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Globalization, Internationalization, and Rankings

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grams was another edge to the NUC sword for eliminating degree mills.

In the last three years, the National Youth Service Corps Scheme into which university graduates are fed has stepped up its regime of screening out products from bogus institutions and unapproved programs. Together, these efforts have translated into an estimated 70 percent success rate in the war against degree mills.

CONCLUSION

Degree mills thrive on fertile grounds provided by a combination of desperate students and easy-profit-seeking providers. While efforts are under way in Nigeria to make the terrain as difficult as possible for the duo, we cannot guarantee that Nigeria will become a degree-mill-free zone in the shortest possible time. The increasing number of candidates who fail to secure university admission and who want to obtain university degrees at all costs makes such an assurance unrealistic. Hope, however, rests on the conviction that NUC will sustain its clampdown on degree mills, indeed, with increasing vigor. ■

Globalization, Internationalization, and Rankings

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Within days of each other, *Times Higher Education* published two articles (July 3, 2008 and July 10, 2008) and the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (July 11, 2008) published one about how domestic demographic shifts across Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries could cause a near doomsday scenario for, in this case, UK and Japanese higher education. UK universities were urged to “buckle up for a rough ride,” while the latter paper told tales of how Japanese universities were responding to escalating competition by “sending recruiters out to high schools, holding open houses for prospective students, building swimming pools and revamping libraries, and recruiting more foreign students.” Stories of what the *Daily Yomiuri* calls the “scramble for students” or the *Economist* calls the “battle for brainpower”

are increasingly common as higher education moves center stage in the geopolitical contest for an increasing share of the global economic market. Indeed, the battle for talent now complements more traditional struggles for natural resources. Government policy aims to offset domestic demographic shifts with internationalization—once seen as a policy of cultural exchange. Global competition is reflected in the rising significance and popularity of rankings that attempt to measure the talent-catching capacity of higher education institutions.

The following observations are based on an international

Countries with high levels of international students benefit from the contribution they make to domestic research and development, while those with low numbers find it “more difficult . . . to capitalize on this external contribution to domestic human capital production.”

survey of higher education leaders in 2006 and interviews at higher education institutions in Australia, Japan, and Germany during 2008.

HIGHER EDUCATION INTERNATIONALIZATION POLICY

Internationalization has become both a university and a government priority—not just because it is seen as a sign of global competitiveness but also because it serves as a way to ensure the capacity to participate in world science. According to the OECD, countries with high levels of international students benefit from the contribution they make to domestic research and development, while those with low numbers find it “more difficult . . . to capitalize on this external contribution to domestic human capital production.”

Previously protected by geography from the full effect of competition, Japan's 726 universities now face considerable pressure. According to census statistics, the number of 18-year-old Japanese has fallen to 1.3 million in 2007 from 2.05 million in 1992. The figure is likely to drop to 1.21 million by 2009. According to the *International Herald Tribune* (June 21, 2007), nearly a third of the nation's four-year universities were unable to fill all of their openings, and others have now closed. The government has set a target of increasing the number of international students from the current 100,000, to 300,000 by 2020.

Germany faces similar demographic challenges, with the greatest impact expected after 2015. The federal government predicts that even with 200,000 immigrants a year, Germany's population will shrink from today's 82.5, to 75 million by 2050. International student recruitment is now seen as vital as the number of students entering higher education and then matriculating from undergraduate to postgraduate falls. The government had anticipated restricting matriculation to only

50 percent of the cohort; but due to such small numbers, the idea was dropped.

Australia faces a converse difficulty. Education is a \$12.5 billion export industry—half in higher education—the third-largest Australian export after coal and iron ore, a point of much celebration and much consternation. The former reflects the significance of higher education for the economy, but it also reveals Australia's overdependence on international students at a time when student-exporting countries—such as Singapore, China, and Malaysia—are rapidly expanding their own higher education systems. Australia has the highest proportion of international students in higher education (17.3%), which exceeds the OECD average of 6.7 percent, although its proportion of international students in advanced research programs (17.8%) lags behind competitive universities by up to 50 percent. This difference is now critical, because PhD students are seen, by all governments, as a talent metric vital for economic development and innovation. Accordingly, changes have been made in student visa requirements to allow easier transition to permanent residency.

RANKINGS AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Australia, Germany, and Japan provide good illustrations of how global rankings have become a powerful weapon in the battle for talent. On a simple country comparison, 2 Australian universities are in the top 100 on the Shanghai Jiao Tong Academic Ranking of World Universities or 8 in the Times QS Ranking of World Universities in 2007. Germany had 6 and 3, respectively, and Japan had 6 or 4 universities, respectively. Despite this record, there is concern in all three countries about the ability to maintain competitive attractiveness.

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International students, especially postgraduate students, are savvy consumers of global rankings. Almost without exception, all international students interviewed for this research indicated they used rankings to short-list institutions, sometimes within an identified country. For example, they “might know about Australia, but not where in Australia to go.” Institutional rank transmits social and cultural capital that resonates with family, friends, and potential employers. It grants self-pride and peer-esteem. This is particularly true for Asian students—the prime recruitment target—who may seek employment in their home country upon graduation. One student explained:

at my university, I have a colleague who graduated from Columbia University and she's holding a very high position at the university now. They did not tell me frankly but I could read their minds that if I am lucky enough to

graduate at this university I could not be as highly appreciated as the one who graduated from Columbia University.

While there is a growing international undergraduate student market, most of these students are spending either a semester or year abroad as part of their program of study. Nevertheless, even here, their decisions are often influenced by reputational factors.

In turn, higher education institutions and their governments are developing sophisticated marketing and recruitment strategies to woo high-achieving students with attractive financial and scholarship packages

REPUTATION, VISIBILITY, AND BRAND

Higher education leaders and their admissions offices are very clear that rankings form a vital part of strategic positioning. A high rank enhances visibility and helps create brand. Higher education leaders, at all levels in the popularity stakes, commented that rankings made their institution better known, both nationally and internationally, in keeping with rankings among international students, recruitment agencies, and other higher education institutions interested in forming partnerships. While some institutions vie for a high rank, many others find just being mentioned beneficial—helping to overcome local bias or tradition.

In turn, higher education institutions and their governments are developing sophisticated marketing and recruitment strategies to woo high-achieving students with attractive financial and scholarship packages, often with other benefits (e.g., financial assistance and access to particular facilities, etc.). According to the 2006 international survey, almost 50 percent of institutions used their rank for publicity purposes—on their Web page, in speeches; at new faculty, student orientation, or international meetings; or when lobbying government:

those who are looking at their institution on an international scale are fully aware of the potential of these ratings, rankings, evaluations to attract students, to attract faculty and so on and it is also commented in . . . the newspapers, in comments in the media and so on. . . .

At the same time, institutions use rankings to help select prospective postgraduate students.

Yet, readying higher education for an influx of international students is not simple. In Germany and Japan, this means transforming programs and activities into English—even when, as in Japan, over 92 percent of foreign students come from Asia, of which 60 percent are Chinese and 15 percent Korean. Most Japanese universities are focusing on postgraduate activities, initially in science and technology fields.

Institutional flexibility allowed under new “incorporation” legislation permits universities to offer distinctive tenure arrangements and salary packages to entice internationally competitive scholars. At one university, exceptional scholars can earn up to twice their baseline salary based on performance. Knowledge of Japanese is not required because these scholars will teach at the postgraduate level, with international or internationally minded students. New facilities include more dormitories, world-class laboratories, and international student services and amenities. At a time when university budgets are being reduced by one percent annually, many Japanese higher education leaders are worried.

IMPACT ON FUNDING INTERNATIONALIZATION

Competitiveness and funding are common themes in all countries—to make higher education institutions attractive academically, research-wise, and physically—and thus draw international students and faculty. There are two main policy regimes. Germany and Japan are unapologetically using marketing and rankings to create greater vertical (reputational) and horizontal (functional) differentiation, concentrating “excellence” in 10 and 30 world-class universities, respectively. This will probably involve closing down some regional and private universities. In contrast, Australia—with its newly elected social democratic government—wants to “brand Australia” with a “diverse set of high-performing, globally focused” higher education institutions. Because rankings and similar benchmarking assessments do influence institutional behavior and performance, the policy choices are critical.



Internationalization on US Campuses: Slipping Backward?

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Faced with unprecedented economic integration and globalization, one might expect to see higher education institutions redoubling their efforts to internationalize their campuses. In reality, internationalization efforts at US colleges and universities are uneven at best.

In May, the American Council on Education (ACE) released a report that summarizes the findings of a 2006 survey of US

colleges and universities on their policies and practices in furthering internationalization. Titled *Mapping Internationalization on U.S. Campuses: 2008 Edition* and written by Madeleine F. Green, Dao Luu, and Beth Burris, the report is the second in a series, following a 2001 study. These reports are the only comprehensive source of data on internationalization in US higher education institutions. In 2006, ACE surveyed 2,746 institutions and received an overall response rate of 39 percent. The report highlights the 2006 data, comparing it with information gathered in 2001 when possible. The publication reports the findings for all respondents as well as by institutional type (doctorate-granting universities, master's colleges and universities, baccalaureate colleges, and associate's colleges). The data emerging from the study were often surprising and suggested the need for campus leaders to refocus their efforts toward internationalization, although a few encouraging trends emerged.

LOW PRIORITIES ON MOST CAMPUSES

The survey data indicate that formal institutional commitments to internationalization are lackluster. In 2006, just 39 percent of institutions made a specific reference to international or global education in their mission statements, and 34 percent listed it among their top five strategic priorities (although that is up from 28% in 2001). Forty-four percent had a task force that worked solely on advancing internationalization efforts, and slightly more than half (52%) reported that they assigned a visible role to internationalization by highlighting international or global education programs and opportunities in their recruitment literature. Only 23 percent had a separate plan that addresses institutionwide internationalization. Although mission statements and strategic plans are only one piece of internationalization efforts, the articulation of explicit goals and development of reinforcing strategies to meet those goals are critical to affecting broad and deep change.

LIMITED REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATES

In the past five years, the intensification of global trade and heightened attention to national security have raised awareness in the United States about the need for more Americans to be able to speak a language other than English. Despite this imperative, ACE's study found that required language study is far from universal. Only 23 percent of all institutions surveyed had a foreign-language admissions requirement, an increase of only 2 percent from 2001. Institutions were also less likely to have undergraduate foreign-language graduation requirements for all or some students in 2006 (45%) than in 2001 (53%). Less than one in five (16%) had a foreign-language graduation requirement for all undergraduate students in 2006.

Furthermore, ACE found that fewer institutions required a course with an international or global focus as part of their general education requirements in 2006 (37%) than in 2001 (41%). Among institutions with such a requirement, the proportion with a “non-Western” course requirement dropped