A Compact for Higher Education

Edited by K. Moti Gokulsing and Cornel DaCosta
A COMPACT FOR HIGHER EDUCATION
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Edited by
K. MOTI GOKULSING and CORNEL DaCOSTA
University of East London
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List of Contributors

Patrick Ainley is Reader in Learning Policy at the University of Greenwich School of Post-Compulsory Education and Training. His latest book is Learning Policy, Towards the Certified Society (Macmillan, 1999) and he is co-editor with Helen Rainbird of Apprenticeship, Towards a New Paradigm of Learning (Kogan Page, 1999). He is co-author with Bill Bailey of The Business of Learning, Staff and Student Experiences of Further Education in the 1990s (Cassell, 1997), a companion to Degrees of Difference: higher education in the 1990s (Lawrence and Wishart, 1994), Class and Skill, Changing divisions of knowledge and labour (Cassell, 1993) and, with Mark Corney, Training for the Future: The rise and fall of the Manpower Services Commission (Cassell, 1990).

Ronald Barnett is Dean of Professional Development and Professor of Higher Education, Institute of Education, University of London. He is an institutional leader, with an informed insight into the challenging nature of higher education in the modern world and has edited, co-authored and authored a number of books some of which have been national prizewinners. His most recent book Realizing the University in an Age of Supercomplexity, was published by Open University Press. He was a team leader in the Dearing Report (1997), and has been consultant to a significant number of committees, including Higher Education Funding Councils for England and Wales (the Barnett Report), Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals and the Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education.

Michael Bassey is Emeritus Professor of Education at Nottingham Trent University and Academic Secretary of the British Educational Research Association (BERA). Of his eight books the latest is Case Study Research in Educational Settings. For BERA he edits Research Intelligence and his contribution to this volume draws on some of his recent editorials. He was active in setting up the new Academy of Learned Societies for the Social Sciences and draws on this experience. He is currently working on the philosophical concept of fuzzy prediction and, in a different dimension, the empowerment of school children to tackle global warming.
Richard Brown became Director of the Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHE) in July 1996 and Chief Executive in 1999. He is also Chairman of the Executive Board of The National Centre for Work Experience (NCWE) a subsidiary of CIHE, funded by government to develop the agenda on quality work experience. He has held senior positions in both the public and private sectors. In the Department of Trade and Industry he dealt, among other matters, with European policy and inward investment. At Meyer International, and then at the National Grid Company he was General Manager in charge of business strategy and new business development. He became Chief Executive in a partnership-based development agency in 1993 before joining CIHE early in 1996.

Phil Cohen is Professor of Applied Cultural Studies at the University of East London where he currently directs the centre for New Ethnicities Research. His recent publications include New Ethnicities, Old racisms (Zed Books, 1999) and Rethinking the Youth Question: Education, labour and cultural studies (Duke University, 1998).

Cornel DaCosta is Deputy Head in the Department of Education and Community Studies at the University of East London. He has had substantial experience of course development and teaching in schools, further and higher education. His research and scholarly work has been in the areas of higher education, multicultural education, and teacher education/training. He has published extensively and is the coauthor and coeditor of Usable Knowledges as the Goal of Higher Education, and A selected Bibliography of Competence-Based Education and Training. In 1981, he founded with Colin Mably, the International Society for Teacher Education which today has a worldwide membership and publishes an international journal. The society promotes international research and individual and institutional collaboration.

Meghnad Desai (Lord Desai of St Clement Danes) is Professor of Economics at the London School of Economics and Political Science, and is currently the Director of the Centre for the Study of Global Governance, LSE. Born in July 1940, he was educated at the University of Bombay. He secured his PhD, from the University of Pennsylvania, USA. He has written extensively on a wide range of subjects. From 1984–1991, he was co-editor of the Journal of Applied Econometrics. He has been both Chair and President of Islington South and Finsbury Constituency Labour Party in London and was made a peer in April 1991. He is currently Chairman of the Trustee’s Board for Training
K. Moti Gokulsing is Reader in Education and Director of the Centre for South Asian Studies at the University of East London. He is the author of a number of articles and books on Education and the Media including the following: Sociology – a user friendly guide; Beyond Competence (co-authored); Usable Knowledges as the Goal of University Education (co-edited); and Indian Popular Cinema – a narrative of cultural change (co-authored).

Norman Jackson currently holds the positions of Senior Research Fellow in the Centre for Policy and Change in Higher Education at the University of Surrey, Assistant Director in the Development Directorate of the Quality Assurance for Higher Education, where he is responsible for developing policy on programme specifications and progress files, and HE Advisor to Ufi Ltd. He was a member of the Higher Education Quality Council’s Graduate Standards Programme research team which provided evidence to the Dearing Committee on standards-related issues in HE.

Ian Johnston is Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Glasgow Caledonian University (1998– ) and Board Member of the University for Industry: Learn direct (1999– ) where he was transition Chief Executive in 1998. He became interested in virtual education and training through the Opentech and Open College initiatives of the Manpower Services Commission and its successors where he was eventually Director General Training Enterprise and Education at DfEE. For three years (1995–98) he was Deputy Principal at Sheffield Hallam where heavy investment has been made in networked learning. He is currently a member of the Council for Industry and Higher Education.

Louise Morley is Senior Lecturer in Higher Education Studies and Assistant Dean of Professional Studies at the University of London Institute of Education. She was previously at the University of Sussex and the University of Reading. Her research and publication interests focus on equity, gender, power and empowerment in higher and professional education. Her recent publications include Organising Feminisms: The Micropolitics of the Academy (Macmillan, 1999), School Effectiveness: Fracturing the Discourse (The Falmer Press, 1999) (co-authored with Naz Rassool), Breaking Boundaries: Women in Higher Education, (1996) and Feminist Academics: Creative Agents for Change (1995) both edited with Val Walsh and published by Taylor and Francis.
Martin O’Donovan worked in NUS’s Public Affairs Unit from 1997–April 2000, having previously worked for Ann Keen MP and the Socialist Group of the European Parliament. A graduate in French and Russian from the University of Westminster, Martin is now the Director of the trade union pressure group, Unions 21.

Andrew Pakes was, until recently, the 47th president of the National Union of Students (NUS). A graduate in politics from Hull University, Andrew took on the lead role in the student movement at a very difficult time with so many fundamental changes in education. He encapsulates much of the progressiveness of the student movement today, with a firm belief in Green issues, a commitment to the various liberation campaigns and NUS ability to make a difference for the future.

Viv Parker is Reader in Educational Development (Learning Support) and the University Co-ordinator for Students with Disabilities at the University of East London. She has managed three HEFCE funded projects to promote access to the university for students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties (dyslexia). Her 1996–99 project was to set up a centre for the assessment of the study support needs of students with disabilities and dyslexia from the East London region as part of the National Federation of Access Centres in the UK. She has researched several aspects of disability and HE including Disability Statements and developing a code of practice for co-ordinators.

Glenn Rikowski is Senior Research Fellow in Lifelong Learning in the Faculty of Education, University of Central England, Birmingham. From 1994–99, he was a Research Fellow in the School of Education, University of Birmingham. Prior to that, Dr Rikowski taught in further education colleges and in schools. His latest book (co-edited with Dave Hill, Peter McLaren and Mike Cole) is Postmodernism in Educational Theory: Education and the Politics of Human Resistance (Tufnell Press, 1999).

Judith Watson is a partner in Sustainable Findings, the research agency for sustainable economic development. Until recently she was also Senior Research Fellow in the School for Post-Compulsory Education and Training at the University of Greenwich. She has recently conducted an ‘Education Audit for London’ (for Focus Central London TEC) and was principal researcher on the ESRC-funded study ‘Learning Pathways: Patterns of Progression in Post-16 Education and Training’.
Tom Wilson is head of the Universities Department at NATFHE, the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education. Prior to that he was Assistant General Secretary at the Association of University Teachers (AUT). Between 1986 and 1989 he worked as national Trade Union Liaison Officer for the Labour Party and before that in the research department of the GMB, Britain’s general trade union, which organises university manual workers. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Personnel and Development, has an MA in Industrial Relations and has written widely on various aspects of trade unionism and higher education.
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Finally, we, the named editors, take full responsibility for any errors or omissions which may remain in this book.
Prefatory Note

All the contributions to this volume were commissioned, except for chapter 8, What Kind of Place is This?, which drew upon a paper the author gave at a conference in Homerton College, Cambridge in May 1998.

The acronyms and abbreviations used in the chapters in this volume are common and widespread in writings about education. The following, however, have been used interchangeably by the contributors:

CIT/ICT Information and Communication Technology

Foreword

A Compact for Higher Education

I welcome this collection of papers. I welcome it because the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, which reported in 1997, had a vision of higher education purposively engaged with society, rather than standing apart from it, and seeking to identify explicitly what it has to contribute and what it should seek to achieve through purposive engagement. But in the time we had, we could only sketch out our thinking in broad outline.

In my own mind, the advantage of expressing what is implicit and seeking to give form to the relationship between the institutions of higher education, and all who have an actual or potential relationship with them lay first in the conviction that the only secure basis for maintaining and enhancing living standards in the United Kingdom lies in a knowledge and research based economy. This meant that the development of our people through education at its highest levels, and the pursuit of knowledge through research, were of the most direct relevance to their well being. It meant that while the distancing of the university from the insistent demands of today’s preoccupations was fundamental to maintaining the quality of what they have to offer, at the same time there was clear advantage for society and the institutions themselves in recognising and seeking to develop to their mutual advantage what each had to offer the other, and in developing that potential through a series of compacts. All this seemed obvious to me in principle but, it was much less obvious how the compacts could be developed and expressed. That is why we need this publication. The concept we outlined is far too important to lie only within the covers of our Report.

I have discussed the concept so far only in terms of the institutions and communities whether at local, regional or national levels. But we also had in mind the relationship between the institutions and their staff and between the institutions and their students. The former are the prime assets of the institutions and yet we felt that on the one hand staff identified with their discipline or department rather than with the institution, and on the other hand the institutions did too little to develop the capabilities and the careers of staff. There would
be gain to both sides from addressing these issues through a compact expressing how each might respond, to their mutual benefit.

Turning finally and arguably most importantly to the student, it is relevant to refer to my Committee's development of the statement of the purposes of higher education as formulated by the Robbins Committee thirty years previously. That Committee had drawn a distinction between the purpose of promoting the general powers of the mind and the purpose of providing instruction in skills for employment. While understanding the distinction made in Robbins, we thought it unnecessary and at least in my mind, an echo of those debates in the nineteenth century, in which strong arguments were advanced for distancing the universities from 'instruction in skills'. While we probably would not have chosen to use the word 'instruction' in any context, we chose not to make these separate purposes, and in that we were implicitly positioning the universities and their service to students in society.

The extent to which universities and colleges of higher education are today dependent on funding from central government is not in the best interests of the institutions or in the best interests of society itself. This dependence is analogous in a commercial context – and nowadays universities have to be thought of as businesses as well as centres of learning – to being almost wholly dependent on one customer. Although the state is a benevolent customer, it has a wider loyalty than to education. The pressures on the public purse of healthcare, social security and the provision for old age are likely to be great. It is therefore in the interest of institutions to broaden their funding base. The compact provides a framework within which they can develop a broader base. It offers a framework within which society can realise the full potential contribution of higher education to its own well-being.

R.E. Dearing
Chairman of the National Committee of Inquiry
The present volume brings together a series of contributions about the idea of a compact for higher education as it confronts a new millennium. A compact for higher education was proposed by the Dearing Report (1997). This book focuses on the idea of a compact from several different perspectives. But what is a compact and is it really possible to formulate one in a rapidly changing world?

The dictionary definition of a compact is ‘an agreement or contract between two or more parties’. Our use of the term derives from this dictionary definition, but builds on the Report of Lord Dearing (hereinafter referred to as the Dearing Report, 1997) whose vision of higher education was underpinned by the following ‘big’ ideas, according to Watson and Taylor (1998, p. 151):

- the contribution of higher education to lifelong learning;
- a vision for learning in the twenty-first century;
- funding research according to its intended outcomes;
- a new compact between the state, the institutions and their students.

The Dearing Report (1997), however, was constrained by the government’s political agenda and this has been discussed by a number of writers (Barnett, 1999; Watson and Taylor, 1998). Barnett (1999, p. 301), in particular, has drawn our attention to how the Dearing Report (1997) ‘is the product of the state and its dominant client group – the corporate sector – concerned to ensure that higher education is playing its part in the positioning of the UK within a globalised and fast-changing economy and world order’. While there are some shortcomings in the Dearing Report (1997) such as its failure to address the structure of higher education itself, and the idea of a curriculum in higher education and associated pedagogical matters, one of its strengths lies in its emphasis to address multiple audiences as the fundamental aims of higher education and its character have become problematic. It thus strove to strike a compact among its varied stakeholders.

However, reflecting critically on the state of higher education two years after his Report, Lord Dearing himself acknowledged that ‘despite much
promising work and some real achievement, the debate (on higher education) never materialised’ (Dearing 1999, p. 11). Focusing on the contemporary situation in higher education in Britain, Lord Dearing (ibid.) continued:

of course universities have enduring purposes that transcend changes in time and circumstance, but times and circumstance have never been changing more speedily, and the needs of society with them. The institutions need continually to be reassessing their strengths and opportunities as well as the challenges deriving from the development of the global economy, the creation of a society committed to learning for life, the unfolding implications of communications and information technology, and from such reassessments, judging how best to equip students to be effective in a world of such rapid change.

These reassessments need to take place periodically if we wish to obviate the need for another Dearing Report (1997) in the near future. The massification of higher education, the acceleration of the technological revolution, the global economy, the government’s prioritisation of stronger links with industry and students contributing to their higher education mean that the providers – the academics and their institutions – are increasingly saddled with obligations and the consumers – students and employers – are increasingly empowered with rights.

These dramatic changes, which are taking place in higher education in Britain as a result of serial reforms in a short space of time, are on the whole impacting negatively on the universities and their staff. Thus, the announcement in December 1999 of the third and final year of the present comprehensive spending review of the New Labour government gives the major share of post-16 funding to further education colleges rather than to the universities, thus confirming the latter’s funding reductions (although this could be said to go some little way towards redressing the imbalance between funding for the two sectors). As the Times Higher Educational Supplement (THES) (1999, p. 1) reported ‘… the year-on-year cuts are unsustainable and pose serious problems for infrastructure and pay’ (in higher education).

But government policies initiated in the Thatcher years of the late 1970s and the 1980s and continued by the present New Labour government remind us of Theodore Zeldin’s apt observation 30 years ago that the modern anti-clericalism is not against the clergyman but against the ‘clerc’, the privileged and arrogant academic. This accusation is still being levelled at academics, particularly at social scientists. Writing in the THES David Blunkett (2000, pp. 36–7), the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, supports the view that too much social science is inward-looking, irrelevant to key
social issues and he calls for more cooperation, understanding and partnership between researchers and policy makers for the benefit of the government and society. In this new climate, we feel it is crucial that not only the voices of the researchers and policy makers but also those of others with roles in higher education should be heard. It is in this sense that we believe this book is innovative since, in one volume, it articulates the voices of some important stakeholders in higher education, thus aiming to implement Lord Dearing’s suggestion of ‘a compact which in certain respects could with advantage be made explicit’ (Dearing Report 1997, 1.27).

Consequently, we are using the notion of a compact as the organising principle of this book in order to identify and examine the separate responsibilities or contributions that each stakeholder e.g. students, the state, employers, unions, academics commits to the compact. To what extent are the different agendas of stakeholders compatible and can they be realised in a consensual way that will carry the widest support of the greatest number of parties?

Such a notion of a compact generates a number of themes which provide coherence and a structure to the various contributions of the stakeholders. In Part 1, the idea of a compact is explored. Focusing on the Dearing concept of a compact, Ron Barnett teases out the implications of a compact for higher education and highlights the ambiguities which are embedded in such a notion. He argues that as we live in an age of supercomplexity, such a compact based on familiar ideas of the university is an illusion. The university is dead, he argued in the THES (Barnett 2000, p. 14), but we need an idea of the university more than ever with multiple frames of understanding; he suggests, therefore, that the compact should be seen as a process rather than an outcome.

The view of the present British government, however, is more focused on outcome than on process, as a number of government policy statements show. In a recent article Baroness Blackstone (1999) the Minister of State for Higher Education, identified the forces of change in higher education which will meet the new millennium. Drawing attention to the joined-up thinking that think tanks supply to political decision makers, Blackstone (1999, p. 14) suggests that the ‘space occupied by think tanks – between academia, the media, civil society and government – is likely to expand in coming years’. One important consequence of this is that ‘the pivotal role of higher education in knowledge development is being transformed’ (Blackstone, 1999) Furthermore:

New Technologies make the provision of learning in real time anywhere in the globe a reality for whoever can access it. This means that different institutions
can operate across previously geographically distinct markets, and that new providers of skills and learning can compete with higher education institutions in terrains previously considered sacrosanct (Blackstone 1999, p. 14).

Lord Desai’s views for a forthright and radical agenda for higher education are in line with the government’s thinking. Arguing, in chapter 2, that the higher education system as at present financed is inequitable and inadequate, Lord Desai suggests that we need to establish a set of contracts in line with the American higher education system. This suggestion is likely to be widely supported in some higher education institutions. In like manner, commenting on university performance indicators published in the press in the first week of December 1999, Alan Smithers (1999, p. 2) argued that universities should be allowed:

to develop courses of different lengths to meet different needs and, crucially, they should be permitted to price their courses to generate income. The government could secure the state’s interest through, say, merit scholarships and grants for the socially disadvantaged.

Consequently, in Part 1, two different agendas are set: Barnett’s arguments favour a notion of an entrepreneurial university operating in a society of supercomplexity while the government and Lord Desai would appear to promote greater privatisation of the universities.

In Part 2 a number of themes address the possibilities of how a compact in higher education can be brought off in practice. Taking his cue from the Dearing Report’s (1997) call for a new compact between institutions and their staff, students, government, employers and society in general, Norman Jackson, in chapter 3, focuses on the important role of quality assurance. This issue has now assumed national significance since the confrontation between the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and the universities represented by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (CVCP) and the Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP) ended in January 2000 with the QAA rejecting the majority of the proposals of the CVCP and SCOP and imposing their own codes of practice. This strengthens Jackson’s argument that a collective commitment to rigorous assurance of quality and standards would be in the interests of all stakeholders by providing rigorously assured awards of national and international standing and a high quality learning experience. Consequently, his chapter examines how the contribution of a national quality assurance policy can help create the conditions within which a compact between stakeholders can be arrived at. This is in stark contrast to the arguments
made elsewhere by Smithers (1999, p. 2) who says that the universities should be left ‘to concentrate on identifying and developing talents, free from the silliness of the Quality Assurance Agency’.

In chapter 4 Louise Morley considers how discourses of quality and equality interact or collide in the context of massification and the changing demography of higher education. Part of her argument relates to how human capital theory has been increasingly applied to higher education in relation to global competitiveness and national prosperity, a point made in the Dearing Report (1997).

Using a Foucauldian framework, she scrutinises a range of arguments to show how the quality discourse has achieved hegemonic authority. She raises questions about the appropriateness of applying quality assurance systems from industry to the complex social and intellectual processes of higher education. On the one hand she finds some of the arguments oppressive while on the other hand she states that quality audits represent a form of consumer empowerment. The scrutiny of organisations/institutions is seen as a refreshing challenge to elitism and to disciplinary authority, reinforcing a point made by Luke (1997), according to Morley.

But clearly one of the most important points of the Dearing Report (1997) is that by addressing multiple stakeholders, it attempted to reposition higher education as a force for continuing economic regeneration (Barnett 1999, p. 293). In the last decade, according to Atkins et al. (1999, p. 99), there has been an increase in the potential roles that higher education institutions can play in the economies of their immediate region. Indeed, during 1995–96 a team from Newcastle University carried out a detailed study of the North East and West Midlands for the DfEE ‘in an effort to identify factors that would either promote or inhibit the engagement of universities in the economic development agendas’. In chapter 5, Judith Watson uses the Thames Gateway as a case study of the largest economic development project in South East England. She singles out ‘academic services’ as a key industry in economic development. Focusing on five universities – three new and two old ones – Watson identifies their strengths and weaknesses in terms of their response to economic development imperatives. The three new universities are enthusiastic participants in economic development but their involvement is hindered by bureaucratic regulations and they lose out when it comes to the allocation of research funds. The two old universities thus have fewer incentives to participate in economic development. The allocation of research funds identified by Watson as one of the reasons why new universities ‘lose out’ brings to the fore the vexed question of the role of teaching and research in higher education.
Next, in chapter 6 Michael Bassey draws attention to the role of government agencies such as the HEFCs in funding research through the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). He deplores the quick fixes that the pressure to publish is engendering. This point was also made by Rosamond McKitterick (1999, p. 23) who stated that despite the RAE’s claims to be assessing quality rather than quantity, some university departments encourage their staff to produce a number of articles on the basis of making a greater contribution to the arithmetical calculation of the RAE. She deplored the reactive marketing policies of many publishers which damage the promotion of pioneering research. Using as his starting point the mission statement of the recently formed Academy of the Social Sciences, which seeks to advance the social sciences in terms of understanding today and shaping tomorrow, Bassey argues particularly for a compact between various stakeholders in the social sciences in the hope that this could lift the siege and enable the social sciences to flourish. For the social sciences have been under a threat since the 1970s, particularly following the election of Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister in 1979 and her notorious statement that there is no such thing as society. The New Labour government have created a more promising environment for research but are more in favour of evidence-based research to guide policy making. Consequently, Bassey’s arguments are timely, since social scientists do not have an umbrella body such as the Royal Society to speak for them.

The last chapter in Part 2 links up with the Dearing Report’s (1997) emphasis on the role of communications and information technology (CIT). However, Ian Johnston’s chapter goes much further and argues strongly for what is virtually a new paradigm: the virtual university. In his chapter he adduces valid reasons for applying CIT to the delivery of higher education, following the well-known argument that this is the third major revolution in human vocational behaviour after the agricultural and industrial revolutions. The implications of the virtual university could be staggering – it will change the needs and expectations of on-campus students, including expected learning outcomes. It will permit hugely widened access to off-campus students, through virtual delivery with consequent changes to concepts of tutoring, mentoring and assessment.

Some observers of this new phenomenon, however, see great danger and significant social loss in such a scenario. As Mason (1998, p. 9) put it:

the essence of our education system has been the community of a classroom and the physical reality of the textbook. It has changed relatively little over the past few hundred years.
But, Mason (ibid.) continues:

What we will have in the next few years is an education system that is part of computer culture. It is not just the physical environment that will be transformed. Whereas books have encouraged us to think in terms of a stable body of knowledge, a form of content that we can read, digest, learn and know, computers dispose us to think differently – to be engaged in a constantly changing process where information is not stable or fixed.

Consequently, new areas of research such as the cognitive effects of computerisation and screen-based learning will develop and probably the most significant effect could be to challenge both how universities are organised and the fundamental reasons why they need to continue to exist.

The implications of such a scenario for a compact need to be explored. It is part of what Blackstone, quoted earlier, meant when she said ‘that new providers of skills and learning can compete with higher education institutions in terrains previously considered sacrosanct’. Recent reports suggest that this is already happening. Thus, Currie (2000, p. 17) states that British academics will be advisers to Regent’s College, America’s leading ‘virtual university’. The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) has set up a Foresight taskforce to find out how new technology and new organisations will alter teaching and learning by 2020 (ibid.). As the leader in the THES (2000, p. 18) states:

New technology and new organisations are opening options, and universities are under threat from competitors. This is forcing a re-examination not only of universities’ organisation and structure, but also of their essential purposes.

Consequently, a new kind of compact in which higher education might play a lesser role than hitherto will have to be worked out.

In Part 3, we explore how a compact for higher education could work out in practice. The issues addressed in this section have been largely ignored or are under-researched in higher education. To start with, Phil Cohen makes a strong case for a multicultural university. As he says, multicultural societies require multicultural universities. ‘It is as simple and as complicated as that. It is simple because it embodies a clear statement of principle: the university should draw its students and staff from every section of society....’

It is complicated because such a proposal for multicultural universities is fraught with difficulties. It challenges the very model of the Western university by the counterflow of populations and ideas from South to North and East to West. Cohen investigates the claim that higher education institutions dispense
universalistic forms of knowledge. The knowledge is based on classical or Biblical foundations and has a long history going back to the middle ages as far as the universities are concerned. This history reveals the following, although not in a linear fashion:

an archaeology of Western Reason in its successive transformations, from the medieval community of scholars, and the institutions of Renaissance humanism, through the 18th century Enlightenment, the so-called Age of Reason, followed by the Victorian Age of belief in Science, Progress and Modernity and thence on to the twentieth century megastructures modelled on corporate capitalism.

In dealing with issues of equal opportunity to account for the diverse student body of higher education, Cohen emphasises issues of diversity, difference and de-differentiation or the breaking down of boundaries and norms. Most of the providers and the consumers of higher education would subscribe to a compact which builds on such issues.

Cohen’s chapter provides an umbrella for the discussion of the next two chapters in this section. The New Labour government’s commitment to education and training is underpinned by their attempt to provide a coherent political philosophy. This philosophy relates to the role that learning now plays in providing an enabling framework to tackle issues of poor levels of literacy and numeracy which lead to increased social exclusion. It was Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who spelt out in some detail the political philosophy of the New Labour government. He sees education and training as mechanisms:

to improve individuals’ access to the labour market and enhance their job security. Rather than alleviate poverty and reduce income differentials through increased taxation and redistributive welfare spending, Brown argued that the most effective means of tackling inequality and social exclusion was to provide recurrent equality of opportunity for individuals to learn… (Hodgson and Spours, 1999, pp. 10–11).

In chapter 9, Viv Parker examines precisely the issue of how higher education can be fully inclusive. She asks whether the principles of universal design developed by architects, product designers, engineers and environmental design researchers could be applied to higher education. If this is feasible, what are the implications for innovations in teaching strategies, learning environments and extending the role of communication and information technology to students with disabilities? Recommendation 6 of the Dearing
Report (1997) states:

We recommend to the Institute for Learning and Teaching that it includes the learning needs of students with disabilities in its research, programme accreditation and advisory activities.

The implementation of the above recommendation and the extension of the scope of the Disabled Students Allowance to students in higher education also recommended in the Dearing Report (1997) are steps in the right direction. They will help remove many of the barriers identified by Parker in her chapter. But disability, as a number of writers have reminded us, is also a form of oppression and the difficulties encountered by disabled people intersect with age, race and class.

In the final chapter in this section, Cornel DaCosta deals with another form of oppression, that suffered by lower socioeconomic groups. This is the term used in the Dearing Report (1997), which is more inclusive than social class differences, probably the most researched theme in the sociology of education in Britain. Although in the words of Reid (1999, p. xix):

social class differences and inequalities have become less central concerns both politically and socially and within social science, perhaps because of developing interest in these features of gender and ethnicity, and/or because the popularity of class has declined owing to its intransigence …

the New Labour government's emphasis on widening participation in higher education makes socioeconomic disadvantage a central plank of its social justice agenda, referred to earlier on in this introduction.

However, comparatively little work has been done on the participation of lower socioeconomic groups in higher education. It is perhaps the Robbins Report (1963) which provides the most comprehensive, though now dated, research in this area. As Reid (1999, p. 181) states, the Robbins Report documents the very separate ways in which:

the social classes, based on father's occupation at the time the sample left school, were in terms of entry to higher and further education … the situation did not change with the expansion of universities and other forms of education following the recommendations of the Robbins Report (1963).

DaCosta draws our attention to the fact that socioeconomic differences and inequalities in higher education are alive and flourishing and that these have to be addressed through a compact.
In the final part, we try to identify and examine the contributions that the consumers of higher education may make to the compact. Patrick Ainley, in chapter 11, situates the new public management of higher education within the 'contracting state'. Looking ahead, he examines the new unified system of further education and training that will be introduced under the Learning and Skills Council on 1 April 2001. Arguing for a reversal of the marketisation of the state and society, Ainley proposes a democratic compact for higher education instead of the commercial contract described by Meghnad Desai in Part 1.

However, one of the fundamental changes any compact has to take into account concerns the lack of sufficient progress being made by university employees in equal opportunities. MacLeod (2000, p. 9) reports the result of a survey which concludes that as far as the employment of women and minority groups is concerned, universities were far from being bastions of liberal employment policies and that they were no better than companies and organisations in the country at large. The Equal Opportunities Advisory Service as well as NATFHE is now involved in addressing such issues.

Next, in chapter 12, Tom Wilson, Head of Education at NATFHE puts the case for NATFHE's approach to higher education and argues against the narrow focus of higher education serving the needs of the economy. He distances himself from the government policy of student fees and removal of grants. Rejecting performance pay for academics, even at a minimal level, Wilson welcomes the Bett Report (1999) and draws attention to the casualisation of higher education employees. Thus, Swain (1999, p. 3) reported that the proportion of all academic/research staff on fixed-term contracts had increased from 9 per cent for females and 12 per cent for males pre-1970 to 80 per cent for females and 77 per cent for males in 1997–98. This situation is now characterising higher education in most advanced industrial countries. According to the US Department of Education (1990), in the United States about a quarter of academic staff are on part-time appointments. In France, Cazenave and Zahn (1989) state that twenty thousand academic positions are part-time and in Canada more than a third of academic staff are on part-time appointment according to Rajagopal and Farr (1992).

Most of the arguments Wilson makes are in line with a trade union approach: protecting pay, conditions and contracts, dealing with discrimination and the improvement of the quality of lecturers’ working lives and students learning experience. A compact would therefore have to incorporate these fundamental issues.

In the next chapter, Andrew Pakes, until recently the President of the NUS, and his colleague, Martin O'Donovan, currently director of the trade union
pressure group, Unions 21, assess the implications of the changed culture and concerns of the NUS in the light of the changing higher education scene. They emphasise the importance of the learning age, particularly the advantages of Internet learning and CIT. They approve of the government plan to expand higher and further education in order to develop a highly skilled workforce and draw attention to the immense funding implications resulting from the increased participation rate in higher education. They agree that a new age of learning cannot be funded by the methods of the past and that ‘students and their representatives must embrace change and move on’. In their view a compact for higher education will evolve as lifelong and distance learning expands.

An issue raised by Pakes and O’Donovan concerns the impact on students’ learning of part-time work in which full-time students are now increasingly engaged. In chapter 14, ‘The Rise of the Student-Worker’, Glenn Rikowski draws upon his research to provide an analysis of the student-worker as a full-time student and explores the risks, stresses and role conflicts that this increasingly important dimension in the lives of full-time students poses. This new situation raises fundamental questions not only for the student worker but also for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Should students take longer to complete a degree and should HEIs revisit their structures to accommodate full-time student workers’? There is no doubt that a new compact for higher education needs to consider this.

Finally, Richard Brown of the Council for Industry and Higher Education gives the views of industry. He insists that:

UK business wants and needs a higher education system that is pre-eminent. It needs the highest quality from all institutions as they pursue through partnerships their own distinctive missions.

According to Jary and Parker (1998, p. 64) The Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHE) is an independent body made up of heads of large companies, universities and colleges whose views have some influence on government policies. CIHE has consistently promoted the concept of a partnership between government, higher education and industry working together to develop a different kind of higher education system altogether (CIHE, 1987 – quoted in Jary and Parker 1998, p. 54). However, the relationship between higher education and business has not always been smooth and productive. Consequently, Brown states that higher education has to respond and meet the challenges of the knowledge economy. But business too has to change. If organisations want:
graduates with more employability skills that can better hit the ground running, they have to engage more with institutions ... they need to communicate their ideas clearly and consistently enough.

Brown makes the interesting point that ‘organisations are not always best at thinking of their long-term rather than short-term needs and a dialogue with academia (that tends to have the opposite trait!)’ can be particularly useful. A compact would, in Brown’s view, involve a closer partnership between higher education, organisations and the government.

Whether such a compact will be politically or organisationally feasible remains to be seen. Other versions of a compact between higher education and society, such as those suggested by the contributors to this volume, offer alternative models. Or it may be that Lord Dearing’s idea of a compact may be lost in the move to full contractual relations between higher education, its students and other clients or customers, as suggested by other contributors. Whatever actually occurs, the notion of a compact should not be lost from the legacy of the Dearing Report. It affords a conceptual space within which discussion can take place over the future of higher education in relation to the society of which it is a part and over the practical organisational forms that that relationship can take. This collection is a contribution to that debate.

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