

Dear Reader,

Here is the first issue of the new international journal of higher education published by the International Association of Universities (IAU), following a decision taken by its Administrative Board at its 1987 meeting in Harare.

There is no doubt that this is an ambitious venture, but it was strongly felt that the Association was in a unique position to embark upon it. It has Member Institutions in 122 countries and major university organizations as its Associate Members. In addition, it has developed a vast network of co-operation with international, regional and national organizations. IAU can thus claim to be in a very real sense representative of the world community of higher education. Its fundamental task is to promote exchanges of all kinds within this extremely complex system of institutions which is largely responsible for the development of knowledge and thought on our globe, and therefore for the shaping of our common future.

Higher Education Policy is meant to provide a channel for the free flow of ideas and information throughout the world of higher education, particularly where communication has so far been scant and the flow reduced to a mere dribble. The North, the South, the East and the West are no doubt rather loose and misleading concepts, but they can at least serve to designate areas of relative mutual ignorance and misunderstanding. A major objective of the journal will be to remedy this as best it can and thus to pave the way for fruitful and necessary co-operation.

The journal will focus on policy issues and the role of higher education in society today, and will also carry reports on relevant research being carried out in various parts of the world. Each issue will contain three main sections. The first will be devoted to a broad topic or set of interrelated problems of a regional or international nature. Attention will be given to both the problems of a particular region (in order to better inform universities and policy-makers in other regions), and also to those problems which lend themselves to broad comparative treatment. The second section will be an open forum for articles and comments on current issues. The final section will include reviews on important books and publications and will report on major events, such as the reform of systems of higher education.

Higher Education Policy starts its career at a rather paradoxical period of our history which is marked by two contradictory tendencies. There is, on the one hand, a growing realization that the globality of most of our problems makes international co-operation imperatively necessary — a question of survival. But there is also, on the other hand, a growing scepticism as to the possibilities and value of international co-operation, particularly in its multilateral form. It is hoped that the journal will contribute, even if modestly, to the strengthening of the first tendency, and to the reversal of the second in the vital field of higher education.

We would like to express our gratitude to the Editor, Professor Guy Neave, and to the members of the Advisory Editorial Board who have kindly agreed to put their talent and competence at the disposal of *Higher Education Policy*, thus helping the International Association of Universities to attain the required standard of quality in the implementation of an important aspect of its policy, as determined by the Administrative Board.

Franz Eberhard
Secretary General

Justin Thorens
President