Dear Deane and Prof. Ghazali,

I am delighted to inform you that I presented your project at our board meeting and received an enthusiastic approval. Congratulations! I will send you a contract shortly. Please confirm your mailing addresses and your phone numbers, as well as the final manuscript delivery date. However, before I send you the contract, please note the following:

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8. Any images or non-text elements in the manuscript must be approved by me before final submission.

9. The delivery date depends on your current schedule for the project, so we can work on coming up with a date that is mutually agreeable. Based on the materials you provided, I have provisionally noted a date of December 1, 2014.

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If these terms are acceptable, please let me know and I will arrange for a full contract to be drawn up. Of course, if you have any questions or concerns about the terms, please let me know.

Very best wishes,
Sarah

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The 21st century has borne witness to a steadily increasing pattern of global interdependence, a keystone of which has been the progressive and seemingly inescapable conjoining of economic activity throughout the world. This trajectory has been amplified by the role being paid by technology of all forms, but most especially (perhaps!) those that link computing, communication and automation. Whereas 25 years ago David Harvey’s judgment that contemporary globalization had resulted in the annihilation of time and space seemed perhaps to border on overstatement, today it is a proposition that few would contest (Harvey, 1990). Situated in the center of this transformation is the nature of work in economies of all stripes, as these forces of change rapidly impact what kinds of work are done where and by whom. Closely linked to these phenomena is the myriad of ties that link education at all levels with what we can more appropriately term the “worlds of work”. It is also true, that there remains a digital divide that shuts out over 60% of the world which does not participate in those aspects of globalization that require this form of technology. This fact has significant implications for the link between learning and work.

In November 2013 the Asia Pacific Higher Education Research Partnership (APHERP), a membership organization of some 25 education-related entities, invited participants from throughout the Asia Pacific region to discuss this issue and to explore the various problematics embedded within it. In preparation for the event, the co-directors of APHERP developed a so-called “concept paper” that outlined a range of initiatives that have already appeared as various entities throughout the region begin to “think thought” various aspects of how these changes in “thinking about and ‘doing’ the world” are impacting higher education and its increasingly important role of educating graduates for a rapidly changing world, and especially, a rapidly changing world of work.

The book proposed here begins with a set of conceptually focused-papers that seek to establish various of the forces that are producing these changes in the presumed competencies that higher education graduates should possess. These give particular attention to the challenges that have arisen through the complex dynamics of globalization as they impinge upon and shape the forces of production and consumption throughout the world. The authors of these chapters give particular attention to the changing nature of communication dynamics within contemporary economies, implications that these produce for the nature of undergraduate education, and the kinds of opportunities that are presented to enlarge and tailor curricula to meet such demands.

The second section of the book consists of country specific chapters that seek to explore the various pathways that various Asia-Pacific countries are pursuing to respond to these challenges. One can gather from these explications very different approaches to the challenges posed by such extensive and rapid vectors of change. Across the board, one can observe two dynamics. In the one instance there is a sense of agreement on the
potential reach that these dynamics may have across higher education and an appreciation that over time significant changes will need to occur. On the other hand, such changes are taking place very much within the historical structures of national higher education statuses, regulation and financing, and within what have become some of the over-arching contexts of higher education change, namely the quest for status within international rankings and the continuous reformulation of higher education to align with the various assumptions and premises of an over-arching neoliberal influenced public policy.

The book concludes with an original chapter by the editors that seeks to extract a set of principles for the progressive transformation of higher education within this context of knowledge society change.

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Introduction: Ghazali and Neubauer

In this introduction Ghazali and Neubauer present a brief set of propositions that link the phenomenon of the emerging knowledge society to contemporary higher education. In the center of these concerns stands the issue of what higher education does and can do to prepare students for the challenges that await them as they leave higher education and seek employment and veracity within a continuously changing knowledge society. The introduction continues on to outline the problematic that is presented in Part One of the book and the substantive country chapters that constitute the second part of the book.