

Re-*Co-op*'ting the University: The Role of Campus Co-ops

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Outline

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1. The Values and Missions of Universities as Apex Bodies of Higher Education



Two Basic Value Commitments of Universities

- **A critical approach to knowledge**
 - As apex body, must adopt a critical (reflexive) approach to ensure that it can effectively promote the acquisition, generation and propagation of knowledge
 - Must maintain its **autonomy** to ensure this
 - **The advancement of a public good over the private interests of particular actors**
 - Mission (to serve the general public, a common good)
 - Values (social justice, citizenship, access, etc.)
 - Legal Form (as non-profit)
 - Financial Model (largely dependent upon public funding and charitable donations)
- **These values inform how universities take up their core missions**

Core Missions of the University as the Apex Body of Higher Education

1. Education

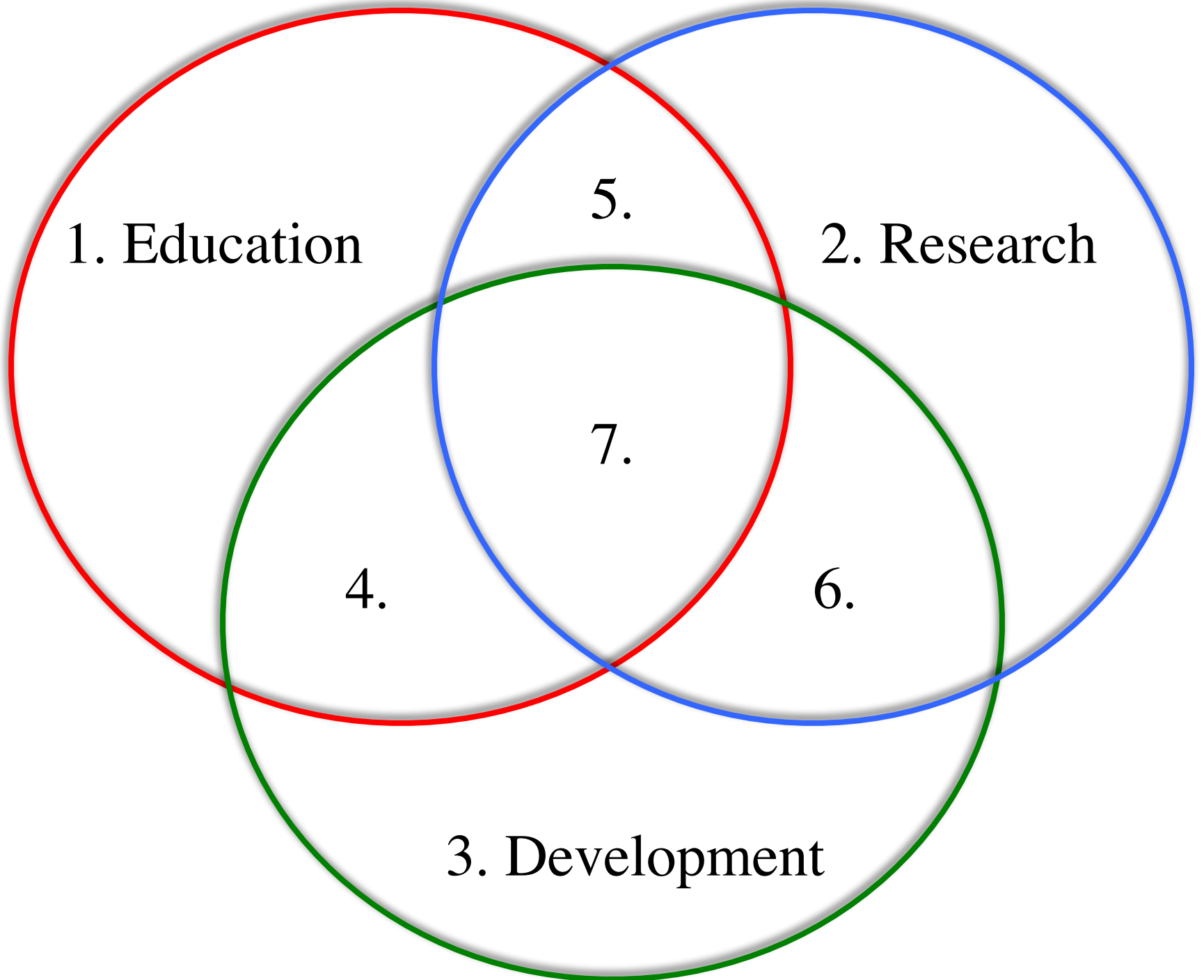
- Knowledge Transmission (Teaching)
 - A theoretical basis to knowledge (disciplines)
- Knowledge Acquisition (Learning)
 - A critical (reflexive) approach – learning how to learn

2. Research

- Knowledge Generation

3. Development

- Knowledge Transfer/Application



Overlapping Missions of the University

4. Experiential Education

- Knowledge acquisition through contact with practitioners
 - Extension Programs, Internships, “Co-op Programs”, etc. ’

5. Education for Research

- Research methodology and assignments

6. Research Partnerships

- Engaging outside actors in different aspects of research

7. Innovation and Development

- Combining research, knowledge transfer and education for practical intervention . . .



2. How Corporations have Co-opted the University

Increasing Influence of Business on Universities

- Founding universities (19th century)
- Control over boards of governors (19th century)
- Development & funding of faculties of interest to business (early 20th century)
 - Managements schools, engineering schools, design programs, etc.
- Influence of corporate management models on university administrative structure (late 20th century)
- Increasing influence of business over government Higher Education policy (late 20th century)
 - Lobbying, ideological influence, etc.
- Access to university resources for commercialization of publically funded research (late 20th century)



3. The Need to Re-*Co-op*'t the University

Why Re-*Co-op*'t the University?

- **Pragmatic Reasons (All Business)**
 - Business opportunities on campus
 - Niche market for many businesses (food, banking, etc.)
 - Establish brand loyalty
 - Training, Recruitment and Cheap Labour
 - Influence content of educational offerings
 - Subsidized labour and recruiting costs
 - through internships, placements, etc.
 - Public Relations
 - Community Outreach Programs
 - Research and Development opportunities
 - Access to (cheap) university resources
- **Principled Reasons (Co-operative)**
 - Co-operative Principles
 - Member education
 - Concern for community

Value Coherence between Universities and Co-operatives

- **Mission driven organizations**
 - Universities
 - Knowledge acquisition, generation, transfer
 - Co-operatives
 - Meeting member needs
- **Value-based Organizations**
 - Universities
 - Critical Approach to knowledge (autonomy)
 - Public Interest
 - Co-operatives
 - Co-operatives Principles

The Importance of Value Coherence

- **Co-operatives can positively contribute to all of the various missions of universities**
 - Promote a more critical approach to business education
 - Provide access to members and local communities for research and knowledge transmission
 - Can provide resources for experiential education, research education research partnerships, innovation
- **Co-operatives are able to collaborate in ways that respect the value commitments of universities**
 - Don't undermine/distort their core missions in exchange for resources
- **Co-operative engagement can reduce the pressure universities feel to engage with corporations**
 - Can fulfill many of the same functions as corporate engagement, but in line with university values

Contrast with Corporate Engagement

- **Commodifies Higher Education**
 - Education
 - Access increasing based upon ability to pay
 - Content/Pedagogy increasingly oriented towards private interests of employers (and income generation – differential fees, etc.)
 - Research
 - Increasingly influences research agenda, method, implementation and dissemination (for its own private interests)
 - university themselves commodify the generation of knowledge
 - By sells research services (itself to address financial concerns)
 - Development
 - Appropriation/application of publicly generated knowledge for private interests
 - Commercialization strategies and institutions
 - Knowledge Workers (Professoriate)
 - Increasing reliance on part-time, contingent labour
- **Undermines the public mandate of the university**
- **Undermines the critical approach of the university**



4. The Strategic Potential for *Re-Co-op*'ting the University



3a. Strategic Goals

- **A co-op presence on all universities (and colleges)**
 - Courses, programs, scholarships, student co-operatives, other co-operatives, etc.
- **Educational opportunities for all life stages**
 - An undergraduate program of study in all regions/provinces
 - stream, concentration, etc.
 - Accessible graduate/continuing education programs
 - Full range of experiential education opportunities
- **Developing ways for all co-operatives to contribute**
 - Everyone can do something . . .
- **Supporting campus co-operatives as sites of education, research and innovation/development**

3b. Strategies

- **Collective reflection and action**
 - Regional, provincial, national levels
 - Align individual action with strategic plans
- **Engaging universities collectively**
 - As the “co-op sector”
- **Establishing long-term relationships with universities**
 - Not just ‘one and done’ opportunities
- **Complementing engagement on education with research and development (community engagement)**

3c. Tactics

- **Support Experiential Education**
 - Giving talks
 - As sites for placements, internships
 - Supporting campus co-operatives
- **Support Co-ops in the Curriculum**
 - Developing curricular materials (e.g. case studies)
 - Promoting/supporting workshops, programs, etc.
 - Chairs in Co-operative Studies
- **Support for Research Education**
 - Be sites of student research
 - Support student researchers (scholarships, awards, etc.)
- **Support Co-operative Programs**
 - Support for employees and members (cont. ed)
 - Support for undergraduates (scholarships, awards, etc.)
- **Support Co-op Development on Campuses**
 - New/existing co-operatives for new/existing needs

5. The Strategic Role of Campus-based Co-operatives in Re-co-opt the University

