

# **Why Innovate?**

## Confronting the limits of mass higher education

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# Current Issues

- Squeezed between high expectations and systemic vulnerabilities
- Tensions between past traditions and the digital revolution
- Tensions are grounded in the outmoded assumptions about mass HE
- Innovation may need to question these assumptions
- Educational values, as well as cost, must drive innovation

# Expectations

- Competitive asset in the global knowledge economy
- Insistence on high accessibility
- Shift in balance of existential and utilitarian roles
- Balance of public and individual share of cost

# Vulnerabilities

- Diminished or stable public investments
- Inflationary costs and rising student debt – doubts about the value proposition
- Concerns about performance – efficiency and quality – accountability
- Curricula and program priorities – cost of comprehensiveness
- Global dialogue with national and regional magnitudes



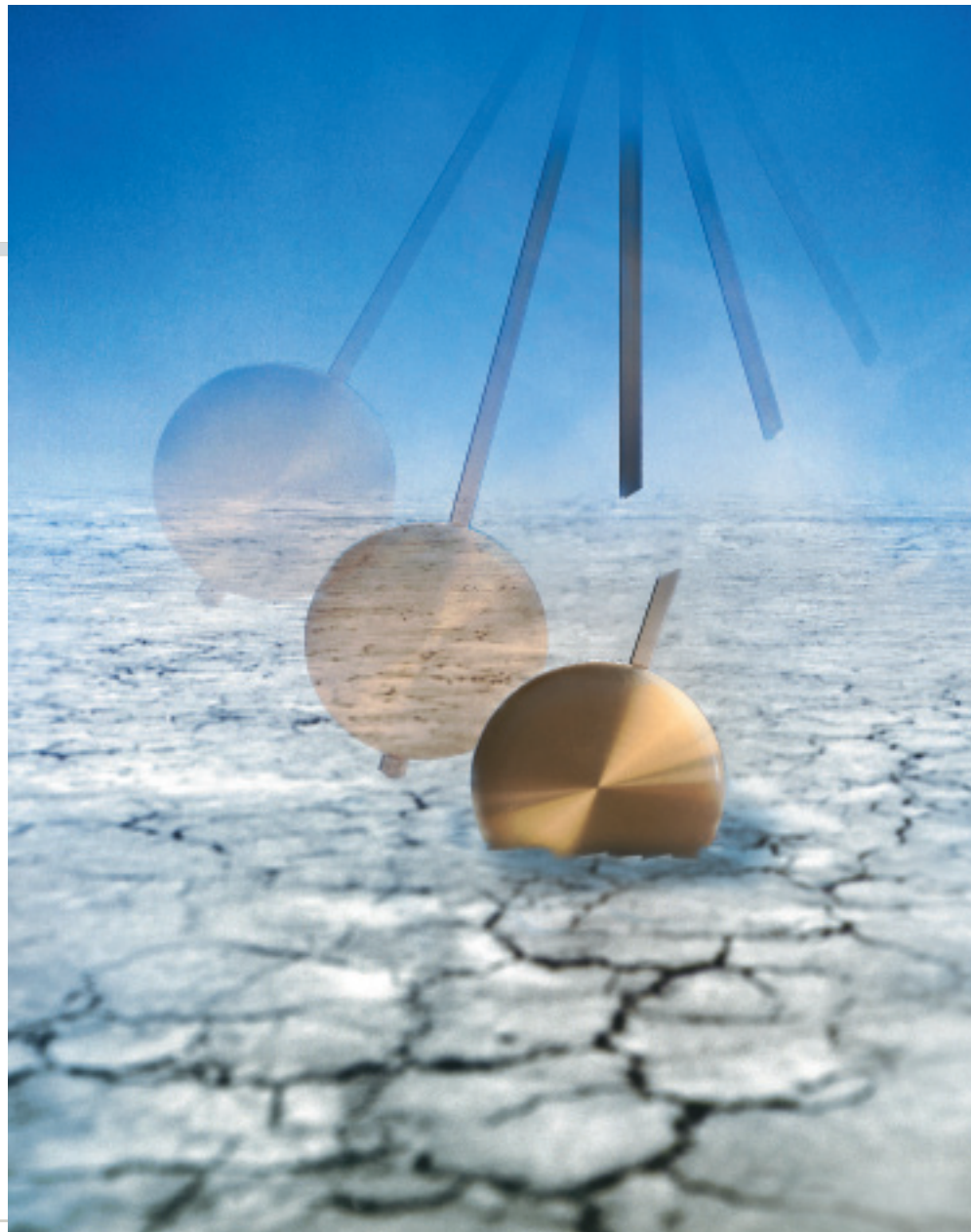
# Global Dialogue

## But U.S. Often a Key Benchmark

- First example of mass HE – idealism of post WW2
- Low cost – High Access – Uniform Mission
- Integrated Mission – 4 year undergraduate residential program
- National Research Funding despite limited federal scope
- First to reach the fiscal limits of mass HE
- Anxieties about quality – paradox of precocity and mediocrity

# New Era and New Outcomes

- Need-based differential tuition – loans rather than grants
- Student demographics
- Mission Variability
- Concentration of Funded Research and Philanthropy
- Alternative Providers
- Misfits of policy and practice – Standardization v Customization



# Restrained Institutional Responses

- “Let the pendulum swing” or “is the pin lost?”
- Focus on a revenue crisis
- Limits of current cost containment
- Legitimacy narrowly defined – multiple stakeholders
- Highly decentralized elaborate decision-making
- Nevertheless major innovations at individual or group level

# Need to Respond at Scale

- Define mission niche and institutional partnerships
- Redefine the meanings and proportions of tripartite missions
- Simplify the academic division of labor
- Provide hybrid pedagogies at scale
- Customize time to degree, timetable and examinations
- Create structured student pathways
- Promote collaborative and integrative research
- Integrate infra-structure
- Implications for future physical environments of HE

# Recapitulation

- Confusion of future visions and past virtues
- Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century Model designed for 25% of student age cohort
- Past virtues still relevant for this 25%
- Cannot serve the remaining 75% without redesign
- Redesign at scale justified by educational motives
- Execution needs a vision and a plan

# The Pendulum is Off Its Pin. It's Time to Innovate

