Technological Evolution to Save the Elite Public University

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(*Notes taken by Gillian Hart & Suzanne Guerlac***)**

What I'm going to talk about isn't policy – it's a fantasy.

The university will increasingly fall short of the Master Plan obligations. How can we keep up with social responsibility to the state and increase access when the state is walking away?

Online degrees via a cyber-campus

Currently we are on Path A:
There is a natural evolution of various forms of online eduction. Already hundreds of courses are available online.

We could continue along this path - or we can recognize that Path B is the future and rush to embrace it.

My assumption is that some day somebody is going to figure out how to do online education in the quality/elite sector, and it ought to be us. It opens opportunities for access that link with our mission. And we could produce net revenue to subsidize on-campus teaching. There are lots of institutions at the level of Phoenix and below. Who is going to do it in the quality sector at scale?

The vision of a cyber campus delivering online instruction:
   ♦   High quality production value – the richest, most captivating content in video;
   ♦   Sections structured with GSIs via video contact – high touch contact
   ♦   For credit or a degree – Californians, but also quality students from Kentucky to Kuala Lumpur;
   ♦   Best teachers approved by faculty senates

Why do it?
   ♦   Want elite higher eduction for continuity of civilization
   ♦   It's also about competitiveness
   ♦   Social justice is the principle motivation
   ♦   Elite in the sense of excellence not exclusiveness
In other words: expand access via a durable business model

6 questions about Path B

- ♦ Can we do it at UC quality? Quality is difficult to pin down – I've got a group working on it and they're chasing their tails
- ♦ Access – can it be done at scale
- ♦ Can it be financially sustainable?
- ♦ Net revenue – I'm agnostic about what we do with it
- ♦ Innovation in pedagogy and teaching
- ♦ Partnerships – do more for the state and the world. It would help with the K-12 pipeline. Also partner with 3rd world institutions. My ambition is global domination.

6 steps:

1. Planning and external fundraising
2. 25-35 courses for on-campus students (they're our white mice)
3. build enough lower division courses (~60) for an AA degree
4. Online BA degree from UC - ~100 courses
5. extend for college-readiness pipeline
6. go global

Steps 1 & 2 – may be some efficiency, but no significant increase in revenue.
How quickly could we get to step 3 – which would let us build new bodies of revenue.
There is unlimited demand for an AA degree – from Kentucky to the army.

What about fees? I spoke with the governor who says charge the same tuition as residential campuses – that will signal that you have the same quality so you don't devalue the brand.

How it will work. For each course there will be:

1. A tenure-track faculty member will be the course owner
2. an instructor of record (a lecturer?)
3. a squadron of GSIs who will be the frontline of online contact, managed by the instructor of record.

Demand will be unlimited.

How many could we serve at the quality level? The main constraint is GSIs – we'll run out of GSIs. We have to figure out new faculty structures for high touch systems.

The startup will only be around $20million. Advertising isn't an issue with our brand.

The biggest obstacle is our academic senate. They revel in the comfort of denial and the conservatism of greatness. They have never read a newspaper – they're in denial. The state isn't going to pay. Faith-based fundraising is not a business plan.

We can't innovate from UCOP – innovation has to come from the bottom. What I fear is a coalition of the willing from the frontline will be stopped by the academic senate. We have to figure out the right balance between bottom-up and top-down.

The faculty might get in the way of this. I'm not good at dealing with them, but Dan Greenstein is a master. We do a bad cop/good cop routine.

Some responses to Q&A:

Q: this sounds like a high school text book adoption model – how do you square that with how faculty teach?
A: I don't need faculty to buy in – only a subset. What I need is for faculty as a whole to get out of the way for a coalition of the willing.

The idea is not to replicate on-campus experience – beer bashes etc. – but to build a different experience. The question is how to brand that experience.

Q: what about failures elsewhere (eg Columbia?)
A: you have to have faculty buy-in (!) And you have to produce a credential – a UC credential. Also technologies are evolving – especially high touch. The big payoff is when you do it at scale.

Q: are you trying to set up a separate online academic senate?
A: I'm not going to go there.