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## THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE US HIGHER EDUCATION AND ITS DISTINGUISHING FEATURES

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The article is devoted to the distinctive characteristics of the US higher education. The great emphasis is placed on the types of the US higher education institutions in accordance with the Carnegie Classification. It includes the precise description of the undergraduate and postgraduate education in America, the types of the degrees, obtained during the study and their basic distinctions. It characterizes the organization of the US high school, the peculiarities of Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral degrees. The article also describes the structure of the colleges and universities, their governmental policy and financial component. It studies the organization of an education process including student curriculum, the ability to choose minor and major courses, credit system and grades. The current article concentrates on the idea of distance learning and programs for 'special students'. The indissoluble connection between the American higher education and the economic prosperity of the state is distinguished. The attention is paid to the implementation of innovation technologies in the education program, the key changes in the teaching process according to the constantly changing demands of the labor market as well as the individualization of the education system.

**Key words:** higher education, the Carnegie Classification, university, college, undergraduate education, postgraduate education, Doctor of Philosophy, Master degree, MBA, Bachelor degree, Community College, online education.

**Introduction.** In the modern world education is considered as one of the most important components of economic development and prosperity of the country. Its role in the life of society is becoming more and more significant each year.

It is a well-known fact that the United States is among world economic leaders. This country has one of the lowest levels of inflation and unemployment, and its innovation technologies are constantly developing, contributing the raise of living standards of the population.

In the United States education plays a crucial role in the economic and social development of the state, its leading positions at the world markets and the supporting of the national safety, as it is reflected in the higher education policy and the practical actions of its realization. That is why the attention has to be paid to some peculiarities of the US higher education and the possibility of its implementation in Ukraine.

The issue of the development of the US higher education is widely highlighted in the scientific literature by foreign and Ukrainian scientists. The structure of higher education is described by E. Barnett, G. Becker, J. Eaton, W. B. Harvey, L. Vinnikova, O. Ponomaryova, S. Sinenko, P. Sauh, N. Nichkalo, V. Kudin, S. Romanova and others. The information about higher education in the USA can also be found on numerous web resources such as American Council on Education, US department of Education, Harvard and Cambridge Universities, USA Community Colleges etc.

All above mentioned proves the actuality of the current article and the importance of the issue, but at the same time it states the necessity of systematization and more detailed studying of the existing information. Therefore, the **purpose** of the article is to describe the Carnegie Classification of the US higher education, to study its peculiarities in comparison with European education system, to reveal the innovative tendencies of American colleges and universities in training specialists.

**The Carnegie Classification of the US higher education institutions.** Modern American higher education system is known for its peculiarities that help us to distinguish the US system from European educational standards.

Despite the fact that the US higher education originates from the British traditional system, at the same time borrowing from German basics, it highly differs from the familiar to us European education. It was influenced by American philosophical beliefs, cultural peculiarities and political system.

Studying the higher education system of the United States we have to note that it is composed of several groups of educational institutions, which differ in the amount of scientific researches, the level of education and the fields of training specialists. The framework for classifying higher educational institutions in the United States was created by the Carnegie Foundation.

The Carnegie classification includes all kinds of the US colleges and universities, which grant some type of degree and have the accreditation recognized by the Ministry of Education of America. This classification reveals the whole variety of educational programs, differentiating their forms and methods of education. The classification has undergone changes during the last decade and hereafter we will get acquainted with the modern system.

At the top of the Carnegie classification we can find doctorate-granted universities. The period of postgraduate studied varies from 1 to 3 years. This degree includes two most common types: the doctor of philosophy (Ph. D.) and the doctor of education (Ed. D.). The doctoral degree is considered to be the highest academic award. It signifies the ability of a graduate to conduct independent research in certain scientific field.

Such doctorate-granting universities differentiate according to the level of research activity: very high research activity, high research activity and the last group refers to doctoral/research universities.

The next step of this pyramid goes to Master's colleges and university with large, medium and small programs (according to the amount of the degrees awarded). Completing 1-3 year program one can obtain a Master's degree (such as MA, MS, or MBA) or professional degree (such as MD, JD). The Master's degree can be either professional or theoretical. It can prepare students for further study aimed to receive the doctorate degree or offer the training program for the future professional career.

There are many professions which require taking postgraduate study, however, such degrees as medicine, law, and social works can be obtained after four, three or two years of Master's course respectively.

Along with such degrees as Master of Science or Medicine Doctor, which are quite familiar for us, we can find the MBA degree (Master of Business Administration), the achievement of American education. The USA is the motherland of the MBA degree, which meets market requirements nowadays and, therefore, is growing in popularity all over the world. The MBA degree is for those who do not want to be engaged in science but choose to prepare themselves for practical work. All in all the USA comprise about 60% of the leading business schools of the world. Foreign students also want to study management and economics in America which is an undeniable leader [4].

However, before receiving master's degree, students have to complete undergraduate studies and be awarded a bachelor's degree. Baccalaureate Colleges provide 4-year trainings in Art and Science (awarding BA or BS) and also may award graduate and professional degrees. These universities concentrate on undergraduate programs in teaching, business and law etc. In this group the number of public and private institutions is almost equal. Private nonprofit colleges include liberal arts colleges, faith-based institutions, women's colleges, historically black colleges and universities, and specialized institutions that focus on a single field, such as nursing or fine arts [2, p.2].

At the bottom of the Carnegie pyramid there are Associates or Community Colleges, as well as Special Focus Institutions. This is the biggest group of public colleges (more than 1 000) attended by almost 5 million students. Community Colleges

are 2-year institutions, also known as technical or junior colleges. These institutions award associate degrees in Arts, Science and Applied Science, but in most cases it only prepares students for transfer to four-year institutions, and serve their communities by providing a wide range of educational services [1, p.9]. Technical institutes, which offer a two- or three-year course for semi-professional occupations (such as dental, engineering or medical technicians), belong to the group of Special Focus Institutions.

At this stage we can also find another group, these are the colleges of Terminal Occupational Education. They offer 1-3 years of study before employment. But unlike Community Colleges, these institutions do not allow student to continue their education at regular four-year colleges or universities.

Therefore, the Carnegie Classification comprises all the types of higher education institutions and explains the difference between them. It shows the diversity of the degrees, which can be obtained after undergraduate and postgraduate studies. Altogether there are four academic degrees that can be obtained by the US high schools.

**The organization of the educational process.** The US higher educational system distinguishes from the Ukrainian system in the methods of organizing the educational process, the range of subjects and the evaluation system.

The academic year is traditionally divided into two terms (four months each), or three quarters (three months each) [1, p.13]. Full-time and part-time students usually study a wide range of subjects. In four years students have to complete nearly 30 subjects. The majority of students don't choose their main specialty till the Master's course. First two years in college are called the freshman year and the sophomore year respectively. General basic courses must be taken by all students during their first two years. These include such subjects as English, a foreign language, natural science, social science and mathematics [3]. The third-year students are called junior. They have to choose their major and focus on more intensive study. In some colleges students also choose their minor (or second specialty). At the same time they take some extra or elective courses in other fields of study. The fourth academic year is called the senior year and it is the last academic year toward obtaining a bachelor's degree.

Each student has his personal advisor from the teaching staff. Such advisor helps to choose the program of study. Foreign students get assistance with visa questions, peculiarities of life in America, and some extracurricular programs. Nevertheless, students are allowed to choose their own courses and class schedules. They are responsible for the choices made for meeting their educational goals.

For each course student receives a certain number of credits. For one successfully completed course undergraduate can get from 3 to 5 five credits. The number depends on the amount of hours necessary to complete the course and is appointed by the institution authority. Grades received at the end of each course include student's performance during class hours, their test results, research activities, and the results of the final examination test. A student can receive the A to F grade depending on the accomplishment of the performed task, with A as the best possible grade and F as a failure. All grades received during a course of study are combined to determine the student's grade point average (GPA) [1, p.13].

Classroom lessons divide into lectures for a few hundreds of students and seminars attended only by several undergraduates. To complete the term students have to write several essays. They also have to get acquainted with all the necessary bibliography beforehand in order to take active part in classroom discussions and understand the material of the lectures. Also, the students of scientific faculties have to spend certain time at the laboratories.

With advancing of new technologies America's universities started to use them very actively in their educational process. Being very sensitive to constantly changing demands of the society the US colleges provide the online education and distance learning for those students who either have to work and care for dependents or have some sort of physical disability, etc. Online education also engages in a wider audience, making the schedule more flexible and the location more suitable (using computer with Internet connection at home or at the nearest Internet cafe).

Along with distance-learning programs universities can accept "special students". These are students who wish to apply for a course without enrolling for a degree. However colleges are not very enthusiastic about such students, unless they have already enrolled for a degree at other university and now they are searching for additional training, which is not available at another institution. Non-degree students also have some limitations in access to the library or computer facilities.

Thus, the educational process in the USA is organized in such way that it tries to give a student the freedom of choice, to teach him how to make his own decisions and to be responsible for them. The US system improves together with the developing of new technologies, providing the online learning and other IT facilities.

**The peculiarities of the US higher education.** The most distinctive features of the US higher education comprise the diversity and complexity of the structure, the autonomy of academic institutions, the level of government control and, finally, the terms of degree-granting.

The system of college and university administration of America has no analogues in the world. They don't have a unique control body for the US educational system. In this connection the whole system is subordinated by the administrative bodies of separate states. It allows transferring the assets between the faculties and reacting the changes in the undergraduate enrolment or the job-market demands. This fact shows a strong connection between the US higher education and market mechanisms.

Colleges and universities are financed by government, but tuition and fee payments are coming from students and their families. The implications of increasing prices for students and families are a matter of constant policy debate. Despite the tuition growth, demand for higher education continues to increase. Nevertheless, government provides different financial aids programs to students, enabling even the low-income layers of society to have a complete education. And this fact causes the rapid growth of the American student population in both size and diversity.

It is also necessary to emphasize the very important role of the individualization of the US higher education program. In the US universities and colleges the methodology of individual education is very widespread. It comprises such peculiarities as absence of strict time limits that permits a student to master the material as quickly as it is comfortable for him and in accordance with his skills; the ability to choose a program by the student relying on his needs and desire; constant testing of students' knowledge which helps teacher to be aware of their educational activity and to control it.

In the terms of modern world development the graduator of the higher institution has to obtain such qualities as the ability to adapt to constantly changing situations; to obtain profound knowledge on his own; to develop critical thinking; to process large amounts of information; to be communicative and to improve the level of cultural development.

Among the top-priority directions in the increasing of educational quality by the USA we can stand out the following: the development of the academic standards for students; the increasing of the requirements to the knowledge level of school graduates, especially in applied science; the widespread usage of different test

programs; the appliance of modern informational technologies; the initiation of modern programs of teaching quality evaluation.

**Conclusion.** Hence, the information mentioned above characterizes the US higher education system, classifying the universities by the number of conducted research studies, the level of education, the duration of the degree courses and the area of training of future specialists. The classification is developed by the Carnegie foundation.

In accordance with this classification the US universities can be divided into Community Colleges which offer a 2-year undergraduate program with an associate degree or it can be used as transferred course toward the Bachelor's program. The next step of the classification is occupied by the 4-year undergraduate program, which offers a bachelor's degree in different fields of study. The successful completion of the Baccalaureate permits the student to continue the higher education performing the graduate program. Master's degree runs from 1 to 3 years in theoretical or professional field. One of the peculiarities of this program is the MBA degree. Due to the prosperity of business in the country, the USA is justly considered the leading in teaching business administration. The last step of the Carnegie Classification goes to the postgraduate studies at the end of which a doctoral degree can be obtained.

Another distinctive feature of the US higher education lies in the organization of the education process. Unlike the traditional Ukrainian education, students at American colleges can choose their major and minor courses but there is a personal advisor, who is always ready to help them with their choices and research works. That means that students don't need to study the subjects which they won't have to use in their professional career. In case they need additional knowledge while working, they can take an online credit course (it is quite convenient for working people) or enroll as "special students" for a course without getting a degree.

It is necessary to notice that the US education system isn't submitted to the government. It is autonomous and the educational policy is determined by university authorities as well as by local councils. This fact also affects the financial aspects of the higher education. The students and their parents have to pay the tuition fees which are rather high. However, some financial aids can be received from governmental programs. On the one hand, such administration peculiarities make the US academic institutions more independent and sensitive to the demands of society. On the other hand, it makes the education rather expensive and inaccessible for every social layer.

Besides, in the modern world of globalization, the US education policy is directed to the development of the graduates abilities to self-develop and self-study. It also tent to individualize the education program, making each student the unique component of the whole system.

In conclusion, it can be said that the US higher education system differs a lot in its structure, policy and approach to students. Despite the detailed studies of its structure, the US higher education systems remain the issue of current interest. The system is constantly improving according to the changes in the society and there are still some questions to be considered.

The strongest proof of the success of the American education system is the economic prosperity of the country. Ukrainian educationalists have to study the distinctive features of the US higher education in details and try to implement some aspects in Ukrainian academic institutions.

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#### **Т. А. Аношкова. Характеристика вищої освіти США та її особливостей.**

Статтю присвячено вивченню характерних особливостей вищої освіти США. Велика увага приділяється розгляду типів вищих навчальних закладів Америки відповідно до класифікації Карнегі, включаючи детальний опис неповної і повної вищої освіти та післядипломного навчання. Дається характеристика структури коледжів та університетів Америка та процесу навчання для отримання диплому бакалавра та магістра, включаючи ступінь магістра з бізнес адміністрування, та отримання ступінь доктора філософії. Описується структура громадських коледжів, як вищих навчальних закладів, що забезпечують неповну вищу освіту. У статті також надано характеристику системи управління коледжами та зазначено роль уряду у фінансуванні коледжів та його впливу на освітню політику Америки. У статті розглянуто особливості навчального процесу, включаючи підбір предметів для кожного студента, кредитно-модульна система та основні складові оцінювання діяльності студента. Розповідається про розмежування між студентами різних курсів, як у виборі загальних предметів, так і визначенні спеціалізації. Пояснюються основні відмінності дистанційного навчання та програми для «особливих студентів». Крім того, стаття висвітлює нерозривний зв'язок між вищою освітою Америки та її економічним розвитком. Вивчається впровадження новітніх технологій в освітню програму, ключові зміни в початковому процесі відповідно до вимог ринку праці, які постійно змінюються. Розповідається про вимоги до отриманих випускником знань та навичок в процесі навчання та про тенденцію до індивідуалізація системи навчання.

**Ключові слова:** вища освіта, освітній процес, класифікація Карнегі, університет, коледж, неповна та повна вища освіта, післядипломна освіта, доктор філософії, ступінь магістра, ступінь бакалавра, громадський коледж, дистанційне навчання.

#### **Т. А. Аношкова. Характеристика высшего образования США и его особенностей.**

Статья посвящена изучению характерных особенностей высшего образования США. Большое внимание уделяется рассмотрению типов высших учебных заведений Америки в соответствии с классификацией Карнеги, включая детальное описание законченного и незаконченного высшего образования, и последипломного обучения. Дается характеристика структуры колледжей и университетов Америки и процесса обучения для получения диплома бакалавра, магистра или степень доктора философии. В статье также дана характеристика системы управления колледжами и обозначена роль правительства в финансировании колледжей и его влияния на образовательную политику Америки. Статья рассматривает особенности учебного процесса, включая подбор предметов, кредитно-модульную систему и основные составляющие оценивания работы студентов. Кроме этого, подчеркивается неразрывная связь между высшим образованием в США и экономическим развитием страны. Изучается внедрение инновационных технологий в образовательную программу, ключевые изменения в учебном процессе в соответствии с требованиями рынка труда, которые постоянно изменяются. Рассказывается о требованиях к необходимым знаниям и навыкам, которые должны быть получены в процессе обучения.

**Ключевые слова:** высшее образование, образовательный процесс, классификация Карнеги, университет, коледж, законченное и незаконченное высшее образование, последипломное образование, доктор философии, степень магистра, степень бакалавра, публичный коледж, дистанционное обучение.