Editor's Introduction

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In the early sixties Thomas Kuhn, in a wonderful book entitled *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, introduced the concept of a paradigm shift in science. Kuhn's view was that science goes through epochs or paradigms. Over time, as significant discoveries are made, a swing in allegiance to a particular worldview occurs, and scientists adopt a new one—a new paradigm. For instance the shift from a Newtonian worldview to an Einsteinian one was a paradigm shift.

There is a paradigm shift taking place in higher education today, and we as members of college and university communities are in the midst of it. This shift makes distance education a natural part of the education process, and a corporate approach to doing the business of education a normal part of university administration. The radical nature of this shift is clear when we realize that twenty years ago virtually no institution was delivering courses on-line, and the concept of for-profit education was repugnant to even the most progressive intellectuals. Today almost every institution is delivering at least some courses by distance means, and progressive faculty at state and private schools discuss revenue sharing as a form of compensation for their development of on-line courses.

Distance education has caught on so quickly because of a serendipitous combination of technology, market forces, and acceptance of divergent models of education. Technology made various forms of distance education possible. Market demands forced institutions of higher education to cope with competition for a share of the student market; and a consumer-focussed, service economy set expectations among consumers that colleges and universities, like all other *businesses*, will cater to their needs and wants. Coupled with a trend to view education more as a job-training exercise than an individual development opportunity, and the need for individuals to re-educate themselves periodically to remain viable employees, distance education is a natural response to changing societal pressures.

Despite the inevitability of having to deal with distance education, institutions of higher education are having a very difficult time adapting to the changing playing field. One would be hard pressed to find a more conservative institution than a college or university. The historic structure of the Academy is fundamentally change-resistant, and most academics hate to think of themselves as being subject to economic forces. Consequently, the venture into the electronic abyss is often made by those who historically have had to pay attention to market demands. The rise of corporate "universities" and their embrace of electronic vehicles for course delivery is a prime example of this. In response, the areas within colleges and universities that seemingly compete for the same student pool as corporate universities have been the first to explore distance education. Continuing education units are prime candidates. Summer sessions are drawn into the arena because many are coupled with continuing education. Furthermore, for the past three decades or so the nuances of summer session administration have forced summer session deans and directors to be leaders in entrepreneurial program development. It is partially for this reason that many summer sessions feel the burden of the distance education race for student market share very heavily.

The distance education revolution is difficult to manage in its own right, but when coupled with the monumental shift in the way universities and colleges finance their operations, administration of the enterprise becomes a daunting proposition. The concept of budget reform—making individual units within an institution responsible not only for managing expenses but for generating revenues—is a relatively new phenomenon on many campuses. Not every institution has adopted some form of budget reform, but most schools are moving in that direction.

In writing "The Economic Management of Summer Sessions: Fiscal Practices at Research Universities," Jack K. Johnson's aim is to summarize current fiscal practices within a representative group of research universities. He writes "There is little readily available data about the fiscal policies, procedures, and budgets at other institutions, even though summer session administrators are usually quite good about sharing information and ideas with one another. While the financial practices of other institutions aren't necessarily relevant to our own situations, knowledge about what goes on elsewhere can be instructive and occasionally very helpful—especially if financial considerations consume an ever greater share of our energies."

Indeed most summer session directors report that financial concerns require increasingly more of their attention. This reflects a trend that we might call the corporatization of higher education. Universities and colleges—and the individual units within them—are behaving increasingly more like for-profit organizations. This move toward a corporate-like structure brings with it new concerns and new versions of old concerns that are particularly acute. For instance, the issue of centralization of a summer session is one that affects many summer session administrators. In those institutions where there is a push to make individual academic units responsible for generating revenue, those units are more prone to consider making a land-grab in which they subsume their parts of the summer session in order to reap the economic benefits. Karen L. Heikel from the University of Minnesota Duluth Campus conducted research on the level and effects of centralization in summer sessions as part of her doctoral dissertation. Heikel surveyed only public research institutions. Of the 87 institutions that participated in the survey, 40 percent were classified as centralized; 44 percent as mid-range or hybrid; and 16 percent as decentralized. Interestingly, Heikel found that the level of centralization had no significant effect on student enrollment or number of courses offered, and there was no significant relationship between the size of an institution and the level of centralization in the summer. However, the level of centralization did have a significant effect on financial success and meeting student needs.

Good research on the value of keeping summer sessions centralized is an important weapon in a summer session director's arsenal when combating an institution's efforts to decentralize. However, it is not sufficient to win the battle. An equally important and often more effective tool in stemming the decentralizing tide is to neutralize the main reason why academic units want to decentralize. The primary reason is usually financial, and one way to at least partially remove the issue from consideration is by offering to share the proceeds of the summer session with the academic units.

In "Revenue Sharing: A Tiger by the Tail," Gary W. Penders from the University of California Berkeley provides a clear, concise, and highly pragmatic perspective of the advantages and pitfalls of sharing summer revenue. Penders describes several revenue sharing models and comments on the virtues of each. Though in general Penders is in favor of revenue sharing, he is not blindly enamored by it and notes that once a summer session agrees to share its revenue (if it has a choice) it can never go back to a pre-sharing state. Pressure from departments for more revenue and departments' reliance on summer revenue will do nothing but grow.

Understanding the consequences of revenue sharing and knowing the programmatic value of maintaining centralized summer sessions is fundamental in good summer session management. However, there are other aspects to good administration, such as attention to program quality. In "Service Quality in the Summer Session: A SERVQUAL Analysis," Richard C. Lee, Chunju Chen, and D. Deming Wang applied the SERVQUAL survey tool to study summer session clients. This is the first reported effort of its kind. The authors note that "The primary purpose of the study is to compare students' expectations for and satisfactions with various summer session services. The findings, which also feature information about the faculty's perceptions of students' expectations and satisfactions, are discussed as they relate to efforts for improving summer session services, facilitating decision-making and identifying future directions for research."

Joan M. Donnelly and Steven C. Kessler from Keene State College and Robert C. White and James F. Toner from the University of Maine share their experiences in managing some of these global issues. In the article, "Enrollment Behaviors of Summer Session Students," Donnelly and Kessler report on the results of a survey administered at their institution. They note that "ensuring the vitality of an institution's summer session and developing a curriculum that complements the academic year requires proactive planning and scheduling squarely aimed at meeting the programmatic needs of students. The study reveals that improving registration and support services can positively impact student satisfaction, but such an improvement is unlikely to effect a change in enrollment patterns unless the critical variables of course availability, scheduling, and cost are addressed as well."

White and Toner highlight the University of Maine's coming to terms with the distance education phenomenon. In "Distance Learning—Expectations and Challenges: The University of Maine Experience" the authors focus on the university's challenges and opportunities in adopting various modes of delivering courses. They view the distance education phenomenon as nothing less than a paradigm shift for the way higher education functions.

The articles in this volume represent a cross-section of the concerns that Summer Session deans and directors have. The administrative playing field is changing, and rules of the game are constantly in flux. It is the job of the summer session director to at once understand the rules and also try to affect them. The aforementioned articles help identify directions and possibilities.