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*Governance of Higher Education: Global Perspectives,  
Theories, and Practices* by Ian Austin and Glen A. Jones  
(review)

Mike Potter

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## Book Reviews

**Ian Austin and Glen A. Jones.** *Governance of Higher Education: Global Perspectives, Theories, and Practices.* New York, NY: Routledge, 2016. 218 pp. Softcover: \$47.95. ISBN 978-0-415-73975-7

REVIEWED BY MIKE POTTER, DEAN OF INSTRUCTION, PROGRAM INNOVATION, LAKE WASHINGTON INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, KIRKLAND, WA; ED.D. DOCTORAL STUDENT, COLLEGE OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES, NORTH-EASTERN UNIVERSITY

*Governance of Higher Education: Global Perspectives, Theories, and Practices* (Austin & Jones, 2016) provides a comprehensive starting point for scholars and graduate students inquiring into the current state of scholarship on governance in higher education across the globe. In the Preface, the authors state that the book has multiple audiences, including graduate students, teaching professors, researchers, faculty involved in governance, and higher education practitioners and policy-makers. Their intended use of the book as a classroom text is highlighted by the inclusion of discussion questions at the end of every chapter.

An essential contribution made by the work is to elaborate on the connection between the spread of neoliberalism as a political-economic global force and governance of higher education. Throughout their work, Austin and Jones point to the growing, transformative force exerted on higher education institutions operating in a neoliberal environment. Neoliberalism is shown to warp the traditional system of governance, threatening to distort the essential unique characteristic that differentiates higher education institutions from others in society.

The authors set the stage for the breadth of their work in Chapter 1. Governance is defined and the history and various models of governance

are described. A distinction is made between governance practiced at the operational level of our institutions and that which is conducted at the state or national level to assure policy goals. Global models of governance are introduced, as well as the ideas of internal, external, and market-oriented forms of governance. In the first chapter, the authors introduce the concept that neoliberalism has profound effects on higher education governance. They write, “Neoliberal globalization has brought with it a discourse that reduces the nation-state to a minimalist state and increases the power of market forces.” (p. 15). In simple terms, Saunders (2010) explains Neoliberalism “. . . is united by three broad beliefs: the benevolence of the free market, minimal state intervention and regulation of the economy, and the individual as a rational economic actor.” (p. 45). Austin and Jones return to this theme many times.

In Chapters 2 and 3, the authors detail many theories of governance, first external (Chapter 2), then internal (Chapter 3). Five external oriented theories are discussed – institutional, agency, stewardship, stakeholder, and resource-dependence. Six internal-oriented themes are discussed – structural, human relations, cultural, cybernetics, social cognition, and open systems, with a note that structural theory provides the framework for the vast majority of scholarship.

Chapters 4 and 5 discuss state-university governance. Although this section of the book describes models and dynamics of the governance relationship between a (nation) state and universities, the authors add a third factor to their descriptions, sometimes called industry and sometimes referred to as the market. Chapter 4 is dedicated to various models (including diagrams). Austin and Jones note the diminished role of the state with the onset of globalization. “The state, as it was traditionally

conceptualized, has undergone a redefinition and transformation driven primarily by globalization and its associated neoliberal narrative” (p. 83). Chapter 5 looks at governance models in specific nations. Short histories are provided for the U.K., France, Germany, U.S.A., Japan, and China. In all cases, the authors point out the trend is a move away from “governance” of their institutions to market driven policies, evidence of the influence of neoliberalism.

Chapter 6 focuses on academic self-governance. Austin and Jones discuss the concepts, theories, and related practices including collegiality, academic freedom, autonomy, shared governance, and unions. The role of Boards and students in self-governance is introduced. Faculty senates, councils, and committees are described as common structures in the practice of self-governance.

Chapter 7 looks at governance as process in institutions. The authors describe the typical hierarchical structure of a university where governance functions as a rational process with ideas and decisions proceeding up through the levels of the organization from the faculty in an academic unit to administration, and finally to the Board to be enacted as policy. The second half of the chapter describes how politics and power often distort the rational model leading to warping of governance processes. Austin and Jones seem quite taken with the Garbage Can Model of governance, devoting a section exclusively to the model’s premise of solutions floating around an institution trying to find problems. For many practitioners in higher education today, this model has resonance.

In Chapter 8, Austin and Jones make their argument that higher education institutions have moved from processes of collegial governance to being closer to managed enterprises typical of the business world. The authors describe the rise of neoliberalism in the public sector, then specifically in higher education, followed by the concept of new public management, or NPM. NPM has three key elements – “businesslike management, client-centeredness, and market-like competition.” (p. 171). Students are viewed as customers deserving consumer purchasing information and product protections, rather than co-producers of their learning and education. NPM has infiltrated universities around the world, altering governance by diminishing the oversight and funding role of the state, increasing the role of the marketplace, populating institutions with a corps of professional managers, and emphasizing education as a private over public good. Subjecting higher education institutions to market forces has led directly to the increase, and some argue necessity, of strategic planning as an environmental adaptation. Such planning processes can usurp shared governance in higher education institutions as the dominant method of institutional decision making.

Chapter 9 briefly covers some new issues and challenges for governance including information technology, risk assessment and crisis planning, multi-campus, and transnational operations. Each of these areas merits its own chapter, and the presentation is so brief that dropping this chapter from the book or expanding the book to cover scholarship in these areas might have made sense. The book ends with a brief review and call for continued research, important because of the role universities play in our society. Austin and Jones state, “University governance matters, not just to those of us inside the academy, but to the world.” (p. 198).

*Governance of Higher Education: Global Perspectives, Theories, and Practices* excels at providing scholars, students, and others a foundation of current research on governance in higher education. The text is particularly strong at including global perspectives and examining the changing role of the state–university relationship. Central to this examination is the inclusion of the effects of neoliberalism on higher education governance. Neoliberalism and higher education have been studied by various scholars for several years (Giroux, 2015; Hill & Kumar, 2012; Lakes & Carter 2011) and will continue as the political-economic impact continues to be a force shaping the modern academy. Austin and Jones’s contribution to the conversation is specifically the impact on governance.

In short, in this book the authors argue that the traditional forms of governance built on faculty autonomy, institutional shared governance, and state control are giving way to market forces and business style management. States and nations are systematically de-funding higher education, have no jurisdiction over global expansion of institutions, and have adopted policies where the public good is better served by individuals seeking credentials valued in the workplace, rather than by development of well-rounded citizens ready to contribute to a democratic society. The neoliberal approach of governments worldwide to create markets for nearly all aspects of life has encroached on the most unique aspect of higher education, our system of governance.

Where Austin and Jones fall short in their presentation is their complete exclusion of community colleges, despite the fact that these institutions enroll the majority of students. Their work is focused entirely on four-year and graduate-level institutions of higher education. “Community college” does not even appear in the Index. This absence is so glaring it calls into question the title of the book. A more accurate title would be *Governance of Universities*. Community and technical colleges have a rich tradition of faculty self-governance and institutional shared governance. Many of the issues raised in the text apply to community colleges, yet these institutions also have unique aspects given

their mission, local ties to community, and funding differences, like the ability to have local taxing districts in some states necessitating the participation in the voting/elections process. Any discussion of higher education is not complete without the inclusion of the community college system in the U.S.A., further education in the U.K., and similar systems worldwide.

Despite this omission, Austin and Jones have authored a valuable resource in *Governance of Higher Education: Global Perspectives, Theories, and Practices*. Faculty teaching governance in higher education should consider adopting the book as a text in a seminar course. Scholars may want to consult one or more chapters as a starting place before constructing a literature review, theoretical framework, or empirical design. Austin and Jones should revisit the subject in a few years and consider updating the current content and expanding topics identified as new issues and challenges. Much will change about governance in the coming decade, and the topic will continue to be of interest to scholars and practitioners.

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**Anna Mountford-Zimdars, Daniel Sabbagh, and David Post (Editors). *Fair Access to Higher Education: Global Perspectives*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2014. 270 pp. Paper: \$35.00. ISBN 978-0-226-25092-2**

REVIEWED BY CLAUDIA YVONNE LINAN SEGURA, PH.D. RESEARCHER, DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA, NORWICH, UNITED KINGDOM; AND CATHERINE M. JERE, PH.D., LECTURER IN EDUCATION AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA, NORWICH, UNITED KINGDOM

As higher education is traditionally considered the main channel of upward social intergenerational mobility (Holsinger & Jacob, 2008), it has undoubt-

edly given rise to great debate on who is accessing it, how they are accessing it, and whether this access is “fair.” This book features ten articles that explore different global perspectives on access to higher education, and in a comprehensive introduction, the editors present the main question driving this work: What does “fairness” mean with respect to the distribution of access to higher education?

This book is organized in three sections. The first section includes two chapters that present research on university admission mechanisms: one from the United States and the other from the United Kingdom. In Chapter 1, Samson conducts a laboratory experiment to test whether demographic changes at The University of California affect individuals’ evaluations of college applications. Students are asked to play the role of an admissions officer. The overarching question guiding the research is: Can a drop in relative group-position for whites in relation to other ethnic groups affect how whites (as the dominant demographic group) evaluate applicants in a meritocratic contest over scarce and desired educational opportunities? This experiment is developed at a time when the proportion of whites in the US population is declining and the landscape and meaning of diversity for US higher education admissions is changing. The research findings suggest there are reactions among dominant individuals within groups, that is white in-group favouritism, that go against the diversity universities promote.

In Chapter 2, Jones engages with the composition and language of “personal statements.” These admissions essays for entrance into UK universities are analysed using Bourdieu’s (2000) theories of field, habitus, and capital. “This study finds that nonacademic indicators, such as the personal statement, may disfavor young people from certain educational backgrounds” (p. 61). As such, this first section highlights important insights into the interplay of different sources of bias within higher education admission processes.

The second section of the book contains three case studies situated in Georgia, Denmark, and France that examine the influence and interplay of location, class, and ethnicity on achieving equitable and equal access to higher education. The first one is a mixed-methods study on rural disadvantage in Georgian higher education. With interviews from a sample of families and policy makers and data on the entire population of applicants from 2005 to 2009, Chankseliani seeks to illustrate the consequences of the state’s equal treatment of applicants in the face of their unequal experiences and prior educational opportunities. “Rural disadvantage in the admissions process is linked with economic and cultural aspects of rural life” (p. 87). Chankseliani’s research uncovers the existing tension between a biased definition of merit and efforts to expand