



sustainability

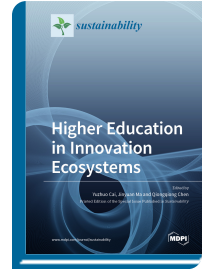


Special Issue Reprint

Higher Education in Innovation Ecosystems

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Higher education has been considered both an ‘engine’ for innovation and a ‘catalyst’ for sustainability development; the integration of both the innovation engine and sustainability catalyst roles are discussed in a recently published Special Issue on the theme of Higher Education in Innovation Ecosystems in the journal Sustainability. Based on 16 articles contributing to the Special Issue from various perspectives, the Special Issue editors have developed an overarching framework about the relationships between higher education and innovation ecosystems. In the framework, we re-define the concept of innovation ecosystem and identify emerging roles of universities in developing sustainable innovation ecosystems. Re-conceptualization of innovation ecosystems In the editorial of the Special Issue, innovation ecosystem is defined as: co-innovation networks in which actors from organizations concerned with the functions of knowledge production, wealth creation, and norm control interact with each other in forming co-evolution and interdependent relations (both direct or indirect) in cross-geographical contexts and through which new ideas and approaches from various internal and external sources are integrated into a platform to generate shared values for the sustainable transformation of society. Compared with most commonly cited definitions of innovation ecosystem, our definition highlights three new aspects of interactions in co-innovation networks: cross-sectoral, transnational, and indirect, drawing insights from the literature including innovation, geography, and biology studies. The roles of universities in innovation ecosystems The emerging roles of universities in innovation ecosystems are as follows: (1) The role of universities is changing from being a in technology transfer to being an anchor in knowledge-rich hubs; (2) e assuming a new role in trust-building between actors in innovation and (3) universities are not merely an entrepreneurial universities but are also institutional entrepreneur in the innovation ecosystem. The three emerging roles all indicate that universities are becoming the catalysts for sustainable development in innovation



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