

Reshaping International Education

THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION has never been greater and the consequences of failing to mainstream it into our educational institutions never so serious. Many key U.S. programs supporting international education and exchange were conceived during the Cold War. Since the end of that era, the somewhat singular focus on national security as the rationale for developing language and international expertise has broadened to include many other compelling reasons.

The seemingly inexorable movement toward globally interconnected systems, problems, and solutions of all kinds challenge the status quo of international education as well as global governance. Expanding participation in international education has widespread implications in terms of capacity, cost, and the range of issues that need to be addressed under the banner of international education. There are also implications for NAFSA and sister organizations here and abroad. At least four major issues are driving a re-conceptualization of international education: (1) mainstreaming access; (2) a more diverse “geography” of interests; (3) diversification of disciplines and majors of relevance; and (4) a changing global higher education profile

Mainstreaming Access

The Economist reports that a majority of the world’s population is now middle class and their disposable income feeds not only the world’s economy but also a rapid global expansion in postsecondary education. The growth of the middle class and rise of powerful new global economies is reconfiguring the markets and systems that govern trade in goods, services, ideas, education, and intellectual property. As the current global economic downturn demonstrates, we already live in a world where global forces not only play out in the local context, but the local context also shapes them. Impacts and consequences are reciprocal.

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nizations abroad—many will have careers that span multiple global work locations.

By definition, a workforce-ready graduate is one who is prepared to live and work globally. As people, organizations and companies large and small engage increasingly in activity abroad, their need for languages, cross-cultural awareness, and knowledge of opportunities and methods abroad intensify and diversify. This requires universities to provide access to international knowledge and learning to all students rather than to only the few. The mainstreaming of international education is both the need and the challenge.

A More Diverse “Geography” of Interest

As a result of globalization, there is an explosion in the number and diversity of regions and countries of interest. Languages and cultures that may have appeared less relevant to us a decade or two ago—either because they were less connected to a world system, or because they were suppressed by powerful regimes—have new salience. New federal programs and a reconfiguration of some older ones support a more diverse set of country and sub-regional knowledge needs. Partially in response, there is more support for teaching the less commonly taught languages and for encouraging study abroad in non-Western countries.

In addition, the basic concepts associated with international development and problem solving abroad have shifted from simple notions of assistance to one requiring intimate understanding of and collaboration within diverse indigenous settings. Such work, whether through NGOs or government, will call for

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a sound foundation of cross-cultural skills and international perspective.

Diversifying the Disciplines and Majors of Relevance

The subject matter of the arts, humanities, languages, and social and behavioral sciences are central to international education. But clean water, lower mortality rates, controlling the spread of communicable disease, widening access to global markets and raw materials, and access to safe food and nutrition require knowledge from professional and applied programs such as medicine, business, agriculture, environmental science and policy, education, and telecommunications, to name a few.

The subject matter of international knowledge and perspective must touch students and research in professional majors as well. It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to imagine any discipline or university program that is not shaped by global forces, not able to contribute to global solutions, or better off informed by global perspective.

A Changing Global Higher Education Profile

By 2025 global demand for seats in higher education institutions is projected to double, reaching an annual enrollment of 200 million. Consequently, there will be a very substantial increase in the number and size of higher education institutions globally. Emerging economies will account for a majority of the growth in global capacity and they will define significantly the future global higher education profile.

More of the world's higher education systems will move from elite to more widely accessible models. This growth seems unstoppable although it remains to be seen whether even the current global economic crisis will slow it, or, if so, for long. Worldwide, more students will study at home, take degrees abroad, and incorporate education abroad into their home programs.

International education is a growth industry. There will be a proliferation of alternative higher education structures for international

education and exchange: satellite programs, partnering, distance learning, consortia, and others not yet seen. There will be challenges to quality control and standards.

The key outcome of the growth of higher education capacity and the cross-border flow of students is that higher education will become more of a globally traded commodity. The consequences will be similar to those that have impacted other manufacturing and service sectors gone global—including a more competitive environment as well as market imbalances and reactions to increased trade.

Price competition is likely to intensify. As access to ideas, communication, and learning have few boundaries in the Internet age, competitiveness will require rapid innovation in subject matter, pedagogy, and cost control.

With the expansion in higher education worldwide, and more competition, challenges will mount to find adequate numbers of qualified faculty and administrators, possibly leading to a human resources bidding war across borders. Where will the world find a sufficient number of competent faculty and administrators to double capacity in the next 15 years? So, too, protectionist barriers may arise in some sectors related to security, limited capacity, differential pricing for home markets, and there may be “political” limits on the proportion of on-campus seats taken by international students.

Universities and International Education in the Global Mix

The dual challenge of mainstreaming access and widening the array of language and area knowledge offered stretches higher education's capacities, particularly now during a period of budget stress. New money to support international education will be needed, but a majority of the solution will have to come from reallocating existing resources and changing practices.

Rethinking the meaning of international education and the methods to deliver it seem warranted.

The key is integration of international education broadly into curricula and learn-

ing, rather than merely adding it on as yet another free-standing institutional responsibility. We must find “twofer” and “threefer.” For example, as many already do, we can view the flow of international students to our campuses as not just an educational opportunity for them (or for us to shape the next generation of world leaders), but also as a prime means to internationalize our on-campus living and learning environments. Existing general education curricula can meet their core objectives while simultaneously incorporating significant international and comparative content. Majors don't have to add new courses, but rather incorporate such content into existing coursework. Diversifying models and pedagogy in language learning can increase capacity beyond cost.

Revisioning the nature of partnerships here and abroad becomes an important enabling tool. If each higher education institution can't literally “cover the globe,” how are priorities set? Isn't part of the answer to increase collaboration and consortia programming across institutions to share resources and capacities in order to meet the diversity of need? Shouldn't we think not only of domestic partner institutions but also partner institutions abroad?

Changes on Campus

Internationalization is moving from the campus periphery to center stage. Clearly, we see this in the rhetoric of presidents and provosts but also in the work of national higher education organizations developing “model” curricular for internationalization. We see related activity on hundreds of campuses.

In moving to center stage, internationalization affects the majority of faculty and most curricula. It impacts general education, majors, internships, service learning, and field research. A deliberate positioning of education abroad and international students and scholars into these broader campus efforts is needed to avoid their marginalization by more powerful institutional forces (e.g., faculty bodies, institutional definitions of core learning outcomes, and the curriculum generally).

Campus internationalization creates new demand for education abroad and for international students and scholars services, but it also increases competition for scarce resources. Education abroad and international student programs will fall under a stronger spotlight, prompting both examination and opportunity.

On the research side, a late-in-coming awareness that not all good ideas are invented here will lead to an expansion of global research projects and partnerships. This creates pressure to select institutional partners that permit integrating instruction, research, and outreach programming. Seeking to integrate international engagement across all institutional core missions may reset institutional priorities affecting the choice of partner countries and institutions. Thus, what was once an ideal partner for education abroad may not be so ideal when thinking across institutional missions.

Accreditation and quality control bodies increasingly look for evidence of institutional commitment to internationalization. Such bodies require measurement of outcomes from internationalization, placing further demands on education abroad and international student and scholar programming to show measurable outcomes. The emergence

of global institutional ranking schemes is also changing the paradigm for ranking institutional stature, further prompting international engagement.

NAFSA's Role

NAFSA is the largest and arguably the most influential international education organization in the world. But the complexities of the changing international education landscape prompts me to a reconsideration of the roles it should play and the meaningful collaborations it must form to continue shaping campus internationalization and strengthening education abroad and international and student scholar programming.

As internationalization incorporates foci other than education abroad and international students, it brings to the table other powerful and well established entities on campus and often with their own vested interests and views. In my view, success in dealing with this wider array can be made more possible by:

- Enhancing productive relations and collaborations with allied higher education and international education organizations in the U.S. and abroad;
- Facilitating integration of education abroad and international students and scholar programs into wider campus efforts

to internationalize curricula and learning; and

■ Developing robust connections to faculty and senior campus leadership.

This is not to abandon NAFSA's historical focus as education abroad, international student and scholars services, recruitment, admissions, and policies related to these. Rather it is to expand its contributions to the overall campus international process and more fully integrate education abroad and international students and scholars into these wider efforts, strengthening both. As a practical matter, I believe NAFSA must

■ Continue and strengthen its leadership position in advocacy for international education and regulatory issues, and maintain and extend collaborations for doing so (even more than we already are).

■ Strengthen engagement with presidents, provosts, and chief international officers.

■ Strengthen collaborations with other higher education bodies as well as with colleague international education organizations here and abroad.

■ Contribute intellectually as well as programmatically to an integrated approach to international education in the context of twenty-first century higher education.

We cannot pretend to graduate educated individuals if they have not been exposed to significant international and global knowledge and understanding. Our collective goals should be that all graduates are exposed in their degree programs to significant international, comparative, and global content; that the scholarship and teaching of all faculties is informed by such content; and that we "mainstream" access to an internationalized curriculum. To be relevant and succeed in a twenty-first century global environment, it will be necessary for higher education and all of us engaged in international education to think in more integrated terms: comprehensive and increasingly borderless international education. **IE**

JOHN K. HUDZIK is vice president for global engagement and strategic projects at Michigan State University and president of NAFSA: Association of International Educators.

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