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**Abstract**

The United States has been well served by its higher education system that, historically, was the product of two philosophies: commitment to the discovery and furtherance of knowledge and fulfillment of the needs of the people. The interaction of these twin philosophies has been tempered by four movements: (i) public control of higher education institutions through boards of trustees; (ii) open admissions for high school graduates; (iii) the university in service to the community; and (iv) the increasing importance of federally funded research. Only in its ability to influence foreign policy formation has American higher education proven itself to be less effective than in the other areas.

(HRK / Abstract übernommen)