

## **Michael Skolnik Research Interests:**

One of my primary research interests is the design of higher education systems, a subject on which I did background papers for recent commissions on postsecondary education in Ontario and British Columbia. I am interested in both factors that influence the design of higher education systems and in the implications of different system designs for accessibility, quality, innovation, and the effectiveness of higher education in meeting societal needs. An example of analysis of the design of a higher education system is found in a recent book that I co-authored (Clark, Moran, Skolnik, and Trick, 2009). We concluded that the design employed in Ontario for the provision of baccalaureate education is inefficient, because it attempts to provide almost all baccalaureate education through a system of publicly funded research universities, the most expensive model for the provision of bachelor's programs. In our recommendations we emphasized the need for greater institutional differentiation among providers of baccalaureate credit activity. This would include having a few predominantly teaching universities that concentrate on baccalaureate programming; an open university; and making credit transfer a major function of the colleges.

Two aspects of system design in which I have a longstanding interest are the role of the community college and how that has been changing, particularly in regard to its relationship with the university and its involvement in degree credit activity; and the emergence of new types of university-level institutions, as has been occurring recently in British Columbia, Alberta, and Florida, as well as several European countries.

Another primary research interest is quality assurance in higher education, an endeavor in which I have some practical experience, having served on Ontario's Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board. I am interested in the models and processes used in quality assessment. From my research, I have concluded that quality assurance in higher education is as much a political process as it is a technical one. Too often quality assurance in higher education works to stifle diversity and innovation and foster conformity and homogeneity.

### Recent books and monographs

Clark, I.D., Moran, G., Skolnik, M.L., and Trick, D. *Academic Transformation: The Forces Reshaping Higher Education in Ontario*. Kingston, ON: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009.

Floyd, D.L., Skolnik, M.L., and Walker, K.P. *The Community College Baccalaureate: Emerging Trends and Policy Issues*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing Company, 2005.

Jones, G.A. and Skolnik, M.L. *Degrees of opportunity: Broadening student access by increasing institutional differentiation in Ontario*. Toronto, ON: Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario, 2009.

Jones, G.A., McCarney, P., and Skolnik, M.L. *Creating Knowledge, Strengthening Nations: The Changing Role of Higher Education*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2005.

### Some recent book chapters and journal articles

Skolnik, M.L. "Theorizing about the Emergence of the Community College Baccalaureate,"

Community College Journal of Research and Practice, Vol. 33, No. 2, 2009, 125-150.

Skolnik, M. L. "Gilles Paquet's Contributions to the Study of Higher Education." In C. Andrew, R. Hubbard, and J. Roy (Eds.), *Gilles Paquet: Homo Hereticus*. Ottawa, ON: University of Ottawa Press, 2009, 269-283.

Skolnik, M.L. "Community Colleges in Canada," In P.A. Elsner, G.R. Boggs, and J.T. Irwin (Eds.), *Global Development of Community Colleges, Technical Colleges, and Further Education Programs*. Washington, DC: Community College Press, 2008, 41-50.

Skolnik, M.L. "The Rae Review and the structure of postsecondary education in Ontario." In C.M. Beach (Ed.), *A Challenge for Postsecondary Education in Ontario* (Kingston: The John Deutsch Institute, Queen's University & McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 7-25.

Skolnik, M.L. "The Community College Baccalaureate in Canada: Addressing Accessibility and Workforce Needs," in D.L. Floyd, M.L. Skolnik, and K.P. Walker (Eds.), *The Community College Baccalaureate*, 49-72.

Skolnik, M.L. "From the 1960s to the 2000s: Reflections on the Difficulty of Maintaining Balance between the University's Economic and Non-economic Objectives in Periods When its Economic Role is Highly Valued," in G.A. Jones, P.L. McCarney, and M. L. Skolnik, *Creating Knowledge, Strengthening Nations*, 106-125.

"The Case for Giving Greater Attention to Structure in Higher Education Policy Making," in C. Beach, R. Broadway, and M. McInnis (Eds.). *Higher Education in Canada*. Kingston: John Deutsch Institute, Queen's University, 2005, 53-75.