

**“Faith-based universities and internationalization:
Balancing mission and market realities”**

**An AIEA Thematic Forum presented on April 19-20, 2018
by the
Boston College Center for International Higher Education (CIHE)
Chestnut Hill, MA (USA)**

FINAL REPORT

Forum Description and Rationale

Across the United States and around the world, faith-based colleges and universities adhere to distinctive missions. These institutions are typically guided in their actions by a particular set of values and priorities that exert a direct influence on their approaches to all aspects of their work. Faith-based institutions see their place in the world through a unique lens, which in turn affects a wide range of decisions and actions they may take with respect to teaching, learning, research, student formation, and community service.

Based on our understanding of these fundamental dynamics, one would assume that the faith-based identity and orientation of a particular college or university would also affect its approach to internationalization, a key phenomenon in higher education around the world today. But, what do we really know about the ways that faith-based institutions approach matters of internationalization and global engagement?

To address this key question, this AIEA Thematic Forum offered an informative, interactive experience designed to provide participants with new information and insights into what we know about faith-based universities and their approaches to internationalization, as well as opportunities to share and compare their experiences with colleagues from a diverse group of faith-based institutions from the United States and elsewhere.

Leveraging the knowledge and experience of the Boston College Center for International Higher Education—itsself housed at a faith-based (Jesuit, Catholic) institution, and directed by Prof. Hans de Wit—this Thematic Forum brought together higher education experts, internationalization scholars, international education practitioners, and representatives from a range of faith-based institutions in the United States, Latin America, Europe, and Asia. The Forum provided an opportunity for open dialogue and case-based learning about this important and timely topic.

Speakers

Hans de Wit
Director, Boston College Center for
International Higher Education

Alberto Godenzi
Special Advisor to the President for Global
Engagement, Boston College

Philip Altbach
Founding Director, Boston College Center
for International Higher Education

Daoud Casewit
President of the American Islamic College

Carlos Coelho
Executive Director of the International
Association of La Salle Universities;

Jennifer Golden
Director of the Office of International
Student and Scholar Services, Yeshiva
University

Dana Gross
Associate Dean for Interdisciplinary and
General Studies, and Professor of
Psychology, St. Olaf College

Fiona Hunter
Associate Director, Centre for Higher
Education Internationalisation, Università
Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Italy)

Michael James
Director of the Institute for Administrators in
Catholic Higher Education

Adrienne Nussbaum
Director and Assistant Dean of the Office of
International Students and Scholars, Boston
College

Jeff Ringer
Associate International Vice President,
Brigham Young University

Laura E. Rumbley
Assistant Professor of the Practice and
Associate Director, Boston College Center
for International Higher Education

Liz Reisberg
Independent consultant in higher education
and Research Fellow, Center for
International Higher Education, Boston
College

Visnja Schampers-Car
Doctoral Candidate, Centre for Higher
Education Internationalisation, Università
Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Italy)

John Skillen
Professor of English, Gordon College

Miki Sugimura
Professor of Education, Sophia University
(Japan)

Daniela Véliz
Assistant Professor of Education, Pontifical
Catholic University of Chile

Program

Thursday, April 19, 2018

8:00-9:00: Registration

9:00-9:15: Welcome and introduction
Prof. Hans de Wit

9:15-9:45: Strategic planning, identity, and internationalization: An introduction
Prof. Alberto Godenzi

9:45-10:15: What does this topic mean to you? (Part 1)
Dr. Laura Rumbley and Dr. Fiona Hunter

- 10:15-11:15: Global perspectives on private higher education and faith-based universities
Prof. Philip Altbach
- 11:15-11:45: Break
- 11:45-12:30: Faith-based Higher Education in the United States and beyond
Prof. Michael James
- 12:30-1:00: Close-up: American Islamic College
President Daoud Casewit
- 1:00-2:00: Lunch break
- 2:00-2:30: Close-up: Yeshiva University
Ms. Jennifer Golden, Director, Office of International Students and Scholars
- 2:30-3:45: Catholic Identity and Internationalization:
Challenges and opportunities in comparative perspective
Prof. Hans de Wit and Dr. Carlos Coelho
- 3:45-4:15 Close-up: St. Olaf College
*Dr. Dana Gross, Associate Dean of Interdisciplinary & General Studies
Director of the Center for Integrative Studies*
- 4:15-5:30 What does this topic mean to you? (Part 2)
Dr. Fiona Hunter and Dr. Laura Rumbley
- 6:00-7:00: Reception (light refreshments)

Friday, April 20, 2018

- 9.00-10.00: Panel: Faith-based higher education and the international student experience
Facilitator: Dr. Liz Reisberg; Panelists: Ms. Adrienne Nussbaum, Boston College; Dr. John Skillen, Gordon College; Ms. Jennifer Golden, Yeshiva University
- 10:30-11:00: Close-up: Brigham Young University
Jeff Ringer, Associate International Vice President
- 10.30-11:00: Break
- 11:00-12:00: Panel: How can the faith-based identity of an institution enhance its internationalization efforts? A world of possibilities
Facilitator: Dr. Fiona Hunter; Panelists: Ms. Visnja Schampers, Dr. Daniela Véliz, Dr. Miki Sugimura
- 12:00-12:30: What we heard and where we go from here
Hans de Wit and Prof. Michael James

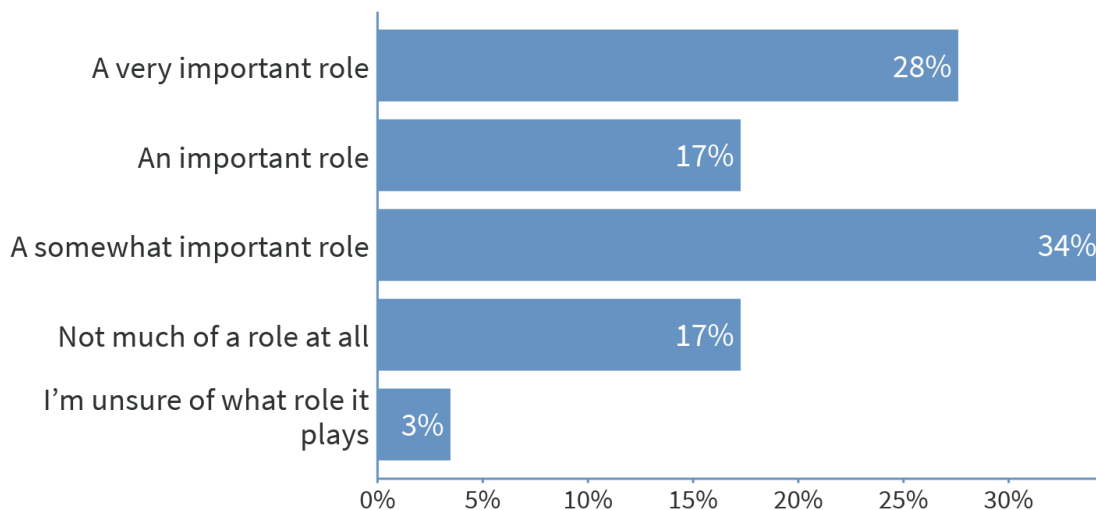
Key Insights and Outcomes

This Thematic Forum event brought together just under 50 individuals from over a dozen different countries to discuss issues of internationalization in the context of faith-based higher education in a variety of contexts. Participants and speakers ranged in profile from graduate students to research professors, from international student advisors to holders of top institutional leadership positions (including one dean and one president).

A quick poll of participants at the start of the program provided insight into perspectives on the perceived relative importance of faith-based identity and mission in relation to internationalization, as well as the key issues on the minds of participants joining this event.

7. When it comes to the internationalization approaches and activities of my institution, I think its faith-based identity and mission plays:

When poll is active, respond at [PolleEv.com/laurarumbley414](https://www.pollevo.com/laurarumbley414) Text **LAURARUMBLEY414** to **37607** once to join



8. When it comes to the subject of this Forum, I am most interested in learning more about:

What is inhibiting internationalization efforts

How interfaith dialogue plays a part once an institution is more diverse religiously
Intersection of mission and internationalization

Strategies for getting support for internationalizations efforts at cabinet level

How faith traditions inform IZN strategies in HE

Institutional identity as "internationalized consciousness"

Faith-based partnerships

Catholic identity translation into internationalization	International partnerships that lead to more solid market positions.
How faith-based universities move forward in the globalized world	What makes IZN in faith based institution
Advocating for internationalization Networking	What others are doing, trends in faith-based HE and leadership
Tension between internationalization and faith base identity	How to get our leadership on board with Internationalization
Strategies for fostering student and faculty reflection about immersive experiences, including issues of religion and faith	Preparing students of faith for study abroad
Recruiting challenges	Faith-based identity and international partnerships
On-boarding faculty to Intl mission	Internationalisation and strategic plan of an institution
Using faith identity as strength not liability in internationalization	Competing identity challenges (student identity & institutional identity)
Mission and institutional prestige	How to make international students as an essential part of the institution

Key insights from the conversation over the 1.5 days of presentations, discussions, and debate include the fact that:

1. Faith-based higher education institutions rarely have an opportunity to engage with one another across faiths to discuss internationalization as a common concern. Most often, faith-based institutions engage with institutions within the same faith tradition, which potentially limits the range of perspectives to which they are exposed or the potential partners with which they might engage.
2. Faith traditions offer enormously rich possibilities for wide depth and scope of internationalization activities and global engagement. The “natural” concern for the human condition universally and the health of the planet are deeply embedded in most mainstream religious teaching around the world. This foundation creates exciting synergies with the phenomenon of internationalization that can be built upon in very dynamic and creative ways.
3. In some cases, faith traditions also present unique challenges when it comes to internationalization and global engagement. Some illustrative examples that emerged from the conversation included the ways that particular religions may be perceived in different parts of the world and how this can create (at least preliminary) barriers to effective engagement between faith-based institutions and those from another faith tradition, or from the secular community. Particular norms or practices of a given faith—for example, in relation to dietary restrictions or proselytizing activity—can add layers of complexity to internationalization activity that require careful attention and consideration.
4. Even within the same faith traditions, there may be a broad range of identities, sub-groups, and approaches to higher education and global engagement. Understanding

how faith and internationalization in higher education intersect requires moving beyond surface-level understandings of “categories” of religious tradition and developing much clearer contextual understanding of the realities, profiles, and aspirations of specific institutions (or networks of institutions) operating in specific contexts.

Outcomes specifically for the SIOs participating in this event centered on:

1. An expanded sense of a broader community of faith-based higher education institutions around the world, which share many common interests and concerns.
2. An enhanced appreciation of the possibilities to learn from more ecumenically-grounded conversations about the intersection between faith-based identity and internationalization—as opposed to operating in contexts where such conversations play out more exclusively within the same faith tradition.
3. The importance of considering specifically how an expanded commitment to international student and/or faculty recruitment brings with it responsibilities and implications—to consider how this strategic decision relates in real terms to the mission and identity of a faith-based institution; how the reality of expanded international recruitment affects all of the stakeholders involved; and how to meet the needs of, and learn from, the international students and/or faculty who may come from faith traditions that differ from that of the institution.

Also of note, a international and comparative study, coordinated by CIHE under the title “Identity and Internationalization in Catholic Universities,” served as the basis for this Thematic Forum. Of possible interest to faith-based university SIOs and other leaders, the following book will be published in 2018:

de Wit, H. Bernasconi, A., Car, V., Hunter, F., James, M. & Véliz, D. (Eds.). (2018). *Identity and Internationalization in Catholic Universities: Exploring institutional pathways in context*. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense/Brill Publishers.