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Journal of Studies in International Education 2007 11: 290

DOI: 10.1177/1028315307303542

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The Internationalization of Higher Education: Motivations and Realities

Philip G. Altbach
Jane Knight

Globalization and internationalization are related but not the same thing. Globalization is the context of economic and academic trends that are part of the reality of the 21st century. Internationalization includes the policies and practices undertaken by academic systems and institutions—and even individuals—to cope with the global academic environment. The motivations for internationalization include commercial advantage, knowledge and language acquisition, enhancing the curriculum with international content, and many others. Specific initiatives such as branch campuses, cross-border collaborative arrangements, programs for international students, establishing English-medium programs and degrees, and others have been put into place as part of internationalization. Efforts to monitor international initiatives and ensure quality are integral to the international higher education environment.

Keywords: *cross-border higher education; internationalization; globalization of higher education; international student flows*

The international activities of universities dramatically expanded in volume, scope, and complexity during the past two decades. These activities range from traditional study-abroad programs, allowing students to learn about other cultures, to providing access to higher education in countries where local institutions cannot meet the demand. Other activities stress upgrading the international perspectives and skills of students, enhancing foreign language programs, and providing cross-cultural understanding.

Internationalization is often confused with globalization (Altbach, 2004). We define globalization as the economic, political, and societal forces pushing 21st century higher education toward greater international involvement. Global capital has, for the first time, heavily invested in knowledge industries worldwide, including higher education and advanced training. This investment reflects the emergence of the “knowledge society,” the rise of the service sector, and the dependence of many societies on knowledge products and highly educated personnel for economic growth.¹ These elements of globalization underlie our analysis.

Journal of Studies in International Education, Vol. 11 No. 3/4, Fall/Winter 2007 290-305

DOI: 10.1177/1028315307303542

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The results of globalization include the integration of research, the use of English as the lingua franca for scientific communication, the growing international labor market for scholars and scientists, the growth of communications firms and of multinational and technology publishing, and the use of information technology (IT). IT facilitates communication; permits efficient storage, selection, and dissemination of knowledge; and allows providers to offer academic programs through e-learning.

The essay delineates academic programs, institutions, innovations, and practices created to cope with globalization and to reap its benefits. Globalization may be unalterable, but internationalization involves many choices. Globalization tends to concentrate wealth, knowledge, and power in those already possessing these elements. International academic mobility similarly favors well-developed education systems and institutions, thereby compounding existing inequalities. Initiatives and programs, coming largely from the north, are focused on the south. Northern institutions and corporations own most knowledge, knowledge products, and IT infrastructure, though south-to-south activities are increasing, especially in Asia and Africa. Internationalization is a two-way street—students move largely from south to north, for example—and serves important needs in the developing world. But the north largely controls the process. We focus on the cross-border movement of students and of higher education programs and institutions—big business for universities and other providers—the growing international market for academic and scientific personnel, curricular internationalization, and the commercialization of international higher education, especially the growing influence of the for-profit higher education sector.² But first, some context.

THE FREE-TRADE CONTEXT

The contemporary emphasis on free trade stimulates international academic mobility. Current thinking sees international higher education as a commodity to be freely traded and sees higher education as a private good, not a public responsibility. Commercial forces therefore have a legitimate or even a dominant place in higher education, which comes under the domain of the market (Kirp, 2003; also see Altbach, 2002). The World Trade Organization (WTO) will provide a regulatory framework to encourage international trade in education and service-related industries as part of negotiating the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). GATS remains under negotiation, and individual countries may agree to some or all of its provisions. But GATS will, when WTO member countries implement the agreement, focus on facilitating academic mobility via

- *Cross-border supply.* This mode may include distance education (e-learning) and franchising courses or degrees. It does not necessarily require the physical movement of the consumer or provider.

- *Consumption abroad.* The consumer moves to the country of the provider. This mode includes traditional student mobility.
- *Commercial presence.* The service provider establishes facilities in another country including branch campuses and joint ventures with local institutions.
- *Presence of natural persons.* This mode includes persons, including professors and researchers, who temporarily travel to another country to provide educational services (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2004, p. 35; also see National Education Association, 2004).

INTERNATIONALIZATION: MOTIVATIONS AND SOURCES

Understanding the most important stimuli for academic internationalization is a prerequisite for our analysis.

Profits

Earning money is a key motive for all internationalization projects in the for-profit sector and for some traditional nonprofit universities with financial problems. For-profit higher education providers—such as Laureate (formerly Sylvan Learning Systems) and the Apollo Group (the parent company of the University of Phoenix, now the largest private university in the United States)—entered the international market by establishing new institutions, purchasing existing institutions, and partnering with firms or educational institutions in other countries. Many countries also host new private universities with overseas links, some in the for-profit sector. Many universities use American, British, German, or other foreign curricula; many teach in English, and some are accredited in other countries.

Traditional nonprofit universities also entered the international market. Their main motivations for internationalization, notes a recent survey (Knight, 2006), are not financial. Instead, they wish to enhance research and knowledge capacity and to increase cultural understanding. Many universities are located in countries where governments cut public funding and encouraged international ventures—Australia and the United Kingdom, for example. Most initiatives—including branch campuses, franchised degree programs, and partnerships with local institutions—are focused on developing and middle-income countries.

Many countries recruit international students to earn profits by charging high fees—including Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States. International graduate students also provide research and teaching services for modest compensation. International students also spend significant amounts of money in the host countries—an estimated \$12 billion to the U.S. economy, for example (Davis, 2003).

It is impossible to quantify the financial scope of academic internationalization. But the sums are large because knowledge industries—especially higher education—often form a substantial part of the total economy. It is also difficult to calculate the impact of international activities on engaged academic institutions and firms, but again the amount is large and rapidly growing.

Access Provision and Demand Absorption

The proportion of young people demanding and obtaining access worldwide expanded dramatically with the advent of mass higher education. Demand is rapidly increasing, even in countries still enrolling less than 20% of the age group, such as India, China, and much of Africa. Many international higher education services—focused on profits—provide access to students in countries lacking the domestic capacity to meet the demand. Access can take many forms: branch campuses, franchised foreign academic programs or degrees, or independent institutions based on foreign academic models.

Traditional Internationalization

Many universities have participated in international activities for decades, some for a century or more. Prestigious, selective U.S. colleges use international programs to provide international and cross-cultural perspectives for their students and to enhance their curricula. Campus-based internationalization initiatives include study-abroad experiences, curriculum enrichment via international studies majors or area studies, strengthened foreign-language instruction, and sponsorship of foreign students to study on campus (Siaya & Hayward, 2003). Traditional internationalization is rarely a profit-making activity, though it may enhance the competitiveness, prestige, and strategic alliances of the college.

European Internationalism

EU authorities actively pursued academic internationalization for more than two decades, as part of the move to economic and political integration. At first, the EU promoted and lavishly funded programs such as ERASMUS that provided large numbers of EU university students with academic experiences outside their home country (Huisman & van der Wende, 2005). The scope of European regional integration expanded, and now the Bologna process harmonizes entire academic systems to ensure compatible degree structures, transferable credits, and equal academic qualifications throughout the EU. European internationalization mainly focuses on the countries of the EU—students are still encouraged to study abroad within the EU—though several non-EU member states have joined the Bologna process.

The EU is also expanding Europe's international programs, especially in Latin America and the Asia-Pacific regions. Current initiatives include regional and institutional linkages and scholarship programs.

Developing-Country Internationalization

Developing countries host a significant number of international students. Developing countries seek to attract foreign students to their universities to improve the quality and cultural composition of the student body, gain prestige, and earn income. India and the Philippines, for example, are significant host countries for students from other developing countries. India hosts more than 8,000 students from abroad, 95% from developing countries (Bhalla, 2005). China, Malaysia, and India are developing strategies to attract students and to export educational programs and institutions.

Individual Internationalization

Individuals make many key decisions concerning destinations and fields of study. Students, though constrained by immigration regulations, decide whether they will return home following their academic work or stay at home and enroll in the programs offered by foreign education providers. Most of the world's more than 2 million international students are self-funded, that is, they and their families pay for their own academic work. Students are therefore the largest source of funds for international education—not governments, academic institutions, or philanthropies.

CROSS-BORDER HIGHER EDUCATION: GROWTH AREAS

International higher education initiatives exist in almost every country. But the developed countries—especially the large English-speaking nations and, to a lesser extent, the larger EU countries—provide most services. By any measure—such as flows of international students, franchisers of academic programs to foreign providers, international accreditors or quality guarantors, or controlling partners in “twinning” arrangements—these countries reap the main financial benefits and control most programs.

The “buying” countries are Asian and Latin American middle-income countries and, to a lesser extent, the poorer nations of the developing world that lack capacity to meet growing demand. The largest markets are therefore for “demand-absorbing” programs that provide access to students who could not otherwise attend a postsecondary institution. Government policies favoring particular ethnic groups over others may also influence demand in a few cases, such as Malaysia. The less prestigious end of the higher education system offers most demand-absorbing programs. Foreign

providers—almost always aiming to earn a profit—may link up with local entrepreneurs or public or private academic institutions or may establish their own branch campuses.

Top European and American institutions have opened branch campuses at the invitations of Singapore and Qatar, among other countries, and the University of Chicago established a business school in Spain.³ Their degree programs may include study at the home campus or entirely offshore studies. The market for international higher education initiatives thus ranges from students who cannot obtain access at home and seek almost any means to study to carefully targeted elite students in small, high-quality programs.

Another part of the market is undergraduate students seeking an overseas academic or cultural experience. Although predominantly an American phenomenon—175,000 U.S. students go to other countries—other industrialized countries also send significant numbers of students abroad, often via EU programs.

Another widespread phenomenon in industrialized nations—providing effective cross-cultural educational preparation for university students, such as internationalizing the curriculum—accompanies the physical movement of students, programs, providers, and academic staff across borders.

THE LANDSCAPE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

The proportion of the increased demand for international education that results in student mobility remains unknown, but the movement of programs and education providers across national borders will significantly grow.

The past 5 years have witnessed the emergence of new types of providers, forms of delivery, and collaborative partnerships. Along with traditional private and public higher education institutions, “new providers” include commercial IT and media companies, corporate universities, professional associations, and international conglomerates. Providers use face-to-face and virtual modes to deliver education to students in their home countries through twinning, franchising, articulation, validation, and joint or double degree arrangements. Some providers also seek to establish a physical presence through branch campuses, independent institutions, teaching and testing centers, and acquisitions or mergers with local higher education institutions.

Here are examples of developments in program and provider mobility announced or established in the past 2 years in all regions of the world (Observatory on Borderless Higher Education [OBHE], 2004a). Conventional higher education institutions still predominate but face formidable increases in volume, innovation, and impact from commercial providers and from corporate universities.

Middle East

The Middle East is witnessing rapid developments. Poland will establish a new private medical institute in Israel where students will study for 3 years before moving

to the Medical University in Gdansk for 3 more years of clinical study. Students will then return to Israel for an internship. Saudi Arabia is establishing new private universities that involve foreign institutions and investors. For instance, the University of Arizona and UNESCO are helping to establish the Prince Sultan Private University. The Stevens Institute of Technology is cooperating in founding the Dar-Al-Faisal University, with financial investment from the Boeing Company and the French defense firm Thales. Harvard is planning to set up a branch campus in the United Arab Emirates.

In Bahrain, the University of Hanover (Germany) is planning an affiliation with a new Euro University. Egypt is already home to the American University, established more than 80 years ago. But the German University in Cairo and the L'Université Française d'Égypte have been established in the past 3 years, and a new British University is under development. Types of local and foreign partnerships slightly differ, thereby illustrating the creativity and diversity of new collaborations. The American University in Egypt, for example, is franchised to offer the distance MBA program of Heriot-Watt University from the United Kingdom.

Asia Pacific

Vietnam is an emerging center of activity. RMIT from Australia owns 100% of a branch campus, whereas Troy State University from the United States established a foreign branch, the International College of IT and Management. The number of active partnerships between local and foreign institutions is steadily expanding. For instance, the University of Hue in Vietnam recently developed a franchised and joint-degree bachelor's program in tourism with the University of Hawaii. Hanoi University of Technology is currently offering master's and bachelor's degrees with higher education institutions from Belgium (1), France (8), Germany (1), Singapore (2), and the United States (1). The Vietnamese government recently announced development of the International University in Vietnam—another initiative to increase national capacity for higher education. Half the university teaching staff will be Vietnamese, and the other half will be from foreign universities. Foreign institutional involvement will build on and expand from the current links of Ho Chi Minh City National University.

Australia, China, Egypt, and the United States are increasing cross-border education to Thailand. The Egyptian Al-Azhar University and Jinan University from China plan to open a branch campus, whereas Swinburne University of Technology (Australia) has operated a branch campus since 1998, though it is changing its focus to industry training only. Troy State University has a teaching site in Bangkok for its MBA program; students can transfer to the United States depending on funds and visa requirements. The Thai-German Graduate School of Engineering, 13 Australian universities, and nine U.K. universities also operate in Thailand.

The University of New South Wales (Australia) will establish the first 100% foreign-owned higher education institution in Singapore after receiving government approval. The university plans to offer undergraduate and graduate programs and to develop a strong research capacity. Other respected foreign institutions offer education and training programs in Singapore through joint ventures, exchanges, and branch campuses, including the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business, Shanghai Jiaotong University, Stanford University, the German Technische Universität München, and the Technische Universiteit Eindhoven (the Netherlands).

Singapore institutions, in turn, are noteworthy exporters. The National University of Singapore and Fudan University developed a joint MBA, aimed at Chinese and Singapore students. The National University is also embarking on a new graduate school initiative for Chinese students to be located in Suzhou Graduate Town, part of the Suzhou Industrial Park. Raffles LaSalle Limited is a publicly traded Singapore company that provides programs in fashion and design in many Asian countries. It is described as

a remarkable instance of international partnership, combining a Singapore firm with branches in Australia, China, Malaysia and Thailand, accreditation from an Australian state and a Canadian province, degrees from an Australian and a UK university, and a number of in-county university and college partners. (OBHE, 2004b)

India's higher education sector imports and exports programs and services at an unprecedented pace. One initiative is the partnership between the Caparo Group—a U.K. firm with interests in steel, engineering, and hotels—and Carnegie Mellon University (United States) to set up a new campus in India.

Africa

Africa, with the partial exception of South Africa, shows the fewest international and cross-border initiatives. The private Universiteit Nienrode (Netherlands Business School) recently established a branch campus in Nigeria in partnership with the African Leadership Forum, a nonprofit organization founded in 1988—one of the first cross-border initiatives on the continent outside of South Africa. Kenya is home to two private nonprofit universities. Pakistan's Aga Khan University opened a branch university campus in Kenya in 2002 that specializes in nursing education, and Alliant International University (United States) provides education in social sciences and the humanities.

The number of foreign programs offered in South Africa has decreased because of strict new government regulations and accreditation processes. Only a few foreign institutions have branch campuses, including Bond and Monash from Australia, De Montfort (United Kingdom), and the Netherlands Business School. Three foreign institutions are leaving because of accreditation issues related to a recent review of all MBA programs. Monash will remain (it does not offer an MBA program), as will the British-based Henley Management College, primarily a distance provider.

Mauritius is trying to establish itself as a “cyber island” by attracting foreign IT firms from the West and India. A “knowledge center”—described as a world-class integrated education and training complex—is a key aspect of its plans. More than 50 foreign universities and professional bodies offer local programs, mostly at the diploma or certificate level and in specialized fields. Attracting foreign education providers to support the education and training needs of a new “cyber island” may stem the brain drain or even stimulate brain gain, but local education institutions may pay a price.

Europe

Russia’s major economic reforms have important implications for the higher education sector. Many higher education institutions—for example, the Moscow International Slavonic Institute and the Moscow State University of Industry—operate programs abroad, such as in Bulgaria. But Russia is also the site of joint and double degree programs, twinning, and franchise arrangements. The Higher School of Economics has a double degree program with the London School of Economics. The Stockholm School of Economics operates in St. Petersburg, and the University of Oslo’s Centre for Medical Studies is located in Moscow. The British Open University has 80 business-training centers across the country. The University of Southern Queensland is partnering with Far Eastern National University in Vladivostok for program delivery. The Pune-based International Institute of Information Technology (India) plans to offer its master’s and PhD courses through the newly established Russian-Indian Centre for Advanced Computer Research in Moscow.

The University of Indianapolis has been active in Greece for more than a decade. Beginning with an articulation arrangement whereby students would start their studies in Athens and complete the program in the United States, the model evolved into a campus in Greece called the University of Indianapolis, Athens.

Laureate Education (formerly Sylvan), a private company, owns part or all of the Universidad Europa de Madrid in Spain, Les Roches and Glion Hotel School in Switzerland, and the L’ecole Supérieur du Commerce Extérieur de Paris in France. Apollo International offers its courses in the Netherlands, and Raffles La Salle (Singapore) recently signed an agreement with Middlesex University to offer bachelor’s and master’s programs in fashion and design.

North America

U.S. colleges and universities and private companies are undertaking hundreds of initiatives and partnerships to deliver cross-border education courses and programs—probably the most active and innovative nation in worldwide program and provider mobility. George Washington University is seriously considering a South Korean branch because the South Korean government has changed its regulations

to permit foreign providers. Other U.S. universities are partnering with Korean institutions and companies. Syracuse University, in conjunction with Sejong University in Seoul, offers a specially designed MBA program for Korean students. Duke and Purdue Universities also offer MBAs in Korea, and Stanford University delivers online graduate and postgraduate courses, using alumni as local tutors. U.S. higher education institutions sponsor similar cross-border activities in China, India, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, and the Middle East. For instance, the University of Missouri at St. Louis helped to establish the Gulf University of Science and Technology—the first private university in Kuwait—and the Modern College of Business and Science in Oman.

U.S. cross-border activity increasingly involves private and publicly traded companies. The Global Education Index (GEI), developed by the OBHE classifies many large, active, publicly traded companies that provide education programs and services. The United States houses the majority of a scan of more than 50 GEI companies (Garrett, 2004). Better-known companies include Kaplan (owned by the *Washington Post*), Apollo Group, DeVry, Career Education Corporation, and Laureate Education. Kaplan, owner of 57 colleges in the United States, now owns the Dublin Business School—Ireland's largest private undergraduate institution, and likely the first of many purchases of foreign institutions. The Apollo Group owns the University of Phoenix, now the largest American private university, and aggressively seeks to broaden its foreign investments and holdings. Since 1995, Apollo has also owned Western International University (WIU), which runs a branch campus called Modi Apollo International Institute in New Delhi through a partnership with the KK Modi Group, an Indian industrial conglomerate. WIU has an agreement with the Canadian Institute of Business and Technology (CIBT) permitting CIBT to offer WIU programs through its three business schools in Beijing.

Northface Learning Inc.—a company to watch for future international expansion—has established Northface University, an IBM- and Microsoft-backed initiative offering degree programs in IT and business. The University of Northern Virginia, another small private university offering programs in business and IT, recently opened a branch campus in the Czech Republic and created delivery partnerships in China and India.

The Canadian International Management Institute (CIMI) is a private postsecondary institution that represents the recruiting interests of 10 Canadian universities and colleges. CIMI signed a memorandum of understanding with the Chinese Scholarship Council in 2004 to offer a foundation and credit transfer program to students in China wanting Canadian university degrees. Students will be based in China for foundation studies, cultural adjustment, and language training for the first 3 years of this 5-year program. They can continue their studies in Canada or China for the final 2 years if they meet grade requirements.

The Al-Ahram Canadian University in Egypt is the only example of direct Canadian university support for a new foreign university. McMaster University, Ecole Polytechnique de Montreal, and the Université du Quebec in Montreal are cooperating with the Al-Ahram Organization, owner of the Egyptian daily newspaper, to establish this private university.

The Serebra Learning Corporation, a publicly traded Canadian company, offers generic and tailor-made software, plus more than 1,800 courses mainly in IT. Serebra works with the Consortium for Global Education—a group of 45 U.S. Baptist higher education institutions—to provide quality-assured IT training in the developing world. Serebra also played a key role in creating the Pakistan Virtual University.

Latin America

The University of the Incarnate Word, a private institution in San Antonio, Texas, opened a new campus in Mexico in 2003. Endicott College, Alliant Intentional University, and Texas A&M—with a “university center” in Mexico City—are other American institutions with Mexican campuses. In 2000, Laureate Education purchased the Universidad del Valle de Mexico; it plans to open a new branch in Guadalajara. Laureate also owns Universidad Interamericana, a private university with campuses in Costa Rica and Panama, and part of three private universities in Chile. Bologna University, in Italy, is one of the few foreign institutions with a branch campus in Argentina. The Technical Institute of Monterrey, in Mexico, is known for its online education programs, especially the MBA, delivered to many Latin American countries.

These diverse initiatives show how conventional higher education institutions and new commercial providers promote, exchange, link, and predominantly sell higher education across borders. Australia and the United States dominate the list of participating countries, though India and China are increasingly active. But cross-border activities also involve risks. Challenges related to quality assurance and the national and international recognition of providers, programs, credits, and qualifications warrant close attention.

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND RECOGNITION

The first issue is, are the institutions, companies, and networks that deliver cross-border courses or programs registered, licensed, or recognized by the sending and the receiving countries? Many countries—lacking capacity or political will—do not have the regulatory systems to register or evaluate out-of-country providers. Regulatory frameworks for quality assurance or accreditation, even when they exist, usually do not apply to providers outside the national education system. This loophole permits bona fide and rogue foreign providers to avoid compliance with national regulations in many countries and makes monitoring their activities difficult. The registration or

licensing of foreign providers raises numerous questions. Do criteria or conditions depend on whether providers are part of and recognized by a national education system in their home countries? Do different rules apply if the provider is for-profit or nonprofit, private or public, an institution or a company? What rules apply to companies that establish institutions in foreign countries and have no home-based presence? How do regulators track all the partnerships between local and foreign institutions or companies? These challenges loom large in trying to establish appropriate and effective national or regional regulatory systems.

The second issue is, how do regulators ensure the quality of the courses or programs offered by public or private institutions and especially by the new private commercial companies and providers who are usually not part of, or recognized by, nationally based quality-assurance schemes? And how to regulate the quality of the academic experience of students engaged in cross-border education? Historically, national quality-assurance agencies did not assess the quality of imported and exported programs, with notable exceptions. But Hong Kong, Israel, Malaysia, and South Africa, as receivers of cross-border education, have developed systems to register and monitor the quality of foreign provision. The United Kingdom and Australia are sending countries that introduced quality assurance for exported cross-border provision by their recognized higher education institutions.

The third issue is the role of accreditation. Market forces increase the importance of the profile and reputation of providers and their courses. Institutions make major investments in marketing and branding campaigns to earn name recognition and to increase enrolments. Accreditation, part of these campaigns, ensures prospective students of the high standing of their programs.

The accreditation process is becoming internationalized and commercialized. *Bona fide* national and international accreditation agencies now work in many countries. For instance, U.S. national and regional accreditors provide or sell their services in more than 65 countries. Accreditation bodies of the professions such as the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (engineering) from the United States and the European Quality Improvement System (business) from Europe also offer their services abroad.

But new self-appointed networks of institutions and organizations also accredit their members—a positive development when academic quality improves. But some of these networks and organizations may not offer objective assessments and may be more interested in racing for accreditation “stars” than in improving quality. A related, more worrisome development is the growth of nonrecognized, illegitimate accreditation mills that “sell” accreditation without any independent assessment. These mills resemble “degree mills” that sell certificates and degrees with no or minimal course work. Students, employers, and the public need to be warned about these accreditation (and degree) mills, which are often Web addresses outside the jurisdiction of national regulatory systems.

The fourth issue is the need for mechanisms that recognize the academic and professional qualifications gained through domestic or international delivery of education for purposes of employment and further study. Students, employers, and the public must be made aware of the quality and validity of the programs and awards. The key questions are, who awards the qualification, especially in partnerships and network arrangements? Is the provider recognized, and, if so, by what kind of accrediting or licensing body? In what country is that body located? The mechanisms for recognizing qualifications must be national, regional, or international to accommodate the mobility of students and professional labor.

The fifth issue is the need for a review of the policy and regulatory environments. Can existing national-level accreditation and quality-assurance systems address education mobility across countries, cultures, and jurisdictions? Can countries establish and monitor quality systems for incoming and outgoing education programs, given the diversity of providers and delivery methods? Should regional or international frameworks complement and augment national quality-accreditation systems? Is it advisable and feasible to develop mutual recognition systems between and among countries? Would an international code of good practice help to ensure quality?

Social confidence in higher education demands giving priority to defining the roles and responsibilities of all players involved in quality assurance—including individual institutions and providers, national quality-assurance systems, nongovernmental and independent accreditation bodies, professional associations, and regional or international organizations. Their roles defined, these players must collaborate to build a system that ensures the quality and integrity of cross-border education.

These issues have special importance for higher education institutions. Quality assurance starts with the program deliverer—domestic or international. Many higher education institutions have adequate quality-assurance processes for domestic delivery. But these processes do not cover the challenges inherent in working cross-culturally, in a foreign regulatory environment and, potentially, with a foreign partner. These challenges include academic entry requirements, student examination and assessment procedures, faculty workload, delivery modes, curricular adaptation, ensuring quality teaching, academic and sociocultural support for students, and title and level of award. In balancing quality issues with the financial investment and return, higher education providers must consider intellectual property ownership, choice of partners, division of responsibilities, academic and business risk assessments, and internal and external approval processes.

THE FUTURE OF INTERNATIONALIZATION

Universities have been international institutions from their medieval European origins, attracting students and faculty from many countries. The rise of nationalism and the nation-state after the Protestant Reformation focused academe inward.

Later, the emergence of the Third World from colonialism in the mid-20th century stimulated the establishment of national universities. Now academe has regained its international scope and direction. IT; the knowledge economy; increased mobility for students, faculty, programs, and providers; and an integrated world economy propel internationalization.

Internationalism will remain a central force in higher education, though its contours are unclear. Australian experts argue that perhaps 15 million students will study abroad by 2025—up from the current 2 million. This prediction might be optimistic. The international student numbers in Australia have declined somewhat, after a decade of dramatic expansion. The United States, the leading host country, also saw a modest enrollment decline in 2004. The long-term trends are strong and stable, but several uncertainties may affect the pace of internationalization:

- *Political realities and national security.* Terrorism may affect international higher education. Tightened visa requirements in the United States and other countries, security restrictions on the subjects that can be studied, and fear of terrorism expressed by potential international students may affect cross-border student flows.
- *Government policies and the cost of study.* Policies concerning the cost of tuition and fees for visas and other documents may affect international initiatives.
- *Expanded domestic capacity.* Interest in studying abroad or in enrolling in international programs may decline as countries increase access to higher education, especially to master's and doctoral programs.
- *English.* The growing use of English as a medium of research and instruction, especially at the graduate level, may stimulate interest in international programs, offered by universities in English.
- *The internationalization of the curriculum.* Students may find international programs useful as curricula move toward models developed in the United States and other industrialized countries.
- *E-learning.* International acceptance of degrees will lead to an expanded role for distance education, though it is unclear whether international e-learning degrees will become more widespread or domestic e-learning programs—often located in developing or middle-income countries—will continue to dominate.
- *The private sector.* Private higher education is the fastest-growing segment of higher education worldwide, though only a small part of this sector is international. It is not clear if private higher education providers will find the international market sufficiently profitable—though some expansion seems likely.
- *Quality assurance and control.* Quality assurance—a major concern within countries—is a greater problem internationally. Observers criticize many international higher education programs for low standards but fail to identify measures of quality.
- *European policies.* Will the EU protect its “European higher education space,” or will it welcome students and programs from the rest of the world? Will it impose tuition and other fees on non-EU students? How will the Bologna initiatives and harmonizing higher education in the EU affect international patterns within the EU and between the EU and the rest of the world?

CONCLUSION

These are the motives for the growth in international higher education and the landscape of programs and institutions. International higher education will provide substantial access in some countries and will be a “niche market” in others. We are at a crossroads—today’s emerging programs and practices must ensure that international higher education benefits the public and not simply be a profit center.

NOTES

1. These themes have been widely analyzed. See, for example, Castells (2000), Friedman (2005), and Odin and Mancias (2004).

2. We will not focus on e-learning or the use of information technology to deliver academic programs across borders. These delivery systems—fast-growing elements of internationalization—deserve separate analysis.

3. It is now moving to the United Kingdom.

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