

QA Responsibilities and Economic Responsiveness

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- 1 Do we know what we're looking for?
- 2 Will we know it when we see it?

Multiple dimensions:

1. Higher education institutions are expected to produce graduates who support and grow the local economy.

- Directly: Engineer, IT, business
- Support role: nurses, teachers, ministers
- Some stimulate the economy: scientists, artists, musicians.

QA: Look at individual institutions and programs: quality of programs, responsive to industry, support for students. Success of graduates.

But supporting economy is also a collective issue: Enough engineers? Too many teachers?

Multiple dimensions:

2. Global economic downturn has affected higher education everywhere.

In U.S.: Lower endowment, less state aid, reduced ability of families to pay, for-profits increased scrutiny over use of public funds and student debt.

Everywhere: Hard on governments, hard on families.

QA: Look at individual institutions: budget, quality, stability.
Don't prescribe unnecessary expense.

Is there a collective role? Are institutions cutting engineering?

Multiple dimensions:

3. How does QA address issues of access?

Mission-related (e.g, American community colleges)

Collective access: as college-going population increases, what about countries that start charging tuition fees or increase them dramatically?

What about success? What good is access without completion?

QA: Look at institutions individually: Retention and graduation rates

Is there a collective role to play? U.S. state coordinating boards. What does a stronger link look like? What can we learn?

Multiple dimensions:

1. Higher education institutions are expected to produce graduates who support and grow the local economy.
1. Global economic downturn has affected higher education everywhere.
1. How does QA address issues of access? What about issues of success?

- Do we know what we're looking for?
- Will we know it when we see it?