

Introduction

When *Comprehensive Internationalization: From Concept to Action* was published in 2011 by NAFSA: Association of International Educators, it challenged higher education (HE) to strategically internationalize its three core missions: (1) teaching/learning; (2) research/scholarship; and (3) community engagement/service (Hudzik 2011). While the notion of comprehensive internationalization (CI) was not new in 2011, advocating its integration with *all* higher education missions and mainstreaming access for students, faculty, and staff in a systematic and strategic way challenged narrower visions of higher education internationalization.

CI is a strategic approach to internationalization because it aims to directly connect to core institutional missions and priorities and, therefore, core values and visions. As with strategy in general, CI is a long-term commitment to internationalizing the higher education institution. It requires an ongoing and evolving connection to a constantly changing global environment and to the changing nature of the higher education institution. CI intentionally affects the institution as a whole by integrating international content and perspective throughout. In these ways, “comprehensive” is “strategic.”

While CI is no longer a novel idea and is being discussed in every world region, it remains a work in progress. In part, this is because CI is an institutional change agent in diverse ways. Examples include: refining admissions criteria and procedures originally developed for domestic markets to now accommodate applicants from systems abroad; revising core and major curricula to incorporate international and global dimensions; expanding promotion and compensation criteria to recognize the value of international activity; revising student support services to accommodate numerous cultural backgrounds and learning styles; diversifying residence

hall cuisine; accommodating diverse religious practices; altering the institutional culture and image from a domestic to a global perspective; and challenging limited approaches to internationalization to incorporate a more diverse set of expectations, motivations, and methods for achieving internationalization across all institutional missions and programs, including mobility, curricula, languages, and cross-border partnerships and projects.

In the 2011 NAFSA publication, and since, CI has been described as a journey without end because of the shifting and evolving landscape of international engagement and learning. A comprehensive and strategic approach to internationalization will change higher education institutions by challenging many of the established practices and priorities that are inadequate for a twenty-first century global environment and for the global higher education marketplace (see, for example, Vaira 2004; Hunter 2012; Hudzik and McCarthy 2012).

Limited Versus Comprehensive Approaches to Internationalization

What distinguishes comprehensive internationalization from many of the earlier, more limited approaches to internationalization? A limited view of higher education internationalization dominated from post-World War II through much of the 1990s. It focused more on student mobility (education abroad and incoming international students and scholars), and less on systematically internationalizing on-campus curricula and learning for all. Mobility was driven intellectually by goals of improving cross-cultural understanding, intercultural sensitivity, skill development, and language learning. Attention was focused on the liberal arts and not generally inclusive of the

professional disciplines. Furthermore, immersion study experiences abroad that were a semester or year in length or degree seeking were strongly preferred during that period.

While the internationalization of scholarship has roots tracing back nearly 1,000 years or more (Kolasa 1962; Neave 1992; Scott 1998; de Wit and Merckx 2012; Hudzik 2011, 2015), internationalization in the latter half of the twentieth century focused heavily on the teaching/learning mission of higher education and much less so on the scholarship and outreach missions. In the postwar period, several institutions developed majors or minors in regional/area studies, international relations, development studies, and others, but these programs generally benefited the few students enrolled in them and not systematically the wider student body. A few institutions engaged in international development work that involved faculty and graduate students in experiences abroad.

Entering the twenty-first century, conceptualizations of internationalization began to consider all three core higher education missions, a diversification of motivations, and a view that internationalization was not simply a desirable possibility but an institutional imperative. These wider perspectives set the stage for defining more holistic and strategic approaches to internationalization.

Comprehensive internationalization is a commitment and action to infuse international, global, and comparative content and perspective throughout the teaching, research, and service missions of higher education. It is an integration of such content and perspective into existing core higher education missions, not adding a fourth mission. The purpose is to enrich outcomes in learning, scholarship, and service for a twenty-first century global environment.

Comprehensive internationalization directly challenges limited approaches to internationalization in terms of five major aspirations:

1. Mainstreaming student access to international and global content. Students in all majors need international exposure in order to thrive in a twenty-first century global environment. This means internationalizing curricula at home for all majors and the common general education component, as well as expanding access to experiences abroad. There are examples of all types of higher education institutions taking on such a challenge, as evident among the 80 recipients of the NAFSA Senator Paul Simon Award for Campus Internationalization (2003–2018) (see www.nafsa.org/SimonAward for more information).
2. Integrating and infusing an international perspective into all institutional missions by expanding an internationally aware and engaged faculty in teaching, scholarship, and community engagement roles.
3. Widening the circle of who contributes to internationalization. CI is impossible to achieve if it is the responsibility of the international office alone. CI requires leadership from the top, the middle, and the base of the institution, as well as participation throughout (presidents, provosts, academic deans, department chairs, and influential faculty, staff, and students).
4. Dual-purposing the use of existing resources for internationalization purposes as well. There aren't enough new resources available to almost any institution to fund comprehensive internationalization. Using existing resources for dual purposes diversifies and expands the amount of money, time, and effort available to internationalization. Examples include: internationalizing components of existing courses instead of adding new courses, building on existing institutional strengths for engagement

abroad, and helping faculty internationalize their research and scholarly expertise, both in content and application. Such dual-purpose strategies are discussed at length in the NAFSA publication *Developing Sustainable Resources for Internationalization* (Hudzik and Pynes 2014).

5. Building synergies across mission areas, a necessity for institutions in a twenty-first century environment of funding challenges. For example, partnerships abroad can simultaneously support curricular, research, and community problem-solving objectives. A faculty research project abroad can provide students with field learning opportunities as well as access to new techniques that can be transferred from abroad to solve problems at home.

These five aspirations, taken as a whole, are in stark contrast to the more limited forms of higher education internationalization. A further implication is that CI is a journey without end because institutions change, and so does the global environment. There is “continuous progress” toward an ideal, even if it is never quite reached. CI is not achieved by declaring, “This is the year for internationalization of our institution.” It is a goal approached through long-term and steady commitment.

Why Engage Internationally?

Many scholars have written about the rationales behind higher education internationalization (for example, see de Wit 1998; Hénard, Diamond, and Roseveare 2012; Knight 2012; Ergon-Polak and Hudson 2014; Hudzik 2015). Rationales can be defined through the expectations of the stakeholders (discussed later), but also in terms of the core missions and accountabilities of higher education generally.

- **Core mission rationale.** The “business” of higher education is ideas and innovation, which includes the creation of knowledge

through research, the transmission of knowledge to learners, and the translation of knowledge into action for society’s benefit. With globalization, the business of HE is increasingly conducted across borders in a global marketplace of ideas and talent.

- **Customer service rationale.** Life and work in a global environment has increasingly become an expectation for everyone, whether living and working abroad or not.
- **Social responsibilities rationale.** The social responsibilities of higher education include expanding global dimensions. Increasingly, local prosperity is tied to global coprosperities in terms of, for example, global relationships, peace and justice, enhanced positions in the global economy, and improvements in cross-cultural understanding.

These rationales and responsibilities drive higher education to engage internationalization.