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Higher Education in the 21st Century:
The Iron Triangle’s Critical Angle
of Quality Assurance

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Structure of Lecture

- COL’s work in the Commonwealth and Jamaica
- Trends & challenges in higher education
- The iron triangle of higher education
- Focus on Quality Assurance
COL’s work - Areas of Focus

- Education
- Learning for Livelihoods
- Human Environment
COL’s Activities in the Caribbean

- Open Schooling in Trinidad & Tobago
- Creation of CARADOL
- Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth
- Educational technology
- Annual meeting of Caribbean Chief Education Officers
COL’s Activities - Jamaica

- 4th Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning, Ocho Rios 2006
- Acting Chair of COL’s Board of Governors is H.E. Burchell Whiteman
- UCC - new partner in CEMBA/MPA degree programs
- Teacher training and development of learning material
- UTech Special Diploma in technical and vocational training
Higher Education in the 21st Century

- Demand expanding rapidly, from 13 million enrolments in 1960 to 130M students in 2004.
- Same period, HEIs in Latin America grew from 164 to 7,500.
- Age Participation Rates (APRs) need to increase substantially.

**Age Participation Rates**

What threshold for ‘developed’ status?

**Examples:**

- **Canada** - 60%
- **Malaysia** - 30% aiming for 40+%
- **India** - <10%
Open and Distance Learning (ODL) - a means to meet increasing HE demand.
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- Growth in open universities.
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Athabasca—26,991
Open University of Malaysia—22,043
Open University of Tanzania—13,000
National Open University of Nigeria—10,000
Netaji Subhash Open University—75,000
IGNOU—1.2 million
UKOU—203,744
AIUC—736,000
Bangladesh Open University — 2,48,908
BRAOU, Hyderabad, India — 3,18,850
YCMOU, Nashik, India — 93,2,500
MPBou, Madhya Pradesh, India — 150,000
UNISA, South Africa 110,000 — 130,000
Open Univ of Sri Lanka — 23,508
TNOU, Tamil Nadu, India — 23,000
Kota Open Univ, Rajasthan, India — 87,930
Open Univ, Uttar Pradesh, India — 3,307
Nalanda Open University, Bihar, India — 641
DBROU — 25,000
KSOU, India — 40,000
Open University of Zambia
Open University of Uttarakhand, India
Open University of Assam, India

2005 COMMONWEALTH OPEN UNIVERSITIES
State role in HE decreasing.
The Iron Triangle

COST

ACCESS

QUALITY

COST
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ACCESS

QUALITY

COST
Guide for policy-makers
Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education
Institutional Audits - Context

• An institutional trial quality audit to prepare Unisa for the real thing in 2008.

• A visitation at the University of Ghana undertaken to help the institution address immediate problems and chart a path for the future.
Backstory

- Neglect of higher education;
- Deterioration in standards;
- Flight of human resources;
- Acute scarcity of resources;
- Weakened institutions;
- National development severely at risk.
The Good News

- A renewed focus by governments and HEIs on re-energizing and revitalizing HE;
- Appreciation that HE is the strategic heart of education;
- HEIs are recognizing the imperative of ensuring quality while making access a priority.
Audit Phases

3 Phases of the Audit Process

- Pre-Audit Phase
- Audit Phase
- Post-Audit Phase
Pre-Audit Phase

- Commitment, a first step
- Designate a coordinating unit
- Conduct self-assessments
- Select the audit team
- Brief the audit team
- Size of the audit team
Audit Phase

- Duration
- Audit site, logistics & the audit
Post-Audit Phase

• Debriefing of senior management
• Report writing
• Contingency plan
Lessons Learned

- Size matters (i.e., team size)
- Keep pre-audit briefings simple
- Use existing documentation wherever possible
- Conduct reflective, analytical and self-critical assessments
Lessons Learned cont.,

- Self-assessments are good for internal quality assurance and external accreditation processes;
- Audit site should be self-contained;
- Institutional audits uncover significant issues of governance and management;
Lessons Learned cont.,

- Audits stimulate and enhance the basis for on-going QA structures and processes.
Conclusion

• The Higher Education landscape is changing rapidly in the 21st century;

• Some challenges in Higher Education:
  - Increasing APRs; Stemming brain drain; assuring quality; increasing access; lowering costs.
Thank you

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