

PRESS RELEASE - Embargoed until 00.01hrs 29 July 2009

Report calls for greater UK/US higher education collaboration

A new report on 'Higher Education and Collaboration in a Global Context' has been published by the UK/US Study Group, a group of senior scholars based in the United Kingdom and the United States.

Commissioned by UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown in Spring 2008, it advocates a leadership role for universities and colleges in fostering the development of a 'global civil society.' The aim would be to bind universities and countries together through common values and principles, and counter potential political and economic fragmentation in the globalised era.

It would be built upon a new model for UK/US collaboration, one that will develop multilateral partnerships and bring the strengths of the longstanding UK/US partnership in higher education to bear in third countries.

The authors argue that if the two countries are to continue to assert their primacy in the realm of higher education within an increasingly competitive global context, they will do so most effectively if they act collaboratively.

Professor Rick Trainor, President of Universities UK, Principal of King's College London and co-Chair of the Study Group said, 'Now, more than ever, collaboration across borders among our leading universities is absolutely necessary. The strength of the UK/US partnership, the longstanding pre-eminence of the two countries in the higher education sector, and, more recently, the crisis in the global economy, validate the case for deepened – and internationalised – collaboration.'

Professor John Sexton, President of New York University and co-Chair of the Study Group said, 'In the future, the UK/US higher education agenda must go beyond seeking simply greater mobility and partnership between the two. Instead, UK/US universities must focus on ways to expand the strengths of the UK/US model in multilateral ways to create a worldwide network of cooperation and excellence.'

The report advocates a number of ambitious initiatives to enrich the universities of both countries and to foster the growth of an open, competitive and accessible higher education sector in other nations. They constitute a vitally important form of soft-power diplomacy.

The report provides an account of the origins and purpose of the Study Group that produced it; assesses the history of UK/US higher education partnership, its strengths and weaknesses, and current context; and gives a forecast of developments with which the partnership should engage. The report makes a case for the absolute centrality of higher education in this emerging world and provides new ideas that capitalise on that centrality.

UK/US Study Group membership

United Kingdom:

Rick Trainor, Principal, King's College London and President, Universities UK. A Rhodes Scholar and a US/UK Fulbright Commissioner, Trainor holds degrees from Brown University (BA), Princeton (MA), and Oxford (DPhil). Trainor, a historian, serves as co-chair of the UK/US Study Group.

Shaun Curtis, Head of the UK Higher Education International Unit, serves as Rick Trainor's deputy in the group. He holds a BA and an MA from the University of Exeter, and a PhD from the University of Toronto.

Dame Janet Finch, Vice-Chancellor, Keele University. A sociologist, Finch is a Board Member of Universities UK and is currently the independent Co-Chair of the Council for Science and Technology.

Christopher Snowden, Vice-Chancellor, University of Surrey. A distinguished engineer, Snowden has wide experience in the public and private sectors, having previously served as CEO of Filtronic ICS, and is now non-executive director of Intense, Ltd.

Eric Thomas, Vice-Chancellor, University of Bristol. Trained in Medicine at the University of Newcastle, Thomas is Chair of the Research Policy Committee of Universities UK and a member of its Board.

Nigel Thrift, Vice-Chancellor, Warwick University. An internationally known human geographer, Thrift was previously Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research at the University of Oxford.

United States:

John Sexton, President, New York University. Educated at Fordham B.A., Ph.D., (Religion) and Harvard (J.D., Law), Sexton is a legal scholar and Dean Emeritus at the Law School of New York University. He is Chair of the Board for the New York Academy of Sciences and of the Independent Colleges and Universities of New York. Sexton serves as co-chair of the UK/US Study Group.

Robert Berdahl, President, Association of American Universities, has served as Chancellor of the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of Texas at Austin. He is a specialist on German history.

Molly Corbett Broad, President, American Council on Education, is the former president of the University of North Carolina and was educated at Syracuse University and the Ohio State University.

Katherine Fleming, Vice Chancellor, New York University, serves as John Sexton's deputy in the group. Educated at Barnard, the University of Chicago, and Berkeley, Fleming is Professor of History at New York University.

Jane D. McAuliffe, President, Bryn Mawr College, has served as Dean of Arts and Sciences at Georgetown University and is a world-renowned expert in Islamic Studies. McAuliffe was educated at Trinity College and the University of Toronto.

Shirley Tilghman, President, Princeton University, is a world expert in the field of molecular biology. Tilghman was educated at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, and at Temple University.

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Notes to editor

1. In the spring of 2008, Prime Minister Gordon Brown approached Rick Trainor, the Principal of King's College London, and John Sexton, the President of New York University and asked them to convene a small group of higher education leaders to engage in a set of conversations on the state of UK/US collaboration in a global context. The report was submitted to the Prime Minister in January 2009.
2. The press release and the report are under embargo until 00:01 29 July 2009.
3. Copies of the report can be downloaded here:
http://www.international.ac.uk/our_research_and_publications/index.cfm
4. For more information, contact Shaun Curtis, Head of UK Higher Education International Unit: 020 7419 5610 or email shaun.curtis@international.ac.uk