will need in the labour market, as employers and enterprises in their own right, as generators of spin-offs and other commercial entities, and as general sources of innovation.

All the evidence shows that universities, from the great leading world research universities to the humblest polytechnics, technical colleges and other institutes, are now a key part of the engine room of long-term, sustainable economic growth and prosperity.

The Global University Summit has provided an excellent opportunity, at an opportune moment for university leaders, the international business community and policy-makers, to consider how universities could achieve even more as economic actors. With participants from 30 countries, the summit debate has been framed in a way that transcends national boundaries as a way of making an even stronger contribution to reinvigorating battered economies and addressing major societal issues.

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Section 1 Observations

- 1.1 Economic regeneration begins with innovation. Successful businesses use technology and investment in long-term research and development to remain agile in an uncertain and volatile economy. Innovation pathways vary by sector, but we observe that many technologies have multiple applications across many sectors – including education.
- 1.2 The key to successful and sustainable innovation-driven economic growth is the “research triangle” of stakeholders – Industry, Academia and Government. Finding transformative ideas that translate research into tangible business benefit is a non-exact science. The process requires all parties to be patient and to understand that sometimes failure is a precursor to success.
- 1.3 A higher tertiary education attainment rate is positively associated with higher labour productivity and increased earnings for individuals. Investments in higher education have a direct correlation with profitable results for society via higher income taxes and lower unemployment costs.
- 1.4 The world's wealth is no longer concentrated solely in the traditional economic powerhouses of the West. Political influence is moving eastwards and towards Latin America as their populations and economies grow. University research is following the same pattern. Citizens everywhere will require new skills and knowledge in order to thrive in a fast-moving global society.
- 1.5 Universities are leading the way in the development of new and meaningful collaborations across national boundaries. With the rise of the so-called ‘BRIC’ nations, the productive relationships already established between Western universities and those in the rising economic superpowers serve as an example of how collaboration based on mutual respect and intellectual curiosity can deliver significant mutual benefits.
- 1.6 Universities are facing challenges on all fronts – complexities that are only going to deepen whilst the business of managing change and improvements will become ever more challenging in the future. In the maelstrom of globalisation it is crucial that universities do not forget the demands and expectations of their core constituents – students.
- 1.7 The curriculum of a university is no longer the exclusive preserve of the Faculty. Though some universities are sceptical of the movement, others are calling Massively Open Online Courses (MOOCs) a revolutionary moment for higher education. Aside from technological advances, universities in many countries that have come under economic strain are undergoing huge structural change because of stress on their budgets and an increasing responsibility to demonstrate value-for-money and to achieve greater efficiencies in operations.
- 1.8 Transnational Education (TNE) has expanded. There is evidence that TNE is leading to a widening of access in host countries, is addressing skills gaps and is widely perceived to deliver enhanced employability for its graduates. However, there has been no commensurate evaluation of the impact of TNE and no policy response from Governments

Section 2 Commitment of Universities to Action

Universities can play an increasingly significant role in inspiring the global response that sustainable economic recovery requires.

The dialogue amongst university executives with senior colleagues from business and from the policy community at this year's Global University Summit has produced this statement of on-going commitment by University leaders to the following actions.

Universities commit:

- 2.1 To encourage businesses to invest more in joint industry-university facilities as they seek to take advantage of a primary research base and other assets.
- 2.2 To continue to promote contract research, knowledge transfer and technology commercialisation, thus creating jobs and new businesses that promote sustainable development and economic growth.
- 2.3 To use emergent technologies to broaden access to educational opportunity for learners worldwide. To ensure that all students get the highest quality education no matter where they learn or how.
- 2.4 To improve global access to research findings, teaching and innovation.
- 2.5 To provide students with more choice in order to produce graduates who have a broader range of transferable skills and knowledge and who are global in their outlook.
- 2.6 To work with businesses and employers to strengthen degrees in partnership and to support mentoring, work shadowing, and to expand the availability of graduate placements.
- 2.7 To continue to develop transnational education that builds strong relationships between institutions and nations; promoting the principles of mutuality, reciprocity and enhanced collaboration

Section 3 Recommendations to G8 Leaders

The Global University Summit 2013 recommends that the G8:

- 3.1 Recognise that the principles of international free trade also apply to ideas and knowledge. The G8 should take action to allow easier movement of academics, researchers and university students between states.
- 3.2 Recognise the increasing demand for higher-level skills in the world's rising economies and work with the G20 to expand this freedom of movement across the world's innovation centres.
- 3.3 Invest more in universities in order to secure economic recovery and reap long-term rewards.
- 3.4 Set goals that reflect patience and a commitment to long-term investments to ensure that universities are given the time and resource to develop the innovation pathways and trusting relationships with business that will create jobs and wealth.
- 3.5 Establish a new Global Institution that identifies and promotes best-practice in university-business relations across member nations and beyond.
- 3.6 Outline what G8 leaders consider 'the Grand Challenges' that universities can help to address.
- 3.7 Take the lead in establishing the highest international standards and market guidance on the value of international qualifications
- 3.8 Continue to work with transnational institutions to simplify the international patent infrastructure that both protects international property across national borders yet simplifies the global flow of innovation that arises from research.
- 3.9 Commit to evaluating the impact of transnational education and developing a policy framework that leads to a better strategic understanding of the social and economic benefits