

NAFSA: ASSOCIATION OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATORS

# Trends & Insights

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INTERNATIONALIZATION IN A TIME OF  
GLOBAL DISRUPTION

by the 2018-19 NAFSA Senior Fellows

## About NAFSA

NAFSA is the largest and most comprehensive association of professionals committed to advancing international higher education. The association provides leadership to its varied constituencies through establishing principles of good practice and providing professional development opportunities. NAFSA encourages networking among professionals, convenes conferences and collaborative dialogues, and promotes research and knowledge creation to strengthen and serve the field. We lead the way in advocating for a better world through international education.

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# Introduction

BY DOROTHEA J. ANTONIO

This issue of *Trends & Insights* showcases the work of the 2018–19 NAFSA Senior Fellows, respected international education scholars whose deliberative reflections are informing internationalization efforts and strengthening higher education's global bonds. The concept for this *Trends & Insights* publication began with a discussion about the world in a time of global disruption and the manifestation of its impact on internationalization. What are the implications of the current geopolitical environment on higher education? What are the repercussions in other fields? And, ultimately, what does the future look like? From unique angles, each Fellow considered a different approach, leading to this powerful collection of current perspectives.

In this issue, **Jenny J. Lee** (University of Arizona) considers the effects of increasing xenophobia. **Francisco Marmolejo** (the World Bank) argues that an internationalized higher education is more important than ever. **Bernhard Streitwieser** (George Washington University) looks at the increasingly complex world of migration and refugees and the subsequent responsibility of higher education. **Ellen Hazelkorn** (BH Associates) looks at the power and politics of global rankings and their impact on higher education. And **John K. Hudzik** (Michigan State University) warns of the consequences of the increasing commercialization of internationalization.

This changing environment requires consistent, thoughtful review and analysis, and NAFSA is committed to furthering the conversation and providing additional scholarship to the field. As part of this commitment, the five Senior Fellows will expand on the topics of this *Trends & Insights* issue in a special session at the NAFSA 2019 Annual Conference & Expo in Washington, D.C., and in a larger publication coming fall 2019.

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# Beyond Trumpism: The Underlying U.S. Political Climate for International Students and Scholars

BY JENNY J. LEE

**T**he current political climate is changing the outlook for international students and scholars in the United States. With federal proposals to limit international students in the country, reports of discrimination, and xenophobia fears, the United States may be perceived as a less welcoming site for students and scholars from abroad. While university efforts to combat these negative views are important, there are limited theoretical reflections on the basic assumptions and contradictions surrounding international students and scholars that shape public perceptions, practices, and policies. Based on the key concepts of neoracism and territoriality, a society's primary identification with the nation-state and America-first interests make internationalization not only difficult, but also positions international students and scholars as threatening to the social order and as convenient scapegoats to governmental shortcomings. These sentiments have pervaded the international higher education landscape. After reflecting on these circumstances and resulting challenges, the article concludes with suggestions for transcending such mental barriers and addressing current challenges in more thoughtful and effective ways.

## U.S. POLITICAL CLIMATE

Last year, a NAFSA survey identified the “political climate” as a leading concern for international enrollment management (Redden 2018) while numerous scholars directly suggested Trumpism as a reason for the shifting of international student flows away from the United States (e.g., De Wit and Altbach 2018; Lee 2017). Since 2017, President Donald Trump has continued to propose anti-immigration policies that reflect the worsening political climate for current and future international students and scholars in U.S. higher education. Among the most recent travel ban attempts was to limit Chinese students in the United States out of a fear that they are spies (Yoon-Hendricks 2018). Currently, nationals from seven countries are restricted from U.S. travel, as decided by the U.S. Supreme Court in June 2018 (U.S. Department of State 2018). Undoubtedly, such travel policies will curb international students and scholars from affected countries from attending U.S. institutions, thereby limiting the countries from which those in the United States originate.

The benefits that international students and scholars offer are hardly disputed by higher education leaders and need not be retold here. Universities and higher education groups have openly expressed their concerns about President Trump's proposals to limit international students and scholars in the United States, knowing the potential repercussions of hosting fewer of them (Redden 2017). What is just as concerning is the collateral damage these successful, as well as failed, policy attempts leave behind.

Meanwhile, current international students and scholars may be at risk. The FBI revealed that the threat of white nationalist violence in the United States is at least as big a threat as that posed by the Islamic State (ISIS) and similar groups (Williams 2017). The disclosure is concerning because it suggests that migrants and temporary residents who are already in the United States may be targets of immigrant hate groups. These dangers are compounded by the more subtle forms of xenophobia that appear less frequently in the news despite their prevalence.

## NEORACISM

Xenophobia and neoracism remain major obstacles in internationalizing universities, perhaps even greater in the current political climate. Neoracism is the subordination of people of color in the postcolonial era on the basis of culture, masking traditional racism (Lee and Rice 2007) and xenophobia. Neoracism is more subtly justified as a way to maintain cultural preservation and global ordering. Under this mindset, international students, as suggested by recent legislative attempts, become misrepresented as threats to the nation-state. More specifically, neoracism presumes a world order that welcomes groups from some countries (e.g., the United Kingdom, Canada, and Germany) more than others (e.g., Iran, China, and Somalia). The U.S. border, like almost every national border in the world, is selectively permeable, depending on one's nationality. An embracing of internationalization holistically might ignore the very unequal patterns of global access, particularly for lower income countries in the Global South that also tend not to be predominantly white. Border discrimination is real and yet the internationalization rhetoric presumes a global mythscape of free movement as a universal pastime rather than a privileged reality.

Identifying mistreatment is not enough. Addressing deep-seated prejudice requires a fuller understanding of how and where cultural superiority and discrimination originates. While overt neoracism is easier to detect and condemn, its subtler forms arise from nationalism, or a sense of superiority based on national identity. In function, nationalism privileges members of a given country while subjugating the purpose of those belonging to other cultural groups to serve the core's interests. Economic rationales are the most pervasive justifications to retain international students and scholars in the United States. The common stereotype of international students as "cash cows," for instance, is not only dehumanizing, it also supposes that their only function is to offset the rising costs of university operations for domestic students.

Beyond offering practical suggestions to provide a more welcoming climate for all international students and scholars (e.g., #YouAreWelcomeHere, buddy programs, and cultural celebrations) that are already being implemented in many institutions, more work is necessary to better understand the climate that perpetuates neoracism in the classrooms, among peers, and off campus (Lee and Rice 2007; Lee and Cantwell

2012). Visible gestures of support are insufficient in combating deep-seated prejudice that negatively invades college environments. Internationalization activities and neoracism can coexist. Hosting international students and scholars and mistreating them, for example, are not always at odds, but rather, can happen simultaneously. As another example, a university might be one of the nation's largest international hosts, but also provide inadequate support services compared to those given to the domestic student population. Thus, internationalization must be more than observable activities, but be a more deeply engrained consciousness about the humanity of internationalization with special attention to the most marginalized international students and scholars.

## TERRITORIALITY

Embedded in an unwelcoming climate for some international students and scholars, whether in small social groups or large institutional settings, is a sense of territory that predetermines who is a member or not. Territory is most often defined by national borders. Individuals within that territory then share a social identity around common citizenship. By privileging citizenship, which is an expression of territoriality, the state's exclusive authority over its territory (Sassen 2013), noncitizens are reduced to second-class members with fewer rights and access to public resources. International students often pay the highest price (in regard to full tuition fees without financial aid) but may utilize campus resources the least. Career services and internship opportunities, as examples, might favor local residents (Li and Lee 2018). University support services staff might wrongly assume that international students do not need assistance or are not "at risk," favoring a limited demographic of local citizens. In other cases, nativist fears of immigrants taking away what "belongs" to a territory's citizens might serve as underlying justification for not supporting these visitors or worse, mistreating them.

## HOW MIGHT INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION TRANSCEND NEORACISM AND TERRITORIALITY?

Global realities are fast changing. As nation-states seek to maintain their significance in globalization and appeal to populist agendas, internationalization is repositioned as a threat. Rather than retreating to old international paradigms of one nation to another,

which assumes a basic push-pull involving the individual or institution weighing their subjective costs and benefits, we must reflect more openly about the paradigms through which international education is understood and operates. Rather than simply denying, working within, or combating an unwelcoming climate and neoracism against international students and scholars, we must critically examine the social forces that create and facilitate it, while keeping the following sentiments in mind:

1. Program evaluations and university reporting help identify issues, but do not inherently address them. Internationalization is not a value, but a strategy. Values about internationalization can differ widely (e.g., revenue generation, prestige, diplomacy, etc.) leading to disconnected and conflicting efforts. What are the university's varying and underlying assumptions about internationalization? Internationalization leaders and staff should engage in honest reflections and intentional learning in which taken-for-granted assumptions regarding citizenship, territory, territoriality, and privilege are critically questioned and shared.
2. Internationalization tends to essentialize nation-states as homogenous territories with a single border. By decentering territory as solely for the nation-state, we can better recognize the global reality of student flows as a networked border with particular channels based on demand, income, and political relations. In so doing, "international" should de-emphasize the "national" and make more central diverse cultures, including those within a single country.
3. Internationalization is becoming increasingly transnational, with education moving beyond binary partnerships and exchanges. Likewise, international students and scholars will increasingly represent more than one country or cultural perspective. Students are not simply international but transnational, with multiple experiences from multiple locations.
4. One of the biggest blind spots with international research is that by centering the work on nation-states we essentialize social identities to the country, while ignoring the many borders within them. There is no typical Chinese

student, for example, much like there is no typical U.S. student. The diversity of students from the same country should be valued and recognized, much like the diversity of students from the United States.

5. International students and scholars are more than resources to support national agendas and their host citizens. They are extensions of the global network that deborder territories. Domestic students and scholars can also serve as part of this international network based on their education and experiences abroad. Rather than relying on old "us versus them" or "national versus international" categories, we must re-envision universities as transnational institutions that serve as conduits for cross-cultural discovery, learning, and exchange.

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# Global Trends and International Higher Education: A Wake-Up Call

BY FRANCISCO MARMOLEJO\*

International higher education is facing a challenging and also promising time. On one hand, the traditional set of assumptions about the importance of international education usually made by its promoters is being challenged in a geopolitical context of increased isolationism and nationalism. On the other hand, such a concerning environment is both a wake-up call and an opportunity to widen the benefits and relevance of international education to a larger number of students, and to more effectively connect the global and local outreach agendas of colleges and universities.

Higher education is increasingly internationalized, with a student body that is more mobile than at any other point in contemporary history and curricula that are increasingly multicultural and global in scope. The progress has been remarkable and, in fact, until recently, most discussions in the field of internationalization have been focused on its dramatic expansion, diversification, and increased level of sophistication. In a way, it has been taken for granted that some global consensus exists about its unquestionable importance and about the relevance that it has in the future landscape of higher education across the world. This internationalization of higher education, as it is known, has been taking place at a breathtaking speed, and for many in the higher education community, the optimism and forward-thinking approach that it has ushered has been most welcome—perhaps naively. After all, who would question that students should have a global dimension on their education? Or that students experiencing internationalization—by means such as studying abroad, learning a second language, or studying a program through a global perspective—would become multicultural, capable, confident, and tolerant professionals and citizens? Who would challenge the idea that, in order to achieve ambitious institutional internationalization goals, colleges

and universities should be bold, entrepreneurial, and innovative?

In such an optimistic climate, only a few voices have cautioned about risks (IAU 2012) and excessive confidence (Brandenburg and de Wit 2011). However, as we know, higher education does not exist in a vacuum, and global geopolitical trends inevitably influence classrooms and research laboratories around the world. Also, they contribute to shape perceptions and decisions of institutional leaders and policymakers. In other words, it would be naïve to assume that the complex, intriguing, and disturbing current international context will not have an impact in higher education and, for that matter, on its internationalization.

Even though we don't agree with them, we cannot ignore the criticism of those questioning the benefits of connecting the world. Some strident voices abound. For some, values such as cultural openness and tolerance are being pitted against "national values." Even in some cases, colleges and universities have been accused of polluting students' minds with global ideas that undermine national identity, social cohesion, and local focus (Ariely 2012). Some critics are even questioning the value of international students and

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\*The views, thoughts, and opinions expressed in the text belong solely to the author, and not necessarily to the author's employer, organization, committee or other group or individual.

scholars, who they claim are taking the place of local students and teachers (Francis 2018), bringing with them foreign ideas, and “stealing” valuable knowledge and well-paid jobs (Sharma 2018; Kaint 2018). Although it can be argued that the aforementioned are just isolated voices, they nevertheless contribute to shaping public opinion and to eroding optimism about international education.

It is against this contradictory and sometimes hostile environment that higher education systems globally must counterargue that, more than ever, an internationalized higher education is the best way to address the formidable global challenges ahead. At the same time, it is a unique opportunity to question whether the building blocks of the traditional internationalization construct are not as strong as imagined. It may be time to take out the higher education internationalization field from its protective “cocoon” and to connect it more directly towards the overreaching challenges faced in higher education and society. Undoubtedly, international education professionals should be mindful of issues apparently far away from the day-to-day tasks of just recruiting foreign students or promoting study abroad programs.

In other words, now is not a time for isolationism or for narrowed solutions to what is clearly an entrenched, global problem, but one with significant local ramifications. Comprehensive internationalization of higher education with a stronger sense of local and global responsibility is desperately needed. The challenges ahead are universal. They are formidable and require higher education graduates who adequately combine global preparedness and awareness with a stronger sense of local community service. To rise to the challenges ahead, our colleges and universities need to be comprehensively engaged in global issues, while also increasingly committed and involved at the local level. The idea of seeing higher education as a key place to prepare students for lives of responsible local and global citizenship (Frederick 2007) should be renewed in the mission and action of our colleges and universities.

International educators must also acknowledge that until now, the push for internationalization of higher education has been largely self-serving, fueled by institutions’ desires to diversify funding sources and, many times, resulting in higher levels of student mobility only for the most privileged. For instance,

globally ranked educational institutions explicitly seek to attract and retain highly talented students from developing countries, but few pair such efforts with contributions that develop local capacity in those dispatching countries. Also, by focusing on the “easy road” many institutions have neglected their responsibilities to provide a global dimension, openness, and tolerance to *all* students, and not only the ones participating in international mobility programs.

Even at the government level, as indicated by Roopa Desai Trilokekar (2017), regional and national internationalization of higher education policies, in many cases, tend to favor (1) societal exclusion (not inclusion); (2) class hierarchy (not equity); (3) political borders (not mobility); and (4) global competition (not reciprocity).

It is critical that we, as a global community, reaffirm the value of higher education and of its international dimension, while also renewing its commitment to more effectively support its relevance and usefulness in the local context. We should not forget that international efforts make sense only if they are relevant in the local context. There needs to be a wake-up call to educators and policymakers on the need to become more innovative and bold in repositioning higher education and its internationalization efforts as central to local development.

The current challenging and intriguing global environment is a great opportunity. As we grapple with the future of higher education and its path forward, it is important to remember that an internationalized higher education—and the skills it can provide people so that they thrive in the twenty-first century—have never been more important, or necessary.

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# Why Migrants and Refugees Have a Place in International Education

BY BERNHARD STREITWIESER

## CHALLENGING THE VALUE OF ROBUST INTERNATIONALIZATION

Around the world at the moment, the question of how to respond to the movement of refugees and migrants is at the center of national debates. The place and potential of migrants and their intersection with education is an important topic in the current climate. Even if the majority of U.S. universities and colleges may be enlightened about the positive elements that migration brings—including greater diversity and innovation—they are also grappling with a host of difficult questions. Concerns include what it means to be a [sanctuary campus](#); how to protect undocumented students with Temporary Protected Status (TPS) or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA); and ways to coordinate efforts to create and launch advocacy efforts to balance the public debate. The challenge for U.S. higher education institutions in their internationalization activities has become how to concurrently project a positive national image through the domestic students it sends abroad, while also welcoming the international students who come to their campuses.

As Jane Knight and Hans DeWit established in their work in the late 1990s and 2000s, internationalization incorporates rationales of academic, political, economic, and sociocultural factors. To these we must now add a fifth rationale: humanism (Streitwieser et al. 2018). If we are to be truly responsive to the current global humanitarian crisis, educators must also be prepared to act with a humanitarian motivation. Refugee and at-risk migrant students are engaging in international education in very different ways than traditional study abroad populations due to mobility that has been forced on them. As such, they have vastly distinct motivations and experience different

outcomes. These students are different from traditional study abroad and international students, who we already know much about but who represent a smaller, more globally elite population.

## MIGRATION IS A WORLDWIDE ISSUE

The globe is currently experiencing the unprecedented migration of 68.5 million displaced people and 25.4 million refugees, the largest numbers recorded by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) since World War II (UNHCR 2018). Increased migration has been caused by conflicts in Syria and other parts of the Middle East and North Africa, where the Syrian Civil War continues to push even more refugees into the already overloaded neighboring countries of Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey (Pew Research Center 2018). Trouble spots in [Asia](#) scatter refugees from Afghanistan into Iran and Pakistan, [Rohingya](#) minorities out of Myanmar, and refugees from Bhutan into Nepal. Instability also rages in parts of sub-Saharan [Africa](#), where protracted conflicts in Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Congo, South Sudan, and Yemen displace a quarter of the worldwide refugee flow. In [Latin America](#), gang violence, the drug war, and autocratic regimes in some countries are driving migration northward.

If the current administration in the United States is a bellwether, much of the discussion around migrants and refugees does not suggest a mood favoring integration. Despite a history defined by migration from every continent, the United States at the moment seems more preoccupied with other concerns. Complex issues dominate, like setting limits for refugee admissions; crafting arguments to ban citizens from certain countries or religious groups; arguing

over how migration will be stopped with walls; defending assumptions about immigrants' criminality; and staking out domestic positions championing or vilifying migration in an increasingly polarized country.

Only 23 percent of refugee children will manage to enter secondary education versus the global average of 84 percent of children of nonrefugee background. In higher education, these numbers are much worse; only **1 percent of refugees** will find their ways into universities or equivalent educational institutions compared with the global average of 36 percent of nonrefugees. With over half of the world's displaced population under the age of 18, their needs will impact not only education systems at primary and secondary levels, but also in the tertiary sector, vocational and career training, and lifelong learning.

Integrating refugees and at-risk migrants is a complex undertaking that requires sustained dedication over many years from receiving institutions. For refugee students and scholars, the hurdles are also vast and include working through psychological traumas (Fazel, Wheeler, and Danesh 2005), completing credential evaluations (Benezet and Zetter 2014), often learning a new language (Loo 2016), affording tuition, learning how to navigate new academic landscapes (Block et al. 2014), and graduating to secure employment. These hurdles impact refugee students unaccustomed to the educational system in a new country of residence and should be important considerations for educators working with this population.

### **WHY CARE ABOUT REFUGEE INTEGRATION INTO HIGHER EDUCATION?**

Research has shown that when refugees acquire new educational opportunities, despite extraordinary odds, they often prove to be resilient and ambitious learners (Mangan and Winter 2017; Morrice 2013). Unlike study abroad students who engage in mobility to broaden their horizons and become more informed citizens—what might be termed “mobility for enlightenment”—migrants generally move to other countries to increase their economic and social opportunities—engaging in “mobility for opportunity”—while refugees leave their countries out of fear of persecution to simply escape—what we must see as nothing less than “mobility for survival” (Streitwieser in press).

In the United States, a robust conversation is not taking place about the challenges of integrating refugees and migrants into higher education. However, the challenges that other countries, such as Germany and Canada, are addressing are problems with which educators in the United States also need to grapple. As the number of new international student enrollments fall—for example in the 2017–18 academic year by as much as 6.6 percent (Baer 2018)—we need to work to integrate the many talented refugees and migrants of university age already here and hungry for tertiary education. As international educators, we serve as positive role models for the entire Academy by being at the forefront of diversifying our higher education system, embracing refugees and migrants, and helping to integrate them into our student bodies.

### **WHAT CAN BE DONE IN THE UNITED STATES AND ABROAD?**

The model of the newly established University Alliance for Refugees and at-Risk Migrants (**UARRM**)\* lays out a helpful roadmap for ways the tertiary education sector can be harnessed for the empowerment and protection of refugees and at-risk migrants. This initiative is led by Rutgers University and works in collaboration with numerous partners. The alliance is pursuing six distinct action areas to facilitate integration into higher education opportunity: (1) creating safe, legal pathways for entry into the United States and other safe third countries; (2) overcoming barriers to higher education access; (3) providing on-campus assistance, protection, and in-community support; (4) advocacy and awareness raising; (5) research and evidence-based policymaking, humanitarian intervention, and public influence; and (6) media, communications, and dialogue. As concerned scholars and practitioners, we have a moral obligation to reach beyond the Academy.

The United States can learn from some recently established initiatives in other countries targeted at helping migrants and refugees who seek higher education opportunity. In Germany, for example, the need to accommodate refugee populations became acute 4 years ago when an exodus of over one million refugees, primarily from the ongoing Syrian Civil War, began fleeing to Western Europe. In response, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research allocated €100

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million to the German Academic Exchange Service to enable universities to establish “[Integra](#)” language and preparatory courses aimed explicitly at helping refugees integrate into higher education. Based on its initial success, the funding was recently [renewed](#). Although undeniably the migration issue has significantly strained German politics, the higher education sector’s response has both demonstrated the power of the education sector to be responsive, and in doing so has yielded positive results.

In another example, the World University Service of Canada has long been helping refugees resettle into higher education through its [Student Refugee Program](#). This initiative is primarily run by students and supported through funds raised on a voluntary basis. It has placed more than 130 students at 80 different campuses around the country. This intersection of the work of governmental agencies and the tertiary sector serves to foster innovation and establish best practices that can potentially be successfully borrowed by one system from another, or adapted from one context to the benefit of another with appropriate modifications.

Some positive initiatives have also grown out of a range of partnerships established in the United States between universities, international satellite campuses, and cross-border exchanges. For example, Bard College in Berlin’s [Program for International Education and Social Change](#) hosts students from Afghanistan, Brazil, Eritrea, Iraq, Palestine, and Syria to bypass travel restrictions and open alternative pathways for students to continue their educations conflict-free. Columbia University’s [Scholarship for Displaced Persons](#) provides Syrian students displaced through the civil war 4 years of full scholarship support to earn a degree in the School of General Studies. The University of California-Davis’s Ford Foundation funded [Article 26 Backpack](#) “blends digital technology, face-to-face counseling, and cloud-based credential assessment” to enable refugees to safely share their documents with universities, evaluators, employers, and agencies seeking to sponsor and provide educational opportunities.

Finally, the 2016 [Vassar Refugee Solidarity initiative](#) of the [Consortium for Forced Migration, Displacement, and Education](#) works to create bridges between communities and vulnerable groups. Through its network of educators, Bennington College, Bard College (and Bard Berlin), Sarah Lawrence College, and Vassar

College have collaborated to teach students about forced migration through a transnational classroom initiative, in which refugees serve as teachers through video chats. These exemplary initiatives represent only a fraction of current activities aimed at helping refugees to integrate into higher education (Streitwieser et al. 2018). Whether they are top-down, large-scale federal initiatives or bottom-up initiatives by single institutions or consortia working together, these initiatives clearly demonstrate not only that there is robust interest in capturing the potential that migrants can bring, but even more importantly attest to a genuine, humanitarian interest in educational institutions serving their local and global communities.

## CONCLUSION

As international educators, we need to acknowledge, incorporate, enable, and encourage the participation of a much larger tent of students. This newer, updated, and more inclusive view must also include students who represent today’s unprecedented numbers of refugees and economic migrants. Higher education opportunities can give refugees and at-risk migrants the tools they need to enhance their existing qualifications. Engaging them in further training enables them to make substantial contributions to their host societies. Looking at these students within the wider tent of participants in international education also means that we need to be cognizant of today’s political, and in some contexts increasingly polarized, environment and how it impacts our roles and responsibilities as international educators and concerned citizens.

Future estimates do not see international migration declining any time soon. By looking at the activities of other countries recognizing the humanitarian needs of refugees and at-risk migrants and actively responding to those challenges, these lessons can also be applied to U.S. higher education institutions. Our higher education sector, and those of us engaged in international education, must think broadly and with humanistic sensitivity about how to counter nationalist, isolationist, and radical tendencies and remain the inclusive sites we need to be for all of our students.

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# Rankings and the Internationalization of Higher Education: What Does it Mean and What Are the Implications for Universities and Students?

BY ELLEN HAZELKORN

**T**his article aims to broaden readers' understanding of rankings, specifically global rankings. College and university rankings are a common topic in the U.S. education media; university leaders commonly refer to them, and students use them to judge the "quality" of a university. Recently, six U.S. senators wrote to *U.S. News and World Report* (USNWR) expressing concern at the way rankings "reward certain prestigious private colleges and universities year after year" and disregard the advantages of other ones (Anderson 2018).

Today, higher education is an international endeavour, but the world in which it operates has become extremely complex. Globalization alongside economic, demographic, technological, and climate changes are bringing about significant transformations to our societies. Higher education has played a critical role in these processes and will continue to contribute to the future. Rankings increasingly frame the conversation about the role of universities and the geopolitical positioning of nations. These developments are changing the world of international higher education.

## WHAT ARE UNIVERSITY RANKINGS AND WHY HAVE THEY BECOME SO PROMINENT AND INFLUENTIAL?

University rankings have been around for over 100 years (Hazelkorn 2015). From a U.S. perspective, the rankings of most consequence are those produced by *USNWR*, which began publishing information about undergraduate education in the 1980s. Since 1988, it has been publishing rankings annually. It currently ranks almost 1,800 colleges and universities. In 2014, it launched *Best Global University Rankings*. In so doing, it joined a long list of other global rankings.

Global rankings were first created in 2003. The Shanghai Jiao Tong *Academic Ranking of World Universities* (ARWU) was originally developed as a means to determine the criteria for world-class universities, in response to Chinese governmental policy (Usher 2017). It became influential almost overnight.

There are almost 20 global rankings today. In addition to ARWU, the other most frequently referenced and influential rankings are the *Times Higher Education World University Rankings* (*THE*) and *QS World University Rankings* (*QS*).

Global rankings are a response to major transformations in the higher education landscape around the world over recent decades. These changes include expanding participation rates, the link between academic achievement and personal success, increasing mobility, and rising competition between nations and universities. Growing importance has also been attached to ensuring the quality and standards of educational delivery, student learning, and graduate outcomes. In the United States, accreditation based on peer review has traditionally been one of the mechanisms to review institutional quality; elsewhere, quality assurance systems have followed similar

methodologies. But these systems are difficult to use for international comparison.

Rankings have become a signpost of quality in this increasingly competitive world. Being able to measure, compare, and boast about the quality, status, and reputation of colleges and universities has become important for universities and also for nations. Rankings have become an important indicator for mobile capital and talent—especially international students and faculty. Having highly ranked universities has become a significant strategy and policy objective for governments and some U.S. states (Salmi 2017). To help this effort, some governments have restricted educational partnerships, student mobility, and research collaborations to highly ranked universities.

Universities also use rankings. As global actors, universities leverage rankings to maximize their comparative and competitive advantages during recruitment drives, in presidential speeches, and on websites. Being highly ranked attracts high-achieving students and faculty, fosters investment and philanthropy, and encourages positive political support and funding, as described above. Students and faculty also benefit from being associated with prestigious universities, which helps boost their own prestige in the labor market. This helps explain why some universities resort to misrepresenting their data or their ranking position (Busby 2018; Jaschik 2018).

### **DO RANKINGS TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY?**

Rankings are seemingly simple tools used to compare university performance. They give the impression of providing a valid comparison of universities across multiple countries by drawing on a range of indicators and methodologies that give the appearance of “scientific objectivity.” However, there is no internationally objective set of indicators to measure education quality and no agreed set of data or data definitions. Furthermore, international comparisons are inherently problematic because the circumstances in each country and institution vary. Thus, concerns are regularly raised about (1) the choice of indicators and the weightings assigned to them and (2) whether the indicators provide a meaningful measure of quality or are simply indicators of convenience.

Despite having a common nomenclature, rankings are troublesome for students, faculty, and parents choosing between institutions. The choice of indicators and the weightings assigned vary. For example, both *THE* and *QS* include an indicator for staff-faculty ratio; it represents 20 percent of the *QS* score and only 4.5 percent for *THE*. Moreover, an institution may have what is believed to be a good ratio but many of the top professors may never teach, lecturers and professors may be subpar teachers or have little to no interest in their students, and students may be disengaged (Kuh 2003). *THE* also includes a survey of teaching but it is unclear on what basis anyone can evaluate someone else’s teaching without being in their classroom.

The proportion of international students and faculty is often used as a measure to reflect global reputation and ability to attract students and faculty from around the world. However, there may be no relationship between this information and the quality of the undergraduate learning experience.

Instead, global rankings focus disproportionately on reputation, research, and research-related factors (e.g., PhD awards, research income, citations, academic papers, faculty and alumni medals and awards). Older research-intensive universities tend to be the best known internationally and are therefore the most recognizable in reputational surveys. This situation creates difficulties for younger, more specialized, or smaller institutions, as well as institutions in smaller towns and cities and in less wealthy countries.

These handicaps present problems for users. But it is highly questionable whether rankings can provide any meaningful measure of teaching or student learning despite claims to the contrary (Altbach and Hazelkorn 2018; Baty 2018). Indeed, most movement within rankings occurs because of small methodological changes or cleaner data—because in reality, universities do not change significantly from year-to-year (Altbach and Hazelkorn 2017). Finally, university rankings measure only a very small subset of the total 18,000 universities worldwide (IAU 2018).

### **WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN FOR STUDENT CHOICE AND INTERNATIONALIZATION?**

Contemporary rankings were originally promoted as a consumer product that could provide students with sufficient information to make informed choices. As

people with stakes in the benefits a university qualification can provide, students were an obvious target audience. Despite slight variances between different studies, the evidence is fairly consistent in showing that a significant proportion of high-achieving undergraduate students, graduate students, and international students use rankings to help inform choice. While studies have found no significant gender differences, science and engineering students are more likely to be influenced by rankings than humanities and social science students.

Institutional and programmatic status and prestige are especially important factors as students balance rising costs against benefits (Hazelkorn 2015). According to the *International Student Barometer*, which collects information from over 100,000 students, over 80 percent of undergraduate and postgraduate students use rankings to inform their decisions of which college or university to attend (Hazelkorn 2015; ICEF Monitor 2018). Institutional rank transmits social and cultural capital, which resonates with families, friends, and potential employers.

This evidence is good news for high-ranking universities (usually within the top 100 globally) that are well-resourced and can target large sums of money toward further improvements in rankings or marketing. Almost everywhere, one of the first questions asked is about a university's rank. However, it poses difficulties for 99 percent of the world's universities—and many students. This situation highlights a major contradiction. Students are choosing universities or governments are making policy decisions based upon rankings, despite the fact that they may not provide meaningful measures of quality.

So, what can be done? Universities should resist using rankings to promote their institution or provide faulty information with the intention of improving their ranked position. Instead, they should focus on improving the quality of the learning environment and the student experience for all students. And they should engage in information campaigns that broaden students' knowledge of the advantages of their institution as well public and political understandings of the shortcomings of rankings.

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# Commercialization of Internationalization: Context, Trends, Limits, and Dangers

BY JOHN K. HUDZIK

Inadequate public funding forces higher education to diversify its revenue streams. Many institutional leaders see revenue potential in international programs (e.g., self-funded or surplus-generating mobility, prioritizing cross-border research and development projects based on revenue potential, and recruiting high-fee-paying international students).

Attractive but high-cost institutions in popular locations, such as the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and a few others, will be challenged by changing global demographics and developing global higher education capacity. The global competition for students, scholars, and cutting-edge knowledge will intensify based on competitive costs and quality, and by the many new suppliers across the globe who meet these criteria.

Further, overemphasizing the money motivation can easily come at the expense of advancing core higher education values (access, quality, intellectual outcomes). Addressing the challenge is difficult, but not impossible.

## PUBLIC FUNDING AND COMMERCIALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

To commercialize something is to see it having economic value to be traded or bought and sold (Appaddurai 2005). The twentieth century higher education “social compact” (Naidoo and Jamieson 2005) saw government and society providing higher education with sufficient public funds to insulate it from having to sell services for political, corporate, or revenue-generating purposes. Companion protections included knowledge for its own sake rather than commercial value, freedom to explore and express viewpoints, liberal learning, and access based on ability.

Higher education students and families increasingly must use private sources of funding, mainly household funds, to access higher education and increasingly weigh enrollment choices based on personal costs, benefits, and affordability. On average, public funding

now accounts for only 66 percent of tertiary expenditures among OECD countries (OECD 2018); globally, one-third of higher education students attend private institutions (Bothwell 2018).

Private funding is trending upward in most countries (IHEP 2007), including in mid-economy countries, such as South Africa. Private institutions and private funding dominate in many countries, such as Brazil, Indonesia, Korea, and the Philippines. Private funding covers 70 percent or more of costs in Chile, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States, and over 50 percent in many other OECD countries. In the United States, many public graduate research institutions receive 25 percent or less of their operating budgets from public appropriations. Two factors are heavily responsible for this trend: one demographic and one ideological.

## The Demographics Factors

Inadequate public investment in higher education is partly caused by the inability of public funds to meet massively growing demand for enrollment in higher education (labeled “massification”), as well as above-inflation higher education cost growth.

From 1992 to 2012, the global share of the college-aged population in tertiary enrollment increased from 14 percent to 32 percent. Marginson (2016) compares 1970 to 2013, noting that while global population grew 193 percent and global GDP 363 percent, global higher education enrollment rose 612 percent. The number of countries exceeding 50 percent participation grew from five to 54. Public funding cannot keep up with burgeoning demand. The future is more problematic with demand expected to exceed 400 million places by 2030 (more than doubling from a decade ago) with most growth outside North America, Europe, and Australia. Africa will experience the largest demand growth (UNESCO 2015). The low- and middle-income countries now have the greatest share of worldwide higher education enrollment, while populations in Europe and Japan, for example, will continue aging and declining.

A growing middle class fuels enrollment massification. There are estimates of global middle-class growth of as much as 250 percent, perhaps reaching 4.5 billion people by 2030, nearly 60 percent in Asia (Ernst and Young 2013; also see, Kharas 2011). It is in the developing economies of Asia, Africa, and Latin America where the future global profile of higher education will be defined.

Country and regional supply-demand imbalances fuel mobility (inbound if excess capacity, outbound if insufficient capacity). Where undersupply and an expanding middle class combine, attractive Western institutions fill part of the gap; in a seller’s market, they can raise prices for international students. In the United States, several large research institutions charge international students a premium of \$500 to \$1,000 per year on top of out-of-state tuition because the market will bear it. Out-of-state tuition rates now average \$26,000 per year in public U.S. four-year institutions and \$30,000 to \$35,000 per year at state flagship public institutions (College Board 2018).

## The Neoliberalism Factor

The neoliberal notion that higher education is more private gain than public benefit helps “justify” shifting costs to students. However, private gain is more easily quantified (e.g., wages) than public benefits (e.g., social capital benefits). While global marketing and recruitment of international students is a means to improve diversity of the local learning environment, it is a “nice coincidence” that international students bring in big money (5,000 students can generate \$100 to \$175 million annually in tuition fees alone, depending on out-of-state tuition rates).

## CONSEQUENCES FOR INTERNATIONALIZATION FROM COMMERCIALIZATION, DEMOGRAPHIC, AND GLOBAL CAPACITY CHANGES

1. With commercialization, access and priorities are based on ability to generate revenue. Out-of-state and international students become a priority. Mobility must be self-financing or cost-plus. Research and contracts at home or abroad that can generate a revenue stream to support cost or create surplus are a priority. In “enterprise education” (Marginson and Considine 2000) priority setting is a business decision.

But admission based on affluence and not just ability is a powerful ally to generational elitism; loans and scholarships help, but typically deal with only a small part of the equity-in-access challenge. Research and contract priorities that give preference to revenue potential are less likely to help the socially excluded “social-problem-owners” (Benneworth 2017), particularly in developing world regions.

Rising costs (tuition and fees) increase pressures to “prove” value or benefit. This is reflected in the growing influence of accreditation criteria, quality assurance and ranking schemes, and outcome assessment models, such as OECD’s Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes Feasibility Test. This OECD study focuses on the feasibility of assessing “what students in higher education know and can do upon graduation....at the global level and valid across diverse cultures, languages and different types of institutions” (OECD 2014).

2. Private-paying consumers will more closely examine return on investment across systems, regions, and institutions. They will vote with their feet, and many with international plane tickets. Mobility trade routes are proliferating with expanding global capacity; the traditionally favored destinations will lose market shares. Regional mobility (e.g., within Asia) and technology-assisted learning will be attractive cost-saving options (Dennis 2018).
  3. Universities have a natural affinity to seek international perspectives in teaching and research because the unfettered and “neutral search for knowledge” (Barnett 2013) requires a borderless search for ideas. This is the “seed gene” for higher education internationalization, but it is weakened when revenue purposes dominate. Revenue motivations “change the meaning of higher education dedicated primarily to knowledge creation and dissemination [into a] commodity and a credential” (Brandenburg et al. 2013). Motivations for higher education (and internationalization) may shift from liberal learning goals and knowledge creation to jobs, career development, and income potential. Actually, it can be both sets.
  4. High-cost but otherwise attractive higher education systems (e.g., those of Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) will become less competitive if they remain high-cost when quality and cost-effective capacity expands and flattens globally.
- revenue generation might dominate priorities for internationalization.
  2. Dialogue should also focus on the diverse motivations, interests, and measures of accountability for internationalization to connect to core values.
  3. Internationalists need to apply their expertise to analyze costs of internationalization and champion efficiencies and innovations that will improve cost effectiveness of international programs and activities.
  4. Policy innovations that reduce net costs, such as expanded scholarship programs or innovative “give back,” are important. For example, Minnesota State University-Mankato offers to cover the gap between in-state and out-of-state tuition for international students if they participate in community and institutional intercultural activities. Symmetric and asymmetric exchanges and partnerships can benefit both sides without money dominating (e.g., exchanges involving undergraduate study abroad opportunities in one direction and access to graduate degrees in the other).
  5. Proactively improving services to international students and scholars (e.g., counseling services, affordable and safe housing resources, intercultural support events, and special academic advising support) helps rebalance views about costs and benefits.

## REBALANCING CORE VALUES WITH FUNDING REALITIES

While most leaders understand the challenges of commercialization, they can benefit from ongoing reminders and practical ideas to better balance revenue and core values behind internationalization. Options might include general-fund subsidies to offset particular cost challenges for international populations and programs with objectives of global civic engagement and global social capital. Yet, there is not much chance of this if leadership is merely paying lip service to internationalization and is insular and provincial. Instead, the following actions might be taken:

1. There is need in many institutions for genuine dialogue involving internationalists, institutional leadership, and the campus community on how

In sum, while the forces propelling the commercialization of higher education and internationalization seem fixed, highlighting their effects and seeking to balance commercialization with core values should be an obligation of higher education and international educators. Further, suborning the wider set of values and motivations behind internationalization to monetary outcomes is ultimately a self-defeating strategy in a globally competitive marketplace.

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