



## **Terms of Reference**

### **IAU Task Force on Access to Higher Education**

*Access to Higher Education, - growing demand, lack or limited capacity, equity and success, new approaches using ICTs, distance education, Open Content movement, and other related issues.*

The Administrative Board of the International Association of Universities adopted this broad cluster of issues in late 2005 as a new theme on which to focus the Association's attention over the next few years. A further discussion about the ways that IAU may adopt to undertake its actions led to a decision to create a small, expert Task Force that can debate not only the more definite contours of the issues the Association can address from a global perspective but also suggest some action lines that it may develop to serve its membership and the higher education community more generally.

An initial step has already been taken by IAU to set the stage for the work of the Task Force. In May 2006, an issue of the newsletter IAU Horizons was devoted to a number of dimensions of this thematic cluster. Articles from several parts of the world addressed topics such as minority participation and affirmative action, access and tuition fees, participation rates, ICTs as a means to broadening access, etc. In addition, it has already been proposed that IAU devote one of its annual international conferences to the issue of Access.

The specific role of the IAU Task Force, takes these initial steps as its starting point. However, its terms of reference are twofold: first, to outline the many different aspects of access, and second and most importantly, to use the results of this mapping endeavor to guide IAU in selecting those areas where it can develop an effective agenda as a world-wide association.

Increasing access, making it more equitable, more affordable (for individuals and society) and more efficient (in terms of need, pertinence and success) are key goals of most national

governments and institutional leaders. Limited capacity, insufficient resources (human and financial), low quality, poor fit with need, inadequate prior preparation and unfair practice are among some of the chief obstacles standing in the way of a better performing higher education system from the perspective of access. The theme is both an essential and an exciting new area for the Association to explore, and meets the test called for by the Administrative Board, in that 1) it is an issue on which a global dialogue would add value; 2) IAU does have a track record, having undertaken a global study on access and admission in the 1960's. The Task Force will help respond to the last two questions that also form part of this Board's test: Can the issue translate into concrete actions that will produce deliverables or outcomes? Are these needed and of interest to the membership?

More specifically, the Task Force mandate is to:

- a) Establish the parameters/pose the primary and secondary questions that IAU may wish to address. *What is the critical access issue in each region? What are the obstacles for increasing access? What policies are being implemented to overcome them? To what extent is distance education addressing access issues? How is the equity challenge treated in various regions? What are the areas that are most susceptible to examination on a global basis? What role does private higher education play in terms of access? Where could IAU add value to what is already going on? Etc...etc...*
- b) Point to overview information about the state of the debate, identifying few seminal reports or documents on the topic.
- c) Identify experts in various regions who could contribute to the discussion from a research and institutional policy perspective.
- d) Examine possible actions that IAU could undertake to advance research and policy development in this area but also to serve its membership.
- e) Contribute to development of the agenda for an international conference in 2007 on the topic of access (general or specific focus).
- f) Investigate the possibility of a moderated electronic discussion prior to the Conference or to share with a broader community the outcomes of the work of the Task Force.
- g) Possibly draft an IAU Policy Statement related to issues of Access for discussion at the 2007 Board Meeting and International Conference and final approval by 2008 General conference.

### **Task Force Operation**

The Task Force will be small (5-6 members at most) and act primarily in an advisory capacity to the Administrative Board and IAU Secretariat. It will serve to broaden the expertise on access available at IAU and offer guidance to the Secretariat and the Board as they develop an action plan for the Association. Task Forces are also expected to increase the active engagement of IAU members in the development of its work programme.

The Task Force will be set up on a limited duration and will report, through the Chairperson, to the Administrative Board. It was agreed that if at all possible an early meeting of the Task Force should be organized in Europe. Due to budget considerations, it

was also agreed that after an initial meeting, most interaction would be by e-mail. In addition to a small allocation from the IAU budget (maximum of 10,000 Euro), other funding should be found.

### Access Task Force Membership

José Ferreira Gomes, Vice-Rector of the University of Porto, Portugal (Deputy Board member of IAU) will chair this new IAU Task Force. Members will be invited from several world regions. ACE will identify and generously cover the costs of a US member of the Task Force from among its employees.

Financial support for the work of the Task Force will be sought from various sources.

<a href="#">Members</a>		
<b>Chair</b>		
Prof. José FERREIRA GOMES	Professor and Head of Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Sciences	University of Porto, Portugal
<b>Task Force Members</b>		
Prof. Alberto AMARAL	Director	Center for Research in Higher Education Policies (CIPES), Portugal
Ms. Jacqueline E. KING	Director, Center for Policy Analysis	American Council on Education (ACE), USA
Prof. Christina LLOYD	Head of Teaching and Learner Support	The Open University, UK
Prof. Shyam B. MENON	Professor of Education, Central Institute of Education	University of Delhi, India
Prof. Marília MOROSINI	Faculty of Education	Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil
Prof. John SSEBLUWUFU	Director of Research & Programmes	Association of African Universities (AAU), Ghana