



Launch of Welcome to the Campus of Struggle

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WELCOME TO THE CAMPUS OF STRUGGLE

Welcome to the launch of David Cohen's book *Welcome to the Campus of Struggle: Dispatches from the International Academic Education Front 1999-2004*.

There is no better description of the book than that provided by Professor Kyongsoo Lho, Dean of International Affairs at Seoul National University, who describes it as follows on the dust jacket:

David Cohen has pulled together a thoughtful, not to mention tremendously amusing anthology. The book presents a collection of personal observations, profiles, news stories and columns that examine profound social and political changes underway from Samoa to Korea, Argentina to Britain, and not least in New Zealand, as seen through the prism of University life.

David describes himself as a 'vendor of words'. His journalism career started in 1986, when he edited an arts and entertainment weekly paper here in Wellington. After working with the *Evening Post*, David traveled to the United States on a Reuters-sponsored fellowship for international journalists, which involved a stint at Tuft University's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, and some time afterwards spent visiting the Northeast and Midwest.

The period marked the beginning of a journalistic love affair with things American. "Things American" of course includes his wife Pamela, whom David met in Washington, DC.

For much of the past decade David has been a self-employed reporter. He writes a regular column about media affairs for the National Business Review. Some of you may know David's 'good friend' Kate Wrath, who writes for *Unlimited* magazine.

David writes for the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, for which he has traveled extensively through Asia, as well as South America, the Pacific, Britain and New Zealand. He also writes frequently for *The Guardian* in Britain. For the past eight years he has been the *Christian Science Monitor's* New Zealand stringer. He also has a working relationship with the *Jerusalem Report* and *The South China Morning Post*.

I am not exactly sure what all these higher quality, august publications have in common with one another – other than they are all high quality, august publications.

It is not immediately obvious, for example, which horse *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, the *Christian Science Monitor* and *The Guardian* are backing in the Auckland mayoralty race!

I read David Cohen's work long before I knew who he was. In fact, when I discovered a database entry showing that David lived in Brooklyn, I

assumed that it meant New York, which would have made him an avid Yankees fan!

We at the Education Forum are pleased to have sponsored the publication of David Cohen's *Welcome to the Campus of Struggle*. Not because there is a significant policy content to the book – even though his many thoughtful articles are replete with lessons for higher education policy-makers the world over. Rather, we did so for two reasons.

First, it presented us with an opportunity to celebrate the many talents of such an able, intelligent and witty writer.

Second, the book presents New Zealanders with glimpses of the struggles that higher education faces in this rapidly changing world – both in New Zealand and elsewhere.

In this book you can read about how to do a degree in circus performing, about the rise of private colleges around the world, about the role played by cyber-universities in advancing the role of women in South Korea, and about the needs of children with autism.

David Cohen has documented the tectonic shifts that have shaped and continue to shape the world of higher education, and mixed them with his

personal experiences. You will be moved, as I was, by the description on page 183 of David and Pamela's son Eliot saying "Hi Dude". It leaves us all with hope for "The Perfect World" that David writes about in his final chapter and the role that we can all play in helping achieve that.

Will Durant said that, "sixty years ago, I knew everything; now I know nothing; education is a progressive discovery of our own ignorance."

We thank David Cohen for covering such a broad range of issues and countries in his book, and so ably giving us all a wonderful lesson in our own ignorance.