

**Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration  
10<sup>th</sup> North American Higher Education Conference  
“Beyond Boundaries: Building Bridges of Collaboration in Higher Education”**

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# **The Academic Profession in North America: Notes for a Research Agenda**

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Coordinación de Planeación y Desarrollo Institucional**

**San Juan, Puerto Rico, October 12-15, 2005.**

# Introductory Remarks

## **Considering that:**

- **We live in an increasing globalized world.**
- **This “world” is increasingly dependant upon knowledge.**
- **The above processes build upon the existing “world structure.”**

## **It is convenient to:**

- **Internationalize postsecondary education in the most equitable way possible.**

## **And this requieres, among other conditions:**

- **Knowledge of the diverse realities that postsecondary education faces in varios countries and, in particular,**
- **Knowledge about the faculty that populate our postsecondary institutions.**

# **But why Study Faculty? . . .**

**In general, we need to incorporate faculty in our analysis of the internationalization of postsecondary education because they are the professionals that are ultimate responsables for:**

- ✓ **Determining the content and delivery forms of the curriculum.**
- ✓ **Carry out the research projects that enrich knowledge and impact technology development.**
- ✓ **Are potentially important role models for students.**

**More particularly, we need to know our faculty better, among other things, because they:**

- ✓ **Will have international students in their classes and other teaching activities.**
- ✓ **Will work with them in research activities.**
- ✓ **Will work with them in program implementation.**
- ✓ **Can help build a culture of respect and inclusion of students coming from diverse backgrounds.**

# Is this a New Development in CONAHEC's Agenda?

No, CONAHEC has been aware of this development since its beginnings, when it published, among others, the following report:

Lovell, C.D., & Sánchez-Soler, M.D. (1995). Higher education faculty in Mexico and the United States: Characteristics and policy issues (Understanding the Differences Series, Working Paper No. 2). Boulder, CO: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education.

Additionally, one has to consider an important body of literature in the comparative study of postsecondary education in general, and of faculty in particular, e.g.:

Altbach, P.G. (Ed.) (1996). The international academic profession: Portraits of fourteen countries. Princeton, NJ: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

## **Central Purpose of the Project**

Present a comparative picture of Canadian, Mexican and United States academics in which each of them serves as a “contextualized mirror” for the other.

# A Contextualized Mirror?

Building a contextualized mirror implies:

1. Identifying a specific indicator to be compared (e.g., research productivity).
2. Relating the identified indicator to historical, current and global aspects (e.g., has faculty research productivity always been this way? Is it the same independent of type of institution, gender, disciplinary area?)
3. Relating the identified indicator to current global tendencies (e.g., what role do research products play in the global market? How is research related to funding agencies?)

# Some Data on Faculty Productivity

	Canada (131,320)	Mexico, 2001 (231,558) (last 3 years, all appointments)		United States of America, 1998 (1,113,183) (last 2 years, only FT)	
% of faculty that report no publications in last...		55.4	All Inst. in research and graduate teaching	33.4	All Universities
		23.4	Diversified Inst. (Mexico City)	14.0	Other 4-year Inst.
		24.7	Diversified Inst. (not in Mexico City)	35.1	2-year Inst.
		63.7	Licenciature-Master in professions.	69.1	
		75.8	Licenciature and masters		
		74.7	Licenciature, small		
		79.6			
For n, data is for 2002.		Grediaga Kuri, Rodriguez Jimenez y Padilla Gonzalez (2004).		National Study of Postsecondary Faculty, 1999.	

# **Specific Dimensions at the Academic Profession Level**

- **Socio-demographic profile.**
  - Socioeconomic background, gender, ethnicity, etc.
- **Professional profile.**
  - Highest degree, institutions attended, professional experience, etc.
- **The academic career.**
  - The “road” to an academic position, years of experience, institutional mobility, rank advancement, etc.
- **The nature of academic work.**
  - Tasks, use of time, work outside institution, productivity, etc.
- **Working conditions.**
  - Contractual situation, income, responsibilities, evaluation, incentive programs, unions’ role, teaching and research conditions, etc.
- **The academic’s perspective on higher education.**
  - Higher education role, emphasis on teaching/research/service, the purpose of research, etc.



# Contextualization dimensions

1. Global processes (globalization, building of geo-political-economic regions, human survival and advancement, fragmentation).
2. National and regional contexts (demographics, government, economy, culture, historical development).
3. Education (structure, attendance rates, teachers working conditions, etc.)
4. Science and technology (tradition, funding patterns, relationship with the economy, etc.).
5. Higher education context (structure and differentiation, regulation, history, tradition, social function, enrollment, funding patterns, etc.).

# Globalization Processes

National Context (demographics, government, economy, science and technology, culture)

Education Sector

The Higher Education System

The Discipline

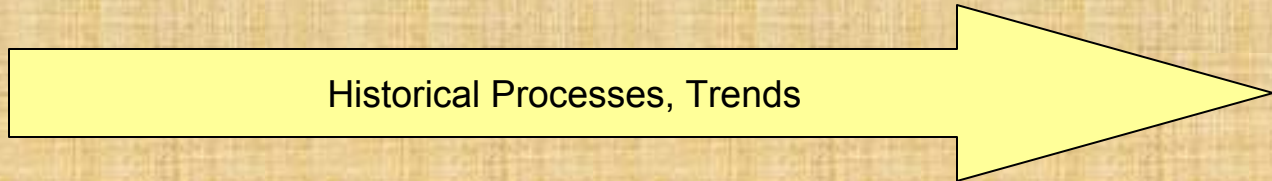
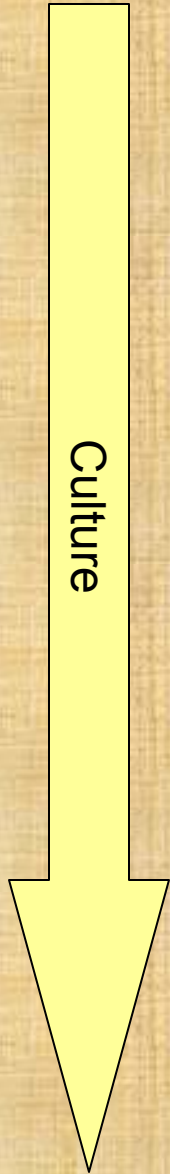
The Institution

The Profession

Culture

Diversity dimensions

Historical Processes, Trends



# The Project's Distinctiveness and Challenges

- Inclusion of Canada.
- Consideration of institutional diversity and other differentiation factors (gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, culture).
- Effort to relate current state of affairs to relevant past events.
- Effort to relate the state of the academic profession to events taking place in the immediate and mediate contexts.
- Consideration of major trends in higher education and the academic profession in each country (funding patterns, emergence of private higher education, increasing complexity of HEI, institutional change processes, evaluation and accountability culture, etc.).
- Effort to build a “narrative” in which the academic profession in North America could be seen as part of an ongoing global development of higher education and academe.

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