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Abstract

Until recently, Higher education (HE) in Brazil had been, identified with colleges and universities running traditional academic undergraduate programs, with expected graduation time of 4 years or more. The universities in the state of São Paulo are at the top of international rankings among Brazilian HEIs, accounting for about half of all indexed research done in Brazil and responsible for 40% of all PhD degrees granted in the country. They have a total enrolment of almost 200,000

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students, about 1/3 of those in graduate programs. However, by 2000, with pressure for expansion of the HE system in Brazil and in São Paulo increasing, it became clear that the singular model of the research-oriented HE institution was no longer a viable one to meet enrollment demand and labor needs. In 2001, São Paulo's state government initiated its first attempt at a "Master Plan" focused on how to expand its network of Higher Education institutions. The main target was to achieve a net enrollment rate of 30% for the whole system (private sector included) by 2020, twice the 2005 figure of 15%. At first, plans were made to create a new 2-year college system similar to that of the United States. But that proved infeasible. By 2005 a new plan emerged to expand the existing system of public State Technological Colleges (FATECs) composed of local or regional, colleges which offer 3-year programs, usually related to the economic and development needs of a particular area. Thus far, this program of expansion been a success, while preserving the function of the universities as more selective and research oriented enterprises. A relatively quiet revolution is under way in Brazilian HE, reflecting a global trend in many emerging economy countries where institutional diversification, including the development of a strong system of HEIs offering vocational programs, has played a key role in expanding HE access. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)

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