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PSE Globality: What are the Marks of a Truly Global Postsecondary Educational Institution and How Do We Benchmark Them?

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As a university head, my thinking is continually dominated by three or four challenges (no, budget is not one - even though it is important, it is a means, not an end). Among these challenges is how to make my mid-sized residential but research-intensive school a truly global institution. A few (very few in fact) have questioned why this is a good thing for our university or for universities in general (and it's a legitimate question to ask, because if we can't answer it clearly we shouldn't be in the business). I'm not going to address that here, but will instead assume that anyone reading this takes as given that pursuing an international strategy of some kind makes sense for postsecondary educational (PSE) institutions.

But the question arises: even if we enthusiastically pursue 'globalization' and 'internationalization' on and for our campuses, what does and should that look like? How do we know when we've achieved it? What are the measures that can show us how we are making progress or where we need to direct more attention and resources?¹

The answers will be different depending on a range of considerations: location of the home institution; its history; its scale and scope (not just how many students and faculty, but whether for instance it has professional schools, PhD programs, or a medical centre); and perhaps most important, its core mission and values, which should be complemented by international initiatives, not compromised or altered by them.

One possible benchmark, 'number of campuses or programs offered outside the home country,' may be perfectly fine and appropriate for certain institutions (especially ones

¹ Rankings such as the Shanghai Jiao Tong *Academic Ranking of World Universities* or the Times Higher Education *World University Rankings* are a popular, albeit controversial, way of measuring both inputs and outputs. I am personally deeply skeptical of most rankings exercises and always worry about their potential to distort mission. With some notable exceptions (such as Shanghai Jiao Tong, which was developed (by a Queen's alumnus) as a benchmark for Shanghai Jiao Tong University), they exist primarily to sell newspapers and magazines. Nonetheless, many international students and their parents do heed them.

where a residential experience is not an essential part of the school's brand and identity) but not for others. A small, strictly undergraduate liberal arts college with mainly local students will have a tougher time acquiring a global reputation (which is not the same as actually being a truly global institution—reputation should be a measure, not a measurable), but it is not impossible.

I would divide the major markers of 'globality' (I don't want to use the term 'globalism,' which has negative ideological associations, and 'internationalization' is a process or means *toward* being a global institution, not an outcome in its own right) in a PSE institution into two broad categories: 1) input indicators; 2) outcome indicators. Both need attention.

Possible input indicators would include the following:

- Numbers of international students and the proportion of the student body enrolled on visas, whether for a degree or on exchange, as well as the number and diversity of their countries of origin; the proportion is of greater importance than the absolute number.
- Numbers and proportion of outgoing domestic students who receive a substantive international experience (I would personally define substantive as three weeks minimum—long enough to get some exposure to the culture. Obviously longer periods, such as a semester, would deepen the experience, but three weeks is a respectable start). The impact of a short stay can be maximized if students are led by a faculty member who can serve as cultural interpreter. Adequate pre-travel briefing and post-return debriefing will also increase the benefits of even a short, but intensive, sojourn.
- Numbers of active exchange and partnership arrangements with international institutions and range of countries represented.
- Research activities involving faculty at multiple universities (but these do not have to involve formal agreements; for the past nine years I have run a major editorial project with contributors from around the world, but there is no institutional MOU in place covering it).
- Collaborative arrangements such as joint or double degrees and co-tutelles.
- Traffic of international visiting speakers and short-term academic visitors (e.g., professors on sabbatical) to the institution, and from the institution to places elsewhere (other universities, industry facilities, or research centers).

Output indicators are the concrete outcomes of some of these inputs and they must be treated with some caution. It is important to recognize that what is being measured is very often something that may be entirely inappropriate to your school. 'Numbers of papers coauthored with international colleagues' is not a helpful indicator if you are an undergraduate-focused teaching institution—but you can still aspire to globality on other measures. Number of alumni working or living abroad is another possible measure, though it is one subject to many factors beyond the school's control, and reliable data are quite difficult to collect.

Output indicators are sometimes harder to quantify than input measures. For instance, it is possible to imagine a college or university that brings in many international students for a short period of time, none of whom has a positive experience. They may encounter racism,

cultural stereotypes, or unnecessary red tape, or they may not mix with domestic students or venture off campus to take in some of the host country's culture. In such a case, they will take little back with them besides a credential and they will also have left little imprint where they have been, which should be a goal of internationalization.

My institution, a mid-sized Canadian research-intensive school with a long history of strong undergraduate experience, has an international campus in southern England. Students attending there must spend some of their time off that campus—which is itself based in a fifteenth-century castle at Herstmonceux—on course-related field-trips or exploring on their own. A significant number of students at that campus come from our international partner institutions and interact with students from our home campus. This is something we are encouraging, and to this end I recently joined the program's director on a visit to several Chinese universities whose students we would like to see spend time at 'the castle' as well as at our main campus in Ontario.

I have thus far not mentioned an important—indeed essential—quality of globality that is really both input and outcome, namely the curriculum. This can include graduate and professional courses as well as undergraduate liberal arts and science programs, and the degree to which it is used will be discipline appropriate. For instance, it is hard to imagine a version of mathematics or chemistry the core of which is 'more' international than another, but it is arguable that the hard sciences have cultural biases and can be taught in a way that recognizes this. And it is certainly possible to create degree programs that mandate international experiences even for students in the exact sciences. Engineering is engineering everywhere (and indeed it is no coincidence that the greatest traffic in international degree students is in the applied and basic sciences, as well as in schools of business where there is a common disciplinary 'language', and where, too, the job market has become a global one). Nevertheless, one can have an engineering program that utterly ignores the global context and produces technically competent practitioners who will flounder the moment they have to function in a foreign country, or who will have no knowledge of local languages, or sensitivity to local customs and values.

But in my experience, business schools, engineering faculties and medical and basic science departments are well ahead of their social science and humanities counterparts in attracting international students, not so much because they have been intrinsically more outward looking and enterprising, but because their job markets much more explicitly look for substantive international experience and also because (especially in the case of the applied, physical and life sciences) they generally have a richer pool of graduate funding resources on which to draw.

Curriculum can be a negative force in internationalization for those students who never leave the country. When I was an undergraduate in the 1970s, many humanities degrees remained highly Eurocentric. (Authorial confession: I am both a humanist and someone who teaches 17th century British history, which by definition is Eurocentric, though I also do global historiography embracing Asia and Africa). There is, let me emphasize, nothing whatever wrong with courses on the western canon, European intellectual history, or French 19th century fiction (which to an English speaker is in its own right international).

My point is this: curricula have to offer a component that allows for a diversity of approaches and perspectives if they are to be global. The well-educated student should have some familiarity with the Qur'an as well as the Bible, with Sima Qian as well as Herodotus, with Japanese Kabuki as well as Shakespeare. At the very least, our students should graduate aware that the world is not encompassed within the traditions of their own country, however worthy and valuable those own traditions are (I would argue that a firm grasp of these helps us understand the differences and the similarities of those that exist elsewhere; it's hard to understand someone else's history if you have a weak grasp of your own).

This last point on curriculum is important and sometimes overlooked, partly because its measures are mainly qualitative, especially on the outcome side of the ledger. We can count the number of credit hours a student must take in the course of a degree or the number of weeks they must spend abroad, but have they acquired a global perspective on their discipline, much less on the wider world and its problems, with which they will be expected to wrestle through their careers? This is tough to measure in numeric terms, and indeed it is very often not even evident until years after graduation. Moreover, a good deal of the work to encourage a global perspective can and should occur *outside* the classroom—through co- and extra-curricular activities, in residence life, through clubs and sports, and in the activities of campus international centres which apart from providing a mixing space for domestic and international students can also be involved more directly in education through workshops on a range of topics, including intercultural communication, for students, staff and faculty.

I would conclude with the following observations: first, that nearly every PSE institution now aspires to some degree to compete in a global marketplace and to acquire an international reputation; second, that 'globality' can be assessed in many different ways, some of which are non-numeric; third, that no amount of reach abroad will matter if the school does not nurture and encourage a global outlook among its domestic students and faculty.

To paraphrase Bengt Nilsson², internationalization begins at home, but to be effective even there, it must embrace more than the minority of faculty and students who go on lengthier exchanges and terms abroad.

² Nilsson, B. "Internationalization at Home from a Swedish Perspective: the Case of Malmö", *Journal of Studies in International Education* March 2003 vol. 7 no. 1 27-40.