

Domestic Globalization: Evaluation of Curriculum Design for Future Global Citizens

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ABSTRACT

Higher education in the U.S. is a \$490 billion dollar a year industry for over 5,300 institutions. If higher education wishes to continue to be more internationalized with a goal to produce global citizens, specific curricular pathways are needed in order to provide international exposure in many forms. This article discusses best practices in redesigning curriculum with an international lens for U.S. higher education institutions. Curriculum redesign requires three pillars which include a first-year curriculum foundation, retaining diverse staff and students, and providing pathways for all to achieve a global citizenship mentality. These pillars will help design curriculum that can be self-directed or lectured that releases the outside contingent financial support and empowers a newly internationalized inside of the institution to better serve the global leaders of tomorrow.

Keywords: U.S. higher education, internationalization, curriculum redesign, affordable global learning, high-impact pathways

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1. Introduction

Higher education in the United States has become a massive sector in the economy housing over 5,300 different types of institutions which bring in over \$490 billion and hold over \$990 billion in assets (Rippner, 2016). With differing U.S. state cultures, funding, and faculty loyalties creating external ambitions student learning is at risk of becoming second place to perceived priorities of politicians, administrators, and faculty (Brubacher & Rudy, 2017; Tight, 2019). This is especially true internally as institutions become “mature” and solidify operations that are reluctant to change (Manning, 2017). Internationalization must be implemented at institutions from the inside out. If higher education wishes to continue to be more internationalized with a goal to produce global citizens, specific curricular pathways are needed to provide international exposure in many forms.

Internationalization needs support in many forms, this includes study abroad, proper reentry programming, and follow up coursework to build off an international experience that may or not be feasible for certain student populations in the form of study abroad. Navigating cultural perception of the importance of internationalization for institutions relies on many factors creating a complex process (Sá & Sepra, 2020). Distribution of funding, whether reluctantly from the state with public institutions (Rippner, 2016) or internal in private institutions, in turn may lower or raise support in designing a global curriculum depending on the organizational culture (Manning, 2017). A true internationalized curricular design enables each student the chance at becoming global citizens. It is vital to approach a globally focused curriculum design,

and eventual external pathways that open opportunity for all students, to prepare degree holders for intercultural competency (Stein et al., 2019).

2. The Customer is Always Right

Before curriculum design is taken into consideration, postsecondary institutions must look at the state of the student. Higher education is in the middle of a perception crisis when students are viewed by society and themselves as differently as before. The reputation of being on a college campus can quickly shift from images of late-night papers while becoming adults to establishing a possible financial roadblock of ten years to anyone's future who enrolls in courses. The transformative cultural shift, by U.S. states, families, future employers, and board members, in the student to a customer shows the pressure institutions are now feeling with the contemporary college student (Tight, 2019). These pressures look to sway how an institutions can and should be educating.

Not only do outside sources view the modern student differently, but the modern student has also completed this transformation as well. Students morphed into customers with viewing the institution as a business and expect to be satisfied from elements of marketing admission to customer satisfaction as an experience (Guilbault, 2018). This mentality of "the customer is always right" internalizes pressure that must confront the external pressures to maintain balance, a feat that may not be sustainable with how fast society is changing. In turn, the institutional culture may shift to easy grades, no complication graduation, and customer orientation (Guilbault, 2018; Rippner, 2016; Tight, 2019). If institutions wish to avoid a localized end product that the external pressures are disappointed with regardless, an internationalized culture is to produce global citizens who understand humanity on a global scale (Barrow, 2017). This culture releases pressures from outside sources and does not require an entire reboot to survive today's demands.

3. Chase for Global Citizenship on Campus

With so many factors that bring together a culture, removing specific cultural labels is key to making sure future global citizens understand the essential definition of what it takes to become one. In layperson terms, institutions can use global citizenship as a basis to teach world issues with a core recognition of global humanity (Barrow, 2017). Global citizens are distinguished by intellectual frameworks that expose students to other cultures built on different language, backgrounds, and experiences that drive empathy from global citizens through issues of social justice, unity, and equity (Andrews & Aydin, 2020). The idea of global citizenship is also able to stretch beyond the academics within an institution that choses to showcase global art and structural architecture, where possible, that is a way to make global citizenship perceptible for students (Tight, 2019). Having the tangible and intangible helps define global citizenship.

Building global citizens can be difficult as each postsecondary institution, with over 5,300 postsecondary institutions in the USA alone (Rippner, 2016), has their own way of handling operations. Each institution is challenged with defining terms that lead to aligned activities and development of global learning (Stein et al., 2019). Specifically, because the final step for students is graduation, quality global learners will be needed by modern workers no longer contained in the workforce by nation-state boundaries (Alvarez & Wan, 2019). When disagreement or delay affects the learning goals for institutions, the delay will be passed on to the student who won't be a good representation of the education they just came out of.

In the age of data accessibility, salaries and job placement numbers are readily quantifiable for prospective students who can search any industry projections of pay and jobs while having a

coffee. Higher education institutions are being labeled a business (Rippner, 2016) and some do not stray away from a business model founded on marketing programs to get students in the door. Global citizenship, when searched on Google Scholar, brings up a massive 2,130,000 results. Globalization has changed many businesses, thus forging the demand for leaders who can bring global citizenship to the workforce that is efficient in a global context (Knoll & Sternad, 2021). Universities are no different than businesses in the utilization of a movement, like global citizenship, to bring on campus to keep up with the demand of what is considered important for future employers.

Currently, institutions are allowed to market within loose guidelines often giving the institution the advantage of confusion. An institution can market national averages of salary in order to avoid producing localized results of degree program that may not be as promising. Capitalizing on the marketing component of choosing a university, even over a specific major interest, is vital for admissions that rely on market orientation to remain competitive for admissions (Guilbault, 2018). Instead of putting some students into a mold they would not normally want or like and trying to help them adapt, focus should be about the institution evolving to adapt to the students coming in (Tight, 2019). A strong culture of adaptation will serve a student population that will change with each generation.

4. Campus Culture

When a student matriculates and becomes an on campus or online student for a university, they are now part of the affinity that current students and alumni relate and possibly continue to connect with. This affinity is seen on tee-shirts, sporting apparel, with donations, and possibly a family tradition of enrollment that builds an education culture within a community. Institutions that have an internationalized culture can benefit from an inclusive and supportive community that promotes knowledge with cultural activities, experiential exposure, and language of diverse staff and students that can serve as a cultural affinity for current students and alumni to take with them as resources (Tight, 2019). The rooted values and assumptions of this dedication to maintain culture is built into the college through the mission statement and thus accentuated in the curriculum. This is a full commitment approach from all members of the organization, just as theaters have an audience watching actors, similar involvement is needed by all to organize an internationalized culture (Manning, 2017).

Faculty values compared to institutional values may bring up a roadblock or an accelerator depending on a few circumstances. Faculty may need to provide personal time to implement a desirable global citizenship curriculum in the classroom (Andrews & Aydin, 2020), specific faculty typically intertwine with other faculty within their department that can create a lack of collaboration (Rippner, 2016). While the tenure track faculty choose sides, the number of adjuncts on campuses that are the main interactions students have with an organization are growing by the year. Around 70 percent of faculty are not on tenure track which means 30 percent of faculty are involved in institutional decision making if they are a part of the governance structure that only represent 30 percent of student face to face (Eckel & Kezar, 2016).

The decision-making process also may pose a problem of having faculty want to adopt an internationalized culture on campus. With contingent faculty making up most of the body, possible voices of adjuncts with fresh diverse perspectives and industry are effectively nullified. These are also the same adjuncts that need continued engagement from the university and have little time to engage with other faculty and students (Layou et al., 2022). The faculty that are tenure track may have little interest in a system that is centralizing decision making over the last twenty years, which leads to a lack of interest of the 30 percent who interact with

students day in and day out (Eckel & Kezar, 2016). All this is within a traditional institution that is normally on campus; scholars must think about schools that have less engaged populations of students by structure.

Community colleges, commuter schools, and online institutions are in a difficult situation of culture on campus since most students are either non-traditional or differing programs such as immersive degrees to speed up their studies. In contrast to institutions that have solidified cultural reputation in the US such as Ivy League, historically African American colleges, and women's institutions, the non-traditional routes of community colleges and commuter schools have a reputation of weak cultures. It is the embodiment of the institution and culture that the new applications can fit (Manning, 2017). Without an internationalized foundation, students who end up moving on from these schools to the four-year institutions or possible graduate level may have trouble adapting to a well-established culture and internationalized curriculum in the future institution.

5. Federal and State Involvement for Change

At times, campus culture may not be able to change internally without the help from resources outside of their power. Governing financial support comes in the form of student aid, research grants, and tuition (Rippner, 2016). Institutions can hinge on budgets that are given by the federal government to the individual state, specifically placing the community college and public institutions guided by governmental influence (Brubacher & Rudy, 2017). This in turn can wreck the tuition system passing on the costs of the lack of support to the student since students are not happy going into the institution or the ones currently there have to continue to pay more and more each year. Who would want to pay more money for the same product a year ago? Not the customer first mentality of the modern students or their families.

Institutional theorist have shown an organization is always subject to the influence of their environment (Manning, 2017), not knowing where funding will come from or how much will hinder an institution's ambition to put resources towards internationalization while in survival mode. If the U.S. state culture and history mixed with policies vary 50 states by 50 states, this proposes more of a challenge to establish an accepted global culture by curriculum design if the existing environment is not in alignment with the desire. If universities wish to keep funding coming in, they then play by the guidelines given in the ranking system.

Rankings for universities is a goal that manages to merge into many aspects of higher education. These hierarchies for institutions are created on unique and limited criteria based on only three international sources. The rankings focus on a small percentage of research based instead of the entire postsecondary system in the U.S. (Altbach, 2019). It is a belief that the highest ranking for an institution will attract the best faculty and thus research dollars from the federal grants. These same grants account for 60 percent of all research universities that are awarded yearly. U.S. federal involvement in education has steadily increased (Brubacher & Rudy, 2017).

The importance of rankings can be the difference of grants and awards on a yearly basis (Bastedo et al., 2016; Rippner, 2016). With money on the table each year, ranked institutions are bringing strategic plans that focus on global and regional contexts which breed a global identity. Unranked institutions fit into a local and communal culture. The problem with this divide is that rankings fixate on the production of research (Lee et al., 2019). The question to ask is which institutions get funding that can assist curricular design to be more global?

Attempting to be ranked based on criteria fit for research will not serve the unique student population, specifically to unranked institutions that stay local for their own reasons. If

multicultural leadership runs institutions that hold unique and varied culture forms due to change year after year through the human connection (Manning, 2017), it is up to the institution to provide the platform for the changing culture that best suits its student population. Each institution can push for an internationalized culture without sacrificing how they receive funds through curricular design.

6. Curriculum Redesign

The curriculum is the closest connection between students, faculty, and leadership at an institution. Studies have shown the importance of first year curriculum design that structures longevity in the learning experience with diverse classes coming in yearly (Tight, 2019). Having an international framework within a curriculum starting from first year will set up a mentality of global citizenship by the time the student moves on to the work force or job transition if already in the work force. Certain graduates are hindered strictly by their university's academic lens which may lack modern student diversity needs (Muir et al., 2019). That is to say, higher education institutions contribute greatly to internationalization and globalization in society (Tight, 2019). It is up to the institution to work together as boards, presidents, and faculty to internationalize the curriculum.

Influence for change in universities comes from different sources with boards influencing campus culture, presidents controlling the budget and hiring along with evaluating senior staff, and faculty, in an ideal situation, focusing on student and curriculum issues (Eckel & Kezar, 2016; Manning, 2017). Selecting a diverse set of faculty would make a solid foundation for an internationalized curriculum overhaul simply due to a diverse background and experience level. It is equally important to keep this staff because an organizational culture can diversify the more institutional capacity for diversity is driven through hire and retention (Smith, 2020).

Staff and faculty retention will ensure initiatives, such as internationalizing a program curriculum, do not leave the door with the departing employee. Diversity in the staff and faculty can align an institution longevity because diversity is an expanding set of issues that must be addressed in higher education (Smith, 2020). Leadership must push faculty to stay motivated since campus initiatives, in a global sense, are started by individuals and their own interests, not the government due to constitutional policy (Rippner, 2016). Career interest may prevent faculty pursuing internationalization projects and support of study abroad simply due to retention and the need for administrative support (Smith, 2020). Academic leadership can change this fear.

When faculty and leadership are ready to make a curriculum design internationalized, the mold needs to have clear pathways that involve modern students' needs and demographics (Stein et al., 2019). One pathway that has the most attention is study abroad, where less than five percent of most institution populations actually partake in the experience (NAFSA, 2020). Even in the small population, more attention needs to be focused on gender and socioeconomic balance for study abroad participants in a drive to make global citizenship for all student populations. Not only does balancing the experience open up pathways for all populations, diverse program leaders, staff, and faculty builds trust among the students and communities that are represented (Smith, 2020).

Going abroad as a direct pathway to global citizenship for those who can is important; however, what builds into an experience abroad before is having the international design set in place. Designing global learning that all student populations can access within a curriculum needs to be the foundation of all pathways. Having both faculty and students engage in global learning pathways sets up structure for enhanced learning abroad or day to day global learning. Setting

the global presence prior is equally as important as the student or faculty going abroad and returning; it provides the internationalized foundation. The ability to learn differentiation for any context adds an important skill for students, and even faculty, in enhancing global mindedness (Doppen & Diki, 2017).

7. Conclusion

Higher education in the U.S. remains a competitive market year after year. Federal influence through grants and award distribution continue to shape how universities operate (Rippner, 2016). If U.S. higher education desires to compete in attracting students and faculty while maintaining their retention, internationalizing the campus to create global citizens is needed by obtaining diverse staff and curriculum redesign (Guilbault, 2018; Smith, 2020). Global citizenship is part of institutional development and can be done through affordable global learning design. The three pillars of the global learning design are a foundation in first year curriculum, retaining current diverse faculty and students, and providing external pathways for all to achieve a global citizenship mentality.

Globalizing the curriculum can benefit businesses where students are prepared for the globalized workforce in a global context (Knoll & Sternad, 2021). This must start in the first year to structure longevity of the learning experience (Tight, 2019). Attracting and retaining diverse faculty helps a university's longevity in the market by addressing issues of diversity (Smith, 2020). Strong organizational culture may increase campus push for global learning (Manning, 2017). Diverse initiatives on campus also come through motivated faculty on their own time (Rippner, 2016) which highlights the need to retain a diverse population of faculty. Pathways for all students to obtain a global citizenship through internationalization remains multifaceted. External experiences such as study abroad remains a strong pathway to global citizenship (Doppen & Diki, 2017). Social elements such as diverse community influence also open pathways for global learning (Smith, 2020). Each U.S. institution can be better equipped to serve the global leaders of tomorrow with an internationalized plan of global learning.

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