The U.S. Academy’s Perceptions of Academic Governance
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U.S. institutions of higher education trace their origins primarily to British models, with an overlay of German influence especially in the organization of graduate education and research. Through the mid-nineteenth century most U.S. institutions were privately established, but thereafter (at least until very recently) the public sector has received much support. The long history of private establishment led to a tradition where individual IHE came to be established by independent boards of trustees that had final responsibility for management and governance. The expansion of the public sector led to a partial revision of that pattern, with state systems governed by state-wide boards of trustees. Thus the American system of governance has always rested final responsibility in boards of trustees, which may either be self-selected or selected through elections by a defined constituency. In some cases, academics have representation in boards of trustees, but they never are a majority.

Over time the American system has become highly differentiated with some institutions becoming very large and offering both undergraduate education and graduate education in many fields while others are much smaller focusing on specialized areas and possibly only on undergraduate education. Thus it is common to think of some institutions as being slanted towards a research emphasis while others strive primarily to provide quality education. This difference in orientation is found in both the public and private sectors.

Recent Tension in Governance and Management
With the combination of public and private funding, the U.S. system became the largest in the world as well as one of the most generously financed systems. Many of the more notable institutions accumulated substantial endowments. Arguably these trends of growth, access, and generous funding peaked in the 1980s. However, in recent years growth has slowed as has the generosity of the system’s supporters. For example, whereas the public sector in 1980 received 80 percent of its funding from state subsidies, that proportion was down to about 25 percent by 2005, requiring public institutions to engage in creative financing. And the recent financial crisis has had a serious impact on the revenues of many private institutions.

Thus the current scene is characterized by significant belt-tightening, primarily orchestrated by the managers at individual institutions. Managers have tended to stress the need for efficiency and effective resource utilization. Outcomes include the cancellation of small classes, the increased hiring of (low-salaried) adjunct and contract faculty, and even the closing of academic programs. Decisions of this kind ratified by boards of trustees and often resisted by elected faculty bodies have not been popular, as much for the top-down way they have been made as for their actual substance.

In the best of worlds, there would be a common understanding of the respective roles of the various participants/stakeholders in the governance and management of higher educational institutions—with academics having priority over academic matters and managers and external stakeholders having priority over other matters. Where such a division of labor has been established, it might be said that an ideal of shared governance is achieved. But in recent times,
in the U.S. and elsewhere, significant gaps appear to have emerged between the key stakeholders.

**Some Striking U.S. Findings on Governance and Management**

Even before the current global economic crisis, discontent with the governance of higher educational institutions was widespread among faculty in the United States and throughout the world. Drawing from the 2007 Changing Academic Profession Survey of faculty in 17 countries\(^1\), we examine faculty perceptions of the current state of governance, and using data from a comparable 1992 international survey look at changes that have occurred in these perceptions over fifteen years.

Focusing exclusively on the response of the American faculty to current practice in management and governance, the following are important findings that will explored in greater depth below:

- Perhaps the most striking finding from the 2007 CAP survey is the strong sense of affiliation that U.S. academics express towards their academic disciplines, but the moderate sense of affiliation they express towards their employing institutions. As indicated in Table 1, only six out of ten U.S. academics indicated a strong or moderate sense of affiliation with their institution in 2007, down from nine out of ten in 1992. The 2007 proportion is the lowest for the 17 countries in the 2007 CAP study, and the decrease relative to 1992 is the greatest. We believe this finding is of particular importance in discussing the attractiveness of the American academy, and as we will illustrate this practice of disaffiliation is highly linked with recent managerial practice. Thus it will be the anchor for the analysis we report below.

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\(^1\) The CAP survey was carried out in 2007. Stratified cluster samples of professors were obtained in Portugal (PT), Italy (IT), Germany (DE), Finland (FI), Norway (NO), the United Kingdom (UK), USA, Canada (CA), Japan (JP), Korea (KO), Hong Kong (HK), China (CH), Australia (AU), Malaysia (MA), Brazil (BR), Mexico (ME), Argentina (AE). The aim was to complete an “effective” sample of 800 professors in each country. Taking into account the design effect and expected response rates, country sample frames typically targeted from 2000 to 4000 faculty. Some countries used mail surveys and other electronic. Response rates were at least 20 percent, and in all countries comparisons of completed sample characteristics with population characteristics was satisfactory. For a few countries, weighting was introduced to improve these comparisons. Participating country teams agreed on a common instrument.
American professors are at best lukewarm in their ratings of the communicability and competence of the top-level administrators at their institutions, and report only modest improvement over the past 15 years [See Table 7].

The Nature of Academic Work
Burton Clark (1980), in his seminal study of *The Higher Education System*, reminds us that the core purposes of the academy are to create, apply, and disseminate knowledge. For this purpose, academics affiliate with different organizations. On the one hand, they seek employment in institutions of higher education and research institutes where they receive space, time and support in exchange for their work as teachers and researchers. On the other hand, they become members of professional associations that sponsor conferences and journals where knowledge is exchanged, debated and codified. Additionally academics may affiliate with private companies that facilitate their consulting work, they may join unions to protect their jobs and their working conditions, and they may join other organizations that promote social and political agendas. These various affiliations shape the viewpoints of academics.

While academics affiliate with many organizations, the majority of their time is spent in the service of the university or college that employs them, pursuing their teaching and research. Depending both on personal inclination and the expectations of the institution where they are employed, they may focus relatively greater effort on teaching, research, or service. To facilitate this work, academics are organized in core units such as departments, centers and programs, and chairs. Many of the essential decisions relating to academic work are made in these units. Additionally, for the coordination of those decisions that affect multiple units, more comprehensive bodies may be formed for the deliberation of academics, such as academic senates or councils.

[Insert Table 2 about here]

Considering the different components of academic work, it can be argued that some components such as teaching, minimal research activity, and service are mandatory whereas other components such as administration, consulting, and other professional activity are largely voluntary. Table 2 focuses on the relation between the relative sense of institutional affiliation of faculty and the number of hours they devote to mandatory and voluntary work. Regardless of degree of institutional affiliation, the average time that faculty devote to the mandatory work of teaching is constant. However, the average time that faculty devote to department and university administration decreases significantly with decreased sense of institutional affiliation; and the average time that faculty devote to service, self-employed consulting, and research increases substantially with decreased sense of institutional affiliation. In sum, professors who feel less affiliation with the university devote less time to the voluntary side of institutional life and more time to their research and remunerative opportunities that are opened up by their status as academics.. It might be said that the decline in institutional affiliation has been accompanied by a decline in the involvement of academics in those voluntary activities that are lead to a responsible academic voice in university governance and management.\(^2\)

\(^2\) An alternate interpretation is the local-cosmopolitan argument that some academics choose to emphasize the local combination of teaching and administration while others choose research and consulting; hence these choices cause disaffiliation rather than vice versa. However, in the 1992 Carnegie Survey of the International Academic Profession
Support for Academic Work
To support the teaching and research work of the core units, the institutions that employ academics are engaged in a great variety of other tasks, including the selection of students, the provision of student housing, the construction and maintenance of classroom and research buildings, the provision of educational and research technology, the acquisition of library resources, the management of finances, and so on.

Effective governance and management hopefully leads to steady improvement in the facilities, resources, and personnel necessary to carry out academic work. The CAP survey asked academics what they felt about different facets of their working conditions. Concerning most items the respondents were about equally divided between those who felt the conditions were excellent or good and those who felt they were lacking. Interestingly telecommunications, classrooms, and the technology for teaching tended to get the highest ratings whereas research equipment and support for research and teaching tended to get lower ratings. In the 1992 study, a similar question was asked. Comparing in Table 3 the recent findings with those for 1992, the academics in those countries with more advanced economies such as the U.S., the UK, and Japan reported little improvement whereas academics in several of the emerging societies reported significant improvement; overall academics in Hong Kong gave the highest rating to their facilities, resources, and personnel.

Focusing on the U.S. situation, it is noteworthy that a somewhat larger proportion of the faculty at private institutions perceived their facilities to be excellent or good. However, there was little difference in the perceptions of faculty at research universities and those at non-research institutions.

Decision-Making in Academia
To accomplish the task of supporting academic work, additional more inclusive organizational units are likely to be formed including the offices of department chairs, deans, provosts, and presidents with their related staff. The appointees to these offices, while often having a background as an academic, are usually regarded as managers. Those at the department and decanal level are sometimes described as middle-level managers while those at the presidential and provost levels are considered top managers. Finally, in state and national settings where governments play an important role in the provision and financial support of higher education, ministries or departments of education and state higher education boards may be established to coordinate the activities of higher educational institutions.

It was found that the academics who emphasized so-called cosmopolitan activities were as likely to express a strong affiliation with their institution as those who emphasized local activities. The difference was that the locals put fewer total hours into academic work than did the cosmopolitans. In the 2007 survey, the cosmopolitans continue to work longer hours, but they have reduced the time they devote to institutional governance, management, and administration.
The CAP survey asked professors which organizational level was primarily responsible for a variety of decisions ranging from choosing the top academic officers to deciding on the course loads of individual academics. Several interesting generalizations can be elaborated from the responses reported in Table 4. Professors in most countries believe academics are the primary decision-makers on most academic matters, though by country there is interesting variation in what is considered academic and what is not. For example, approving a new academic program is thought to be an academic decision in Japan and much of Europe but a managerial decision in the U.S., Korea, and several emerging countries.

For most of those countries for which there is data both for 1992 and 2007 (including the U.S.) the faculty’s role in decision making has shrunk somewhat, more so in the mature systems than in the more recently founded systems. It would be interesting to learn whether the current economic crisis has accelerated this trend. U.S. faculty view themselves as among the least powerful, over the 17 countries included in the 2007 study.

[INSERT TABLE 4: PERCEPTIONS OF FACULTY PRIMACY IN SELECTED ACADEMIC DECISIONS IN 17 COUNTRIES]

Where faculty have experienced a decline in power, they perceive that the net gainers are middle-level administrators, especially deans, rather than top-level managers or external authorities. This is illustrated for the U.S in Table 5. U.S. faculty appear to believe they have consolidated their influence over faculty appointments and promotion, and have lost influence mainly in selecting administrators and determining budgets (and perhaps even in establishing new programs).

[INSERT TABLE 5: U.S FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF PRIMACY IN SELECTED ACADEMIC DECISIONS, 1992 AND 2007]

Academics in all of the CAP countries believe they are most influential in shaping policies at the departmental level and that they have very little influence at the institutional level. In the case of the U.S., these patterns are more accentuated in public institutions.

[INSERT TABLE 6: PERCEPTIONS OF FACULTY INFLUENCE AT DIFFERENT INSITUTIONAL LEVELS IN 17 COUNTRIES]

Prevalence of a Top-Down Management Style

Governance and management reflect the decision-making rules and processes that link the actors at these various organizational levels. Some of this decision-making may involve extensive consultation between actors and have a collegial character, while other decisions tend to be “top-down.” Fewer than two out of every five respondents in the CAP survey said there was “collegiality in decision-making.” Over half described the management style at their institution as top-down. The degree to which decision-making is collegial or hierarchical varies within and between institutions as well as between nations. But overall the academics in the CAP countries believe current decision-making is far more top-down than is appropriate and far less collegial than is desirable.
Interestingly in 2007 in the U.S. there were very limited differences in governance patterns by institutional level, suggesting that there may be stability or deterioration at the research universities, but improvements in the non-research sector. On the other hand, concerning most of the governance issues noted here, there is a somewhat more positive pattern in the private sector relative to the public sector: better facilities, more faculty influence, a perception of greater collegiality and consultation.

Sense of Affiliation
In the CAP survey, respondents were asked to describe the importance they attached to their affiliation with their academic discipline on the one hand, as contrasted with their department and their institution.

As noted above at the outset of this paper, U.S. academics in 2007 expressed an exceptionally low sense of affiliation with their institution—though this was not the case in 1992. Put differently, the gap between the U.S. academics sense of affiliation with their discipline and their institution is exceptionally wide—suggesting a disturbing disaffection with recent managerial trends at their institutions. The attributes of U.S. faculty who indicate greater institutional disaffiliation include:

- Those who feel they are not influential in decision-making, especially at the institutional level
- Those who feel there is a lack of communication between managers and academics
- Those who see the management style as top-down
- Those who believe there is lack of collegiality in decision-making
- Those who believe their institution has a cumbersome bureaucratic process
- Those who think the administration provides inadequate support for their teaching
- Those who are young
- Those who are less productive in scholarship
- Those who work in publicly supported institutions

Conclusion
In sum, academics both in the United States and around the world feel they have an insufficient role in decision-making, though American faculty feel less powerful in a number of respects than their colleagues in other mature systems of higher education. Additionally, in most national settings academics do not feel that the current decision-making processes have led to much improvement in their working conditions. Hence overall the academics in the CAP countries do not give very high ratings to the performance of their managers (see Table 8). Worldwide as well

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3 These generalizations are based on two parallel correlation analyses. In the first, rank order correlations were computed between the institutional affiliation variable and a variety of other variables including all of those discussed in this paper. In the second analysis, the institutional affiliation variable was replaced by an “affiliation gap” variable computed through subtracting the scores on disciplinary affiliation from institutional affiliation. The advantage of the gap variables was that it yielded greater variance, though the actual correlation between the two variables was quite strong (.84), and the pattern of results was essentially identical.
as in the U.S. less than half of all academics view their top-level managers as competent. Additionally in the majority of countries, academics express concern that the administration of their universities is not providing adequate support for academic freedom. On this particular issue, however, American academics have a more favorable view of their administration than do their colleagues in the majority of other countries.

Disempowerment (or the perception of same) appears to be the major driver of discontent with recent managerial and governance practices. The consequences of disempowerment are a significant reduction in the participation of academics in those aspects of university life that are voluntary such as committee work, administrative assignments, extra teaching loads, and so on. In other words, disempowerment has a direct bearing on the amount and quality of work that is accomplished by academic institutions. The increase of academic empowerment may be one of the keys to building more productive institutions.

[INSERT TABLE 8: FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF GOVERNANCE IN 17 COUNTRIES]