Executive Summary

Comprehensive Internationalization

From Concept to Action

John K. Hudzik

This is an executive summary of the key concepts contained in NAFSA's report, *Comprehensive Internationalization: From Concept to Action.* The full report, which includes extensive underpinnings for the arguments presented, can be downloaded at: **www.nafsa.org/cizn**.

The report focuses on U.S. higher education, with its 4,300 degree-granting institutions—a very large and complex system with substantial variation and no federal-level governmentally imposed uniformity. In publishing this report, we also recognize the important contributions throughout the world to this topic, and intend to learn from them.

The report is intended for use by a diverse audience, including "new hands" and "old hands" to the processes of internationalization, from the top to the bottom of the institutional hierarchy. The publication is designed, therefore, to provide a shared foundation for discussion, dialog, and enhanced commonality of purpose and coordination among the growing and diverse types of individuals engaging internationalization in the U.S. higher education community

—The editors

About the Author

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Comprehensive Internationalization: An Emergent Imperative

Higher education internationalization is not a new concept—scholars and students have been crossing international borders for centuries. However, during the last several decades, powerful new factors have intensified the international dimensions of higher education. Altbach and colleagues (2009)* report a 53 percent increase between 2000 and 2007 in overall global higher education enrollments. Alan Ruby (2009), notes that it is fairly "accepted wisdom" that from a year 2000 base there will be a 150 percent increase in higher education seats globally to 250 million by 2025, mostly in the "developing world," and a more than doubling of student mobility from the current three to more than seven million annually by the same time, if not earlier (Banks et al. 2007; Haddad 2006). In just one year from 2007 to 2008 the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development reports (2010) that global mobility grew nearly 11 percent. The globalization of commerce, social forces, idea exchange, and growth in student mobility drive further significant internationalization of education.

A core reality that distinguishes current discussion from that of the past is the scale and scope of what internationalization encompasses—the breadth of clientele served, the outcomes intended, and a reshaping of institutional ethos. There is a growing sense that internationalization is an institutional imperative in higher education, not just a desirable possibility.

The business of universities is ideas: the creation of ideas through research and the dissemination of ideas through education and application. Increasingly, the business of universities is as much across as it is within borders, and not just in the free flow of ideas but also in the global flow of students and scholars who generate them.

There are fewer workable restrictions on the global circulation of ideas than in almost any other area of trade. With the increasing flow of students and scholars worldwide, it becomes easier to talk about the free trade of minds. With easier travel and the Internet providing near instantaneous access to hundreds of millions of idea generators throughout the world, more and more minds flow across borders physically and virtually—with the mode of transportation chosen sometimes having little practical impact on outcomes. "Comprehensive internationalization" is a recognition of these realities.

The Big Tent

The conceptual and operational tent for internationalization has to be large if it is to accommodate all of its possible dimensions. Comprehensive internationalization (CI) is a big-tent label for doing this. It can be the organizing paradigm for the institution as a whole, or one used by academic departments or professional programs at their level of operation.

CI is *not* a call for all institutions of higher education, or all of their academic units and programs, to engage in all ways of internationalizing—this would be an impossibility for any individual institution. Varying missions and starting points will produce uniquely tailored responses to the challenges and opportunities of internationalization and globalization. Nevertheless, there are common features to a commitment to CI.

Definition of Comprehensive Internationalization

Comprehensive internationalization is a commitment, confirmed through action, to infuse international and comparative perspectives throughout the teaching, research, and service missions of higher education. It shapes institutional ethos and values and touches the entire higher education enterprise. It is essential that it be embraced by institutional leadership, governance, faculty, students, and all academic service and support units. It is an institutional imperative, not just a desirable possibility.

Comprehensive internationalization not only impacts all of campus life but the institution's external frames of reference, partnerships, and relations. The global reconfiguration of economies, systems of

trade, research, and communication, and the impact of global forces on local life, dramatically expand the need for comprehensive internationalization and the motivations and purposes driving it.

As this definition notes, when CI is effectively implemented, it affects the entirety of campus life and learning and fundamentally shapes the institution's external frames of reference, partnerships, and relations. It will seek to instill international, global, and comparative dimensions not only in the classroom but also in field and experiential learning.

As recognized by a 2008 NAFSA Task Force, "Internationalization can ultimately leverage the collective assets of the higher education sector to create a new generation of global citizens capable of advancing social, and economic development for all." It is a complex process that can permeate every aspect of higher education, including (but not limited to):

- faculty development,
- curriculum design and delivery,
- instructional design,
- student diversity and faculty diversity,
- research and scholarship,
- training and education for outside clientele,
- development assistance,
- student support services and academic support services,
- resource development,
- financial management,
- risk management,
- institutional competitiveness and positioning,
- and civic engagement.

Thus, comprehensive internationalization has an aggressive agenda. To date, the report card for U.S. higher education to achieve the breadth, depth, and pervasiveness of CI is at best mixed. The American Council on Education's (ACE) 2008 publication *Mapping Internationalization of U.S. Campuses* concluded that U.S. institutions have made progress, but it is neither complete nor even. The report states, "Many institutions do not see internationalization as integral to their identity or strategy…Few institutions have

an internationalization strategy…a gap exists between institutional rhetoric and reality."

Nonetheless, there is progress in the field and examples of successful institutions. Some of these appear in NAFSA's annual report, *Internationalizing the Campus,* which profiles winners of the Senator Paul Simon Award for Campus Internationalization **(http://www.nafsa.org/simonaward)**. From these reports and a variety of sources, a series of key concepts emerges to inform those considering greater internationalization.

Setting the Stage for CI

It is not possible to devise a step-by-step implementation checklist that would be applicable to all U.S. institutions of higher learning. Detailed action planning is highly dependent on the particular and varied environments of each campus. However, for CI to be successful in *any* setting, it needs effective leadership from many sources, widespread participation from throughout the campus, action integrated across many offices, collaboration as a norm, and the formation of guiding mindsets.

The importance and role of creating an organizational culture that sustains CI is critical. Two essential components of such a culture are: (1) an institutional ethos that

manifestly connects local, national, and global dimensions of institutional missions and values; and (2) guidance and accountability provided by goals and intended outcomes. Other important elements to establishing a guiding culture for CI reside in the formation of supportive organizational mindsets and the understandings and beliefs of its human resources and clientele.

Common Elements of Orientation, Mindset, and Action

1. An Enabling First Step: Making the Case

The first step for many institutions will be a dialog among key stakeholders that moves the campus mindset from seeing CI as having little or no value (or being marginalized by mere tolerance for it) to seeing CI as essential. A parallel mindset needs to be built among key elements of the institution's external environment (e.g., constituents, alumni, donors, political arenas). Education and advocacy for CI is important both internally and externally.

Even though it seems nearly everyone gives at least lip service to the value of internationalization, one cannot assume that

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Useful Actions to Achieve Institutional Consensus for CI

- A dialog involving campus leadership, governance, and internal and external clientele culminating in a shared understanding of the compelling rationale for CI, and its meaning, goals, program priorities, and the outcomes sought. What should this institution look like if it becomes comprehensively internationalized? What do we expect to get out of CI, particularly in terms of outcomes, and what will define success?
- Clear and consistent messaging from the president, provost, and academic leadership on the importance of CI to institutional missions and values, and on their expectations for participation by all students, faculty, staff, and administrators—each in ways befitting their unique roles and responsibilities.
- Ongoing information and education programs to sustain widespread awareness and understanding throughout the campus of the dimensions of CI and that encourage all to consider why they should participate and how they can contribute, as well as benefit.
- Support of pilot and demonstration projects that offer successful examples of payoffs from widening international engagement.
- Regular reporting of internationalization engagement actions and outcomes, and meaningful institutional recognition and rewards for units and individuals successfully engaged.

a deep understanding of and commitment to needed action necessarily follows—particularly in an environment of resource constraint and strong competition for institutional funds, time, and attention.

Even when internationalization is universally acknowledged as fundamental to the mission of the institution, it is not automatically clear what actions should follow and who should take them. Many of the rhetorical statements made in support of internationalization are sound bites that lack understanding of the underlying breadth and depth of CI that need to drive action.

Building a solid case for CI and a culture for it should be among the first steps taken and is a matter of leadership, consistent messaging, and deep and wide campus dialog reinforced by action and documented desirable outcomes.

The requisite mindset for action begins with a campus-wide discussion and understanding of the rationale, motivations, and options to engage internationalization. Successful CI is not the product of well-meaning but heavy top-down decision-making by presidents and provosts. Neither is it only the result of bottom-up populism, but a product of these two processes in concert to pursue consensus.

2. Long-Range Commitment and Audacious Goals

Broad acceptance of the importance of CI is necessary, but insufficient. A necessary additional enabler is to set goals and expectations that shift the view of CI from a peripheral commitment to a central position in all aspects of the institution.

"Stretch goals" are preconditions for comprehensiveness (see box, Examples of Audacious "Stretch Goals"). Some may view such goals as daring, but it is through this audacity that CI will become truly *comprehensive.* Institutions will need to select the right mix of stretch goals to best fit their own culture. However, whether some or all are actively pursued, a commonality among such goals is a commitment to internationalization touching all aspects of the institution.

Given the "stretch" nature of many of these goals, a long-range commitment will be essential.

Examples of Audacious "Stretch Goals"

- Every undergraduate student given significant exposure to international, comparative, and global content as part of their degree programs.
- Learning outcomes established for internationalization, incorporating knowledge, attitudes, and skills outcomes.
- All students have opportunity to engage learning through education abroad.
- All faculty encouraged to enhance international, comparative, and global perspective in their teaching and scholarship.
- The integration of all international students and scholars into the campus living and learning environment.
- All graduate students given understanding of the practice of their profession and discipline in other cultures.
- Routine institutional support of research and of research collaborations abroad.
- Community engagement that routinely includes connection of local constituencies to global opportunities and knowledge.

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3. A Mindset of Shared Responsibility and Collaboration

Institutional dialog and leadership needs to build a culture for cross-unit collaboration in both mindset and action.

CI cannot occur without the willing and meaningful collaboration of academic departments. Additionally, productive collaborations formed between academic departments and international programming units are essential. Education abroad in its various forms provides the experience component of international learning; together, the on-campus curriculum and education abroad are partners in internationalizing curriculum and learning. Internationalized curriculum and learning require an internationally engaged faculty. Language departments provide access to the communication tools supporting internationalization, and area study provides the core knowledge required to function globally and within world regions. International students and scholars enrich and internationalize the on-campus learning environment and can significantly enhance campus research capacity and outcomes. Engagement in development activity abroad connects the institution to global applications and solutions and provides invaluable field experience for faculty and students.

It is the synergies among these elements that makes the whole greater than the sum of its parts and the "comprehensive" part of CI possible. To accomplish this, the leadership and staff of individual departments and offices must locate and build upon the connections that lead to synergies and be governed by a collaborative mindset. The collaborations need to be expanded throughout the campus enterprise and across academic units, international program units, and general campus support and service units.

Far from obviating the need for overall leadership of the CI effort, pushing responsibility for CI engagement throughout campus actually increases the need for such leadership. Coordinative campus leadership for CI is always needed, and not having it will almost guarantee disjointed and suboptimal effort.

4. Collaborative and Coordinating Leadership

The success of CI depends on a mindset where components of internationalization are driven not just for their own purposes but for their contribution to overall CI goals.

Thinking and behaving departmentally tends to focus attention on *inputs* (size of the office budget) and *outputs* (clientele head counts), rather than on *outcomes* relating to overall CI objectives (e.g., graduates who are workforce ready for a twenty-first century environment). Study abroad and learning a second language may well be goods independently, but have even greater impact when connected to and reinforcing larger institutional objectives.

SIO Leadership Roles. The absence of overall leadership and coordination of the CI effort almost guarantees its fragmentation and suboptimization. Although it is understood that not all senior international officers (SIOs) are strategically placed to provide such leadership and coordination and that scale and scope of the CI effort will depend on institutional mission and size, leadership and coordination will enhance CI efforts in any campus setting.

Building a coherent institutional strategy for internationalization across the work of either a few or numerous internationally engaged offices and programs requires leadership (a) that is senior and influential enough to promote development of an institutional consensus and strategy for CI as a whole, and (b) that can help facilitate development of synergies across the programming components of internationalization.

SIOs can have important leadership roles on their own, as well as supporting presidents and provosts and other academic leaders, in:

- Building the case for CI throughout the campus and developing a campus mindset for CI.

- Promoting a sense of shared role, responsibility, and collaboration across campus to achieve CI.

- Gaining campus acceptance and follow-through to achieve universal opportu-

> ### Key questions for SIOs for Developing Institutional Strategy
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> - What are the scope, consistency, and strength of institutional rhetoric for CI?
> - Do actions (policies, programs, resources, outcomes) align with the rhetoric?
> - What are strengths, weaknesses, synergies, and conflicting realities of the institution's CI efforts?
> - What should be the strategic action plan and priorities for strengthening CI?

> ### For Leaders of International Program Components
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> The types of questions that provide a start for looking outward, connecting actions of a particular office or program to CI, and for building synergies include:
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> - Do you know the institution's overarching objectives for CI?
> - Can you identify how your program can or should contribute to achieving CI objectives?
> - Who are your principal clients and what are their needs with regard to internationalization?
> - Who or what might present barriers for your program in meeting its objectives?
> - Can you identify collaborations that would enhance achieving program internationalization objectives?
> - Have you assessed what your program does not do well, for which collaborations with others would help?

nity for students and faculty to engage internationalization.

- Helping to shape an adaptive bureaucracy to the needs of CI and enhance campus academic and support/service unit assistance for CI.

Leaders of International Program Components. Depending on the campus, there can be a wide range of offices or programs that specialize in aspects of international engagement such as education abroad, international students and scholars, English language centers, language departments, area study centers, and international thematic centers, to name just a few. If individual offices and programs are to contribute effectively to internationalization as well as maximize achievement of their own internal goals, effective "outward-looking" leadership of these offices and programs is vital.

Equally important is a leadership style in these offices that looks for collaboration and win/wins in dealings with other stakeholders.

5. Integration into Institutional Policies and Processes

Core institutional documents such as mission and value statements provide direction and a sense of priorities for any well-managed organization. Bureaucracy sets the rules of the game, provides order and orientation, but it also constrains and can stifle flexibility and adaptation. CI will

be weakened or rendered ineffective if not appropriately recognized and supported by core institutional documents and policies. Adapting core institutional documents and the bureaucracy to govern both domestically and internationally is a core leadership issue. Some of the specific issues to address include:

- **Declare where the institution is headed and what is important.** These are answered publically in institutional mission statements and companion statements about institutional values. They are given further detail in institutional strategic plans.

- **Reinforce the message.** Change is, in part, the product of consistent and frequent messaging. It is reinforcing to give prominent attention and placement to CI and its activities and successes on the university Web page; in institutional brochures and recruitment materials in job postings; and in college, department, and alumni newsletters and magazines.

- **Define and reward what counts.** The integration of international dimensions into curricula and degree requirements signals what counts for students. The inclusion of international activity and accomplishments into promotion, compensation, tenure, and related decision-making signals what counts for faculty and staff. A requirement that departments and

units identify their intended contributions to CI as part of their annual planning activity, followed by the flow of institutional resources to departments and units contributing to CI, underscore what is important to the institution and for departments and units.

- **Recruit and employ for CI.** Organizations are defined in important ways and success dictated by whom they seek to attract. Important institutional CI messages are sent by signaling efforts to recruit (a) students who have strong global interests; (b) faculty with international backgrounds, experience, or interests; (c) staff who see the importance of international engagement and who will work creatively to actively support it; and (d) administrative leaders who see a significant part of their leadership role creating the vision and support for achieving CI.

- **Commit to human resource development**. Whereas curriculum and pedagogy are the human resource development tools applied to students, education and training (for example, professional development workshops, access to language training, or experience abroad) are components of institutional personnel development processes.

- **Design adaptive bureaucracy and service units.** Rules and regulations designed to support a community and domestic base of operation often don't easily sustain cross-border mobility or "doing business" abroad—and sometimes are powerful barriers to doing so. Different cultures, practices, and legal systems intervene in a myriad of ways only some of which can be anticipated—affecting for example, institutional travel regulations, risk assessment, insurance requirements, intellectual property expectations, translating standards across cultures, contractual practices, regulations, and resolving conflicts among regulations from having to deal with multiple governmental entities. An important mindset for successfully acting on CI is flexibility to adapt necessary rules and procedures to new environments.

Key Questions for Integrating CI into Institutional Policies and Processes

- Is CI a prominent part of such institutional direction-giving documents?
- What are the institutional priorities, outlets, and frequency for reinforcing the institutional CI message?
- Is internationalization a core part of the curriculum, institutional recognition and reward systems, planning processes, and resource allocation decisions?
- Does the institution seek broadly to recruit and attract the internationally interested and engaged?
- Is there an institutional commitment to developing the international knowledge, skills, and abilities of existing faculty and staff?
- Is there a mechanism to identify bureaucratic barriers to CI and for acceptably resolving them? How hidebound and resistant is institutional bureaucracy to changes in procedures and practices?

From Concept to Action

A comprehensive approach to internationalization must be all encompassing. Globally informed content is integrated into the vast majority of courses, curricula, and majors. Comparative and global perspectives are integrated into research and scholarship of faculty. The benefits of cross-cultural and comparative understanding are extended through outreach to citizens, businesses, and public officials.

The prerequisites for action and success in pursuing the expansive and pervasive CI agenda require fully engaged leadership from the top of the institution to academic deans, heads of academic and support units, academic governance, faculty, and key support staffs.

Among the first steps of leadership is the need to engage in campus dialog and consensus building on the importance of CI, engagement around a "stretch" set of goals, building a campus-wide mindset of shared responsibility and coordination of effort, and commitment to fashioning administrative, organization, and policy structures that will facilitate support and facilitate CI.

A strategic undertaking as complex as CI requires constant monitoring and adjustment. No plan will anticipate perfectly. So, in addition to a commitment to assess the outcomes of CI, there needs to be a companion commitment to assessing the process, structure, programs, and actions put in place to bring CI to reality.

GET THE FULL REPORT

The full publication, available at no cost at **www.nafsa.org/cizn**, examines these and further topics in greater depth:

- The Evolving Meanings of Higher Education Internationalization
- Expanded Goals, Motivations, and Rationales for Comprehensive Internationalization
- Options for the Scope and Scale of Institutional Comprehensive Internationalization
- Prerequisites for Successful Initiation and Implementation of Comprehensive Internationalization
- Issues, Barriers and Challenges for Comprehensive Internationalization
- From Concept and Rhetoric to Institutional Action