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Abstract

The history of higher education has revealed all the forms of structural change associated with growth. The following focuses on a special form that involves growth, specialization, and proliferation, and applies mainly but not exclusively to universities. In search for a descriptive term, I have settled on the concept of 'structural accretion,' a composite form of growth. Its simple definition is incorporation of new functions over time without, however, shedding existing ones or splitting into separate organizations. It is a complex process reflecting, in the main, the following driving forces:

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expanding as a result of new opportunities for activities, usually but not always relevant to the main missions of the university: the fact that most growth has been a matter of mutual opportunism; and the power of academic competition and emulation in a highly stratified prestige hierarchy of institutions. This paper reflects the first of three Clark Kerr Lectures on the Role of Higher Education in Society given on January 24, 2012 by Neil J. Smelser on the Berkeley campus and on the subject of 'Higher Education: The Play of Continuity and Crisis.' (HRK / Abstract übernommen)

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