Equity and Diversity in Mass Higher Education: Scoping Policy Issues

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Abstract

This paper documents the policy dilemmas which resulted from the deregulatory/regulatory mix characteristic of the policy regime instigated by the Dawkins reforms in higher education. More specifically, it focuses on the dilemmas for equity and diversity, while at the same time considering the possibility of equity in the expanded provision and the importance of federal requirements for institutional level equity initiatives. However, it also argues that the marginalisation of higher education and the emergence of status hierarchies between institutions work against the interests of equity and diversity.

Some policy issues: An introduction

The Dawkins (1987-1992) revolution in higher education in Australia, while contributing to a substantially expanded provision of higher education, also precipitated a number of policy dilemmas. These dilemmas have resulted basically from the fact that this agenda for more equitable participation is located within a policy regime that is in many respects deregulatory in its approach to equity dilemmas. These dilemmas have resulted basically from the fact that this agenda for more equitable participation is located within a policy regime that is in many respects deregulatory in its approach to equity dilemmas. These dilemmas have resulted basically from the fact that this agenda for more equitable participation is located within a policy regime that is in many respects deregulatory in its approach to equity dilemmas. These dilemmas have resulted basically from the fact that this agenda for more equitable participation is located within a policy regime that is in many respects deregulatory in its approach to equity dilemmas. These dilemmas have resulted basically from the fact that this agenda for more equitable participation is located within a policy regime that is in many respects deregulatory in its approach to equity dilemmas. These dilemmas have resulted basically from the fact that this agenda for more equitable participation is located within a policy regime that is in many respects deregulatory in its approach to equity dilemmas. These dilemmas have resulted basically from the fact that this agenda for more equitable participation is located within a policy regime that is in many respects deregulatory in its approach to equity dilemmas. These dilemmas have resulted basically from the fact that this agenda for more equitable participation is located within a policy regime that is in many respects deregulatory in its approach to equity dilemmas. These dilemmas have resulted basically from the fact that this agenda for more equitable participation is located within a policy regime that is in many respects deregulatory in its approach to equity dilemmas. These dilemmas have resulted basically from the fact that this agenda for more equitable participation is located within a policy regime that is in many respects deregulatory in its approach to equity dilemmas. These dilemmas have resulted basically from the fact that this agenda for more equitable participation is located within a policy regime that is in many respects deregulatory in its approach to equity dilemmas. These dilemmas have resulted basically from the fact that this agenda for more equitable participation is located within a policy regime that is in many respects deregulatory in its approach to equity dilemmas.
Now a number of observers need to be made about this expansion of participation in higher education. Firstly, some contingent equity and the institutional constraints on higher education may be identified. The system of higher education is a complex one, involving many stakeholders, including students, educators, policymakers, and the society at large. The challenge is to ensure that higher education is accessible to all, regardless of their socio-economic background.

In the context of declining enrolments, there is a need to re-examine the role of higher education in society. The post-war educational expansion was driven by the belief that higher education was a key to social mobility and economic growth. However, in the post-war period, there was a shift towards more selective and elitist systems of higher education, which served to exclude many students from accessing higher education. This trend has continued until the present day, with many countries adopting a model of higher education that prioritises access for the elite, rather than ensuring a more equal and inclusive system.

Some definitional considerations

This section will attempt briefly to define the three concepts central to the theme of this issue of *Australian Universities’ Review*, namely equity, diversity, and participation in higher education. It is important to note that equity in higher education is usually defined in terms of access. This contrasts with the more pervasive definitions of equity as an end in itself, which seek to improve outcomes and opportunities for all. The access-based definition of equity is also closely related to the concept of participation, which refers to the extent to which individuals have the opportunity to engage in higher education.

The requirements for participation in higher education include: access, which refers to the extent to which individuals have the opportunity to engage in higher education; quality, which refers to the extent to which the education provided is of high standards; and equity, which refers to the extent to which all individuals have the opportunity to access and benefit from higher education.

As suggested earlier, and below, increased levels of education in the population can be seen as much in credentialling terms as for human capital purposes. But the trend in recent years has been a move away from the traditional credentialling perspective, towards a focus on the benefits of higher education, including the individual benefits of higher education and the societal benefits of higher education.

In conclusion, it is clear that higher education is a critical component of society, and that efforts are needed to ensure that it is accessible to all. This requires a reevaluation of the existing structures and policies, as well as a focus on improving the quality of education provided, and ensuring that it meets the needs of all students.

The papers in this *Australian Universities’ Review*

The first three papers by Gale and McNeice, Ramray, and Brown outline the developments in higher education policy in Australia. The second paper by Gale and McNeice discusses the impact of higher education on the economy, while the third paper by Ramray and Brown examines the role of higher education in promoting social mobility and social inclusion. The fourth paper by Brown and Taylor focuses on the importance of higher education in promoting social cohesion and social justice.

Finally, the fifth paper by Gale and McNeice discusses the impact of higher education on the environment, and the sixth paper by Ramray and Brown examines the role of higher education in promoting sustainable development.

In summary, higher education is a critical component of society, and efforts are needed to ensure that it is accessible to all. This requires a reevaluation of the existing structures and policies, as well as a focus on improving the quality of education provided, and ensuring that it meets the needs of all students. The significance of higher education in promoting social mobility, social cohesion, and sustainable development cannot be underestimated, and efforts should be made to ensure that all members of society have the opportunity to benefit from higher education.
stratified institutions in ensuring such compliance. However, her argument is that the very corporate management techniques which have been implemented to improve short-term efficiency are eroding the long-term effectiveness of equity programs in higher education. This is often accompanied by increased pressure on students to achieve high grades, leading to a situation where students may be labeled as 'non-compliant' based on their performance. The report highlights the importance of providing adequate support and resources to students to ensure compliance and the continued success of equity programs.

The report also discusses the need for the government to increase its capacity to monitor and assess the effectiveness of equity programs. It calls for a more systematic approach to gathering and analyzing data, and for the development of indicators that can be used to assess the impact of equity programs. The report suggests that the government should also consider the role of institutional culture in promoting equity, and that efforts should be made to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for students.

According to the report, Australia's universities have a high profile internationally, with many students from diverse backgrounds. However, the report notes that there is still room for improvement in terms of equity and diversity. It highlights the need for universities to continue to develop and implement effective equity policies, and for the government to provide the necessary support and resources to help universities achieve their goals.

The report concludes by stating that Australia's universities have made significant progress in advancing equity and diversity, but that there is still a long way to go. It recommends that universities continue to work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable environment, and that the government provides the necessary support and resources to help them achieve their goals.