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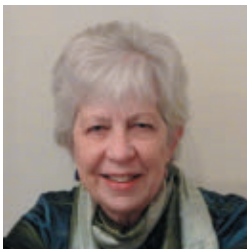
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The Leadership Issue: Guiding a New Era of International Education



Susan Buck Sutton, Member, National Academy for International Education; Fellow, IIE Center for International Partnerships



Clare Overmann, Head, Higher Education Initiatives, IIE and Executive Director, National Academy for International Education

International education is at a crossroads, and leaders of all kinds are stepping up to shape what comes next. From administrators advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion to students designing new programs and initiatives on their own, the field is in motion.

This issue of the *IIE Networker* explores the leadership ideas, roles, and structures emerging at this dynamic moment. The articles that follow open a conversation on what directions the field might now pursue, who must be at the table, and how we can achieve the shared understandings needed to advance us all.

While they examine varying aspects of international education leadership, these articles converge on two overarching principles. First, leadership is not confined to the head of an institution's international office, the international office, or an institution. By definition, a leader is anyone who initiates, motivates, organizes, counsels, or guides.

Second, international education calls for leadership that fits with the field's values and goals – leadership that is collaborative, networked, multivocal, and inclusive. Equitable co-creation must take its place alongside the values of learning and exchange that have long guided the field. And this co-creation must identify and include a wider range of participants than has sometimes been the case.

In this light, several articles demonstrate what is gained by recognizing how international education leadership might be threaded across many roles within an institution:

- Marshalling efforts of administrators, faculty, and staff to achieve “collective impact.”
- Recognizing chief academic officers as crucial drivers of a nexus of offices and individuals.
- Connecting international education to institutional priorities at community colleges, which educate a very large portion of U.S. students.
- Letting recent international alumni take the lead in developing programs for prospective and incoming students.

Other articles stress the collective, multi-perspectival conversations that must undergird program development, for example:

- The offices of Indigenous Education and Global Engagement at North Island College joined with First Nations Elders to envision what Indigenizing international education might look like.
- COIL program development, which moves from teacher-to-teacher planning to student-to-student explorations like passing the lead in a jazz ensemble.
- The articulated processes of collective self-reflection and sharing needed before leaders take action.

And two articles explore new directions toward which we might head:

- Considering our work's impact on the environmental and cultural heritages that make international education worthwhile.
- Moving away from the perception that international education is uniquely about student mobility.

The National Academy for International Education (NAIE) was honored to co-edit this issue. NAIE brings together global thought leaders and practitioners to advance international education in ways that address global challenges and build a more peaceful, sustainable, and equitable world. We enjoy conversations on key issues within the field – and exploring ways to embed the transformative power of international education into the field's decision-making and leadership is certainly one. We plan to continue this conversation, both online and in person, and invite you to join in. ●

Learning Beyond the Classroom

Dr. Peter Kilpatrick became the 16th president of The Catholic University of America (CUA) on July 1, 2022. Jason Czyz, IIE's Co-President and CUA alumnus (J.D. '09), interviewed him about the institution's leading principles and how global learning enhances student learning.

What were some of the first things you set out to accomplish in your first year in leadership?

The Catholic University of America is the only university founded by the U.S. bishops. Located in the nation's capital, it's one of the country's first research universities. We have unique values we believe should be more broadly recognized as making us a center for faith, excellence, and innovation. One of our most important goals is to double enrollment within the decade. We are already seeing the fruits of increased efforts to bring students to Catholic University. First-year enrollment, for example, is up significantly over last year.

The University's reputation as a research institution continues to grow as we further our partnership with NASA and other organizations. In June, we announced that more than \$500 million had been raised as part of our Light the Way campaign, which is funding scholarships and investments in our facilities for a better campus experience. Some of these scholarships are going toward first-generation college students as part

of our Take Flight program, which is an area I anticipate growing during my tenure.

Finally, we are always building on what makes the University so unique – our welcoming and joyful campus community and our firm commitment to our Catholic identity. Whether through our campus ministry, service to others, or events that bring people together, we want there to be even stronger unity on campus, where students look after each other and, once they graduate, carry that selflessness with them wherever they go.

Attracting more talent is critical to building a better, cleaner, healthier, safer, and more equitable world. The demand for better infrastructure and technology is global, so there is space to create more international opportunities for students and faculty.



Dr. Peter Kilpatrick greets students on Move In Day.

As we navigate a post-pandemic world, what are some of the key learnings from that time that you are bringing into CUA's vision and strategy going forward?

While I was not here during the height of the pandemic, my observation is that our University handled the situation very well – and somewhat differently than other institutions. We really wanted to have in-person learning while, of course, wanting everyone to be safe and comfortable, whether they were coming to work or to class.

Now, as we move further away from the pandemic, it's clear to me that the biggest lesson I can take away is that people thrive when they are working together and engaging each other socially and professionally. We find ourselves through our relationship with God and with others. Through collaboration and interpersonal relationships and the giving of ourselves to others, we can become who we are called to be. Communication is critical to success. Whether it is sharing the story of the University to attract top talent or connecting our community members to professional opportunities, clear and consistent communication is key.

When we communicate clearly, we provide certainty. And when there is a sense of certainty, trust is gained. This is vitally important in a crisis situation or even in everyday life.

What role do international education and global learning play at CUA?

The word 'catholic' means universal and a global outlook has always been a part of our mission. Our international students, more than 400 from 80-plus countries, are critical to the success of this University. In addition, our campus in Rome and our study abroad programs provide opportunities for students to directly interact with different countries and cultures, providing a richer educational experience.

We live in a global society, and the education we provide must ensure each student graduates with an understanding of how we are connected to our brothers and sisters around the world. This is why we introduced the

Global Connections program last year where we invite Ambassadors and experts from other countries to offer their perspectives on key issues that affect us all.

What do you feel are some of your most important responsibilities in leading a higher education institution today?

My goal is to make sure each student is getting an education that goes beyond the classroom. At The Catholic University of America we take seriously the responsibility that we are to – as our founder Pope Leo XIII charged – give the Nation its best citizens. That's the mission of our faculty and staff.

Blessed Basil Moreau once said, "Education is the art of helping young people to completeness; for the Christian, this means education is helping a young person to be more like Christ, the model of all Christians." Adhering to this timeless message and our mission will ensure this University is here for another 137 years of growth, innovation, and academic excellence.

With your background as an engineer, what can we learn from that field in terms of international collaboration and student or faculty mobility?

There is an increased need and demand for engineers to serve society in all fields. Engineering bachelor's degree holders make seminal contributions not only in the field of engineering, but in sales, as CEOs of companies, medical doctors, lawyers, and as leaders of startup companies.

Attracting more talent is critical to building a better, cleaner, healthier, safer, and more equitable world. The demand for better infrastructure and technology is global, so there is space to create more international opportunities for students and faculty. The education that our engineers receive at Catholic University prepares them to work in global environments by encouraging them to develop a worldview where they see their potential careers within the context of contributing to society. ●

Through collaboration and interpersonal relationships and the giving of ourselves to others, we can become who we are called to be. Communication is critical to success.

The National Security Education Program Builds the Next Generation of Leaders Within the Federal Government

Excerpt from “Celebrating 30 years of the National Security Education Program”, a commemorative booklet honoring the National Security Education Program (NSEP). NSEP is an initiative of the Defense Language and National Security Education Office (DLNSEO).

During the past 30 years, NSEP has transformed the federal hiring landscape to meet the evolving needs of federal agencies with national security responsibilities. From developing new programs that meet specific needs in the workforce to creating targeted methods for finding future leaders, NSEP provides the federal government with highly skilled professionals.

Since 1994, NSEP award recipients have worked in nearly 5,000 national security positions, with more than three quarters at the Departments of Defense, State, and Homeland

Security, as well as within the intelligence community. Many NSEP graduates have gone on to assume leadership positions across these priority agencies.

NSEP recognizes that 21st century national security challenges are broad and works to help awardees launch careers in countless professions throughout the federal government. NSEP alumni have been appointed to many different organizations, from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to the Department of Justice’s Criminal Division, bringing high-level language and culture skills to each office.

Creating Opportunities

To meet the federal government’s diverse needs, NSEP has developed specialized programs for a wide range of individuals from unique backgrounds. Project Global Officer (Project GO) is an initiative aimed at improving the language skills, regional expertise, and intercultural communication skills of future military officers by supporting ROTC students. The Language Training Centers program provides high-quality university instruction for military, reserve, and civilian DoD personnel. The English for Heritage Language



Janette Wu, Hunter College Chinese Flagship Program Alumna, 2020.

From developing new programs that meet specific needs in the workforce to creating targeted methods for finding future leaders, NSEP provides the federal government with highly skilled professionals.

Speakers (EHLS) program provides native speakers of critical languages with the opportunity to use their expertise in highly specialized federal jobs. Through targeted programs like these, in addition to programs with wider applicant demographics such as the Boren Awards, NSEP has successfully addressed many different areas of national security needs.

NSEP also has created extensive placement mechanisms for federal agencies to hire awardees who are ready to use their language, culture, and regional training to benefit U.S. national security. As part of this effort, NSEP continues to establish and strengthen federal partnerships with hiring managers throughout the federal government to identify opportunities for awardees. During the past 10 years alone, NSEP has posted hundreds of employment opportunities on behalf of offices in the Department of Defense, Homeland Security, and State and the intelligence community.

The Steps to Success

Exclusive hiring authorities granted by Congress have made it simple to bring an NSEP award recipient into the federal workforce. Through one of these hiring authorities, any federal agency with national security responsibilities can non-competitively appoint an NSEP awardee to the excepted service and then convert them to career or career-conditional appointment without further competition. Through this mechanism, NSEP alumni with critical skills can more efficiently find opportunities to support national security initiatives.

NSEP has transformed how new talent – the next generation of leaders – is brought into the federal government and continues to play an ever-increasing role in creating a workforce ready to serve 21st century national security needs. ●



Joyce Keeley, Boren Scholar to Tanzania, 2011.

What's Missing in International Education Leadership?

By William I. Brustein, Professor Emeritus, West Virginia University; Research Associate, Department of Sociology, University of Pittsburgh; Member, National Academy for International Education

International and higher education are facing significant challenges in the U.S. Public support for higher education in general and international education in particular are dwindling. Several factors account for the decline in public support for higher education, including a rise in anti-intellectualism, a troubling geopolitical environment, a set of perplexing domestic challenges, a rising tide of isolationism, and economic protectionism. Consequently, more and more people in the U.S. question the value and relevance of both a higher education degree and support for international engagement.

Amidst the challenges facing international higher education, too many in the field continue to think and act reactively, rather than understanding we are at a key inflection point or possibly a paradigm shift for international education. More specifically, international educators continue to double down almost exclusively on ways to overcome the decline in international student mobility.

For many years, study abroad and international student recruitment were the bread and butter of campus international offices. International educators were able to gain the attention of senior university leadership by emphasizing the revenue streams created by these student mobility programs. Among other factors, the recent pandemic brought that golden era to a halt. Unfortunately, too many international education offices built a *raison d'être* around student mobility and now are reaping the consequences of a near total dependence on a waning tide – namely, declining international student enrollments. We must stop bemoaning the flow of enormous numbers of Chinese students willing to pay a premium for admission to our institutions as nearing an end. While there are other regions of the world where we should be investing

our resources to attract students and build partnerships (e.g., Southeast Asia, South Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa), the field of international education must think beyond student mobility. It is significant to note that increasing student intake from regions outside of East Asia such as from sub-Saharan Africa is unlikely to replace the hefty revenue streams for universities, which Chinese enrollments produced for students and their families in these non-East Asian regions may lack the financial resources to compensate for the loss of high-paying Chinese students.

Most importantly, we need to embrace forward-looking innovative strategies that speak to the value-added contributions of international education for the present and future. International educators, as well as higher education leaders, can and should make the case that international education can play a key role in addressing local and regional community challenges while providing new growth opportunities.

Build for the Future

What's the path forward for the field of international education? It's essential international education leaders quickly distance the field of international education from the perception international education is uniquely about student mobility. We need to embrace issues for which we're well-suited to address and coordinate. International educators need to commit to and promote an inclusive and multi-layered network of community, corporate, non-profit, and university partners dedicated to addressing critical local and global issues through focused, multi-dimensional engagement and collaboration in research, teaching, and service on a global stage. The public wants to see evidence of the

contributions international education makes to an improvement to their livelihoods.

Higher education is obliged to prioritize its civic responsibility mission; the growing partnership between the University of Pittsburgh and Newcastle University is one example. Both universities are high-intensive research institutions located in comparable regions having suffered from a post-industrial decline. Under the auspices of the two universities' international offices, the partners designed a framework examining the role universities can play in building sustainable, just, and inclusive cities and regions.¹

Among several planned initiatives undertaken by the partners is their effort to serve as principal coordinators of regional development for Northern Appalachia in the U.S. and Northumberland in the UK with a special emphasis in the field of medicine. Local and regional leaders applaud the key contributions these two universities are making to improve the livelihoods of their local and regional citizenry. It's this type of engagement spearheaded by our universities that will prosper no matter who wins in the next major elections in the U.S. or in Britain's next general elections.

International educators are well-positioned to facilitate and, in some cases, to lead cross-national initiatives aimed at improving the livelihood of their local and regional communities. Such efforts will not only contribute to improving the welfare of our citizenry, but can restore the public's esteem for higher education and international education. ●

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Who is Leading Whom and How?

Equitable Co-Leadership Through COIL Virtual Exchange

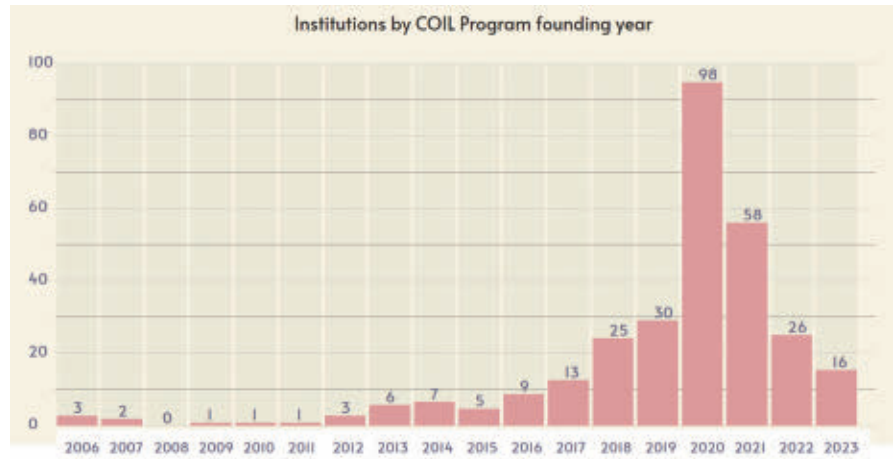
By Jon Rubin, Director, COIL Connect for Virtual Exchange and COIL Consulting, Founder and former Director of the SUNY COIL Center

A successful international program at a higher education institution requires strong local leadership to grow and sustain. But how do leadership practices vary internationally and how must they adapt when leading across diverse cultural settings? One core value of internationalization is working with those who have different worldviews, practices, and goals. Therefore, the processes and practices of leadership, usually developed locally, must be exercised with awareness when engaging international partners who may enact leadership differently. Leadership across borders can provide engagement, guidance, and respect, or it can become a domineering and overbearing hegemonic force. Local leadership practices are not universal.

Indeed, the cultures of international offices around the world often are as different as the peoples of the regions where they are based. These cultural differences lead to localized styles of leadership, which can lead to misunderstandings across international partnerships. Leadership doesn't have to mean wielding power. Listening carefully and showing respect also can be leadership qualities. Co-leadership is another approach to reconceiving partnerships.

The Starting Line

COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) Virtual Exchange is a format of international exchange and engagement. It has grown during the past 20 years (see graph) from a mélange of diverse, individually driven, faculty-based initiatives towards a more institutionalized model, first developed at the State University of New York (SUNY), and then emergent at an array of programs and initiatives around the world.



This graph, drawn from an array of surveys located on the COIL Connect website (coilconnect.org), represents the growth of COIL during the past 18 years (as of July 15, 2023). Its organized by the year each member institution founded their COIL Program.

COIL pedagogy is based upon linking two or more classrooms, based in different settings and cultures, so students share a learning experience through collaborative projects, usually by working in small groups to explore a topic or develop a project. These "COILs" run from four to eight weeks and are embedded in existing classes, often bringing together different disciplines. The individual classes may be online or face-to-face, but the joint COIL activity always is online.

Because the COIL format is so profoundly bilateral, it's an active space where instructors, who design these joint experiences, and then the participating students, must first communicate, then cooperate and collaborate if they're to create meaningful joint outcomes. Each of these three stages require leadership to initiate dialogue and exchange, but the lead must gradually shift first from teacher to teacher, as the course is designed, and later between different students in their working groups, so they can learn

from each other and contribute to a joint, interculturally meaningful outcome. Successful COIL projects develop like a jazz band passing the lead from one to the next as they hear each other play. The central activity of a COIL exchange is more like forming an ensemble than completing a task.

COILs also can be a testbed for leadership fluidity and an opportunity to be led by others in an interculturally productive framework. Managing this interaction requires insight and sensitivity to different leadership styles and cultural contexts. The teachers and staff who co-design these projects need to be receptive to these leadership shifts. Collaboration takes time and requires cognitive flexibility. For some participants the challenge of this format is a transformative intervention.

Building Strong Foundations

Beyond their conjoined classrooms, COIL exchanges raise many interesting issues structurally and administratively. The COIL format is engaging more teachers and

institutions, but still seeks an appropriate home at many universities, underwritten by support from those with resources. Many COIL virtual exchange programs are managed by the international programs office, but most international offices aren't organized to develop or support credit-bearing courses. This requires a different set of skills and different leadership qualities than do most physical mobility endeavors and must be learned through practice. COIL can become an opportunity to develop these skills while internationalizing the curriculum, a goal that many institutions seek. Who should lead this activity and how should they accomplish that end?

In recent years, many institutions have created a COIL coordinator position, as was first developed and employed at SUNY with their international COIL partner institutions beginning around 2011. This individual may be part- or full-time and typically has multiple responsibilities. They usually work with faculty to help find partners and develop their COIL courses, but they also act as a

liaison between academic programs and the international office. Because COIL necessarily links to so many units across institutions (online learning, teaching and learning, international research, etc.) these coordinators often become key cross-campus connectors.

Dynamic COIL coordinators are critical to the development of robust COIL programs, but rarely are placed in leadership positions. This may partially be due to the relatively recent timeframe of institutional commitments to COIL. Nevertheless, coordinators are, in fact, tasked with a complex and responsible leadership role. They link their campus to other universities, while managing and guiding an array of co-taught intercultural classrooms that engage other countries and perspectives in unique ways. Due to the bilateral position of COIL exchanges, guiding their growth and development requires exactly the type of non-hegemonic leadership that's key for the future of international and intercultural exchange. COIL practices should become a training ground where COIL

coordinators and instructors become exemplars of a new kind of international leadership, linking our highest academic ideals to the most meaningful, sustainable, and bilateral international partnerships.

To provide a forum and dialogic space for those developing COIL at dispersed academic institutions around the world, COIL Connect for Virtual Exchange (coilconnect.org) was launched in 2020. It has grown quickly to more than 300 institutional members, which are represented by their COIL coordinators/program managers, in addition to 1,500 general members located in 46 countries.

COIL Connect is developing a focus on partnering and co-leadership within COIL practices and by COIL experienced professionals that we hope will be transformative for the field. In time, we expect this community will produce the co-leadership and connected leadership desperately needed by our fragmenting world – and these practitioners will become central to re-establishing our interconnectedness. ●



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Land of Ideas

Leading Together: A Journey Toward Indigenizing International Education

By Sara Child, Indigenous Education Coordinator; Mark Herring, Executive Director, Office of Global Engagement; Romana Pasca, Manager International Projects, Partnerships and Global Education; and Kelly Shopland, Executive Director, Office of Indigenous Education, North Island College

North Island College (NIC) is honored to acknowledge the combined 35 First Nations of the Nuu-chah-nulth, Kwakwaka'wakw and Coast Salish nations, on whose traditional and unceded territories the college's campuses are situated.

These territories are located in a temperate rainforest stretching from mid-Vancouver Island more than 80,000 sq km north to the central coast of British Columbia. The region is sparsely populated, made up of cities, towns, and remote communities separated by ocean and mountains; connected by highways, backroads, floatplanes, and boats. NIC has four campuses and delivers in-community programming in multiple small communities throughout this region.

Indigenization is the ongoing process that calls upon us to create transformative environments across our college that weave local Indigenous knowledge systems together with the distinct knowledge systems reflected across our college community. Indigenization supports a fundamental shift that enables learners, faculty, and staff to understand, appreciate and mutually respect one another.¹ The journey to Indigenize international education requires significant leadership from across the institution. NIC's strategic plan, *BUILD 2026*, and NIC's first Indigenization plan, *Working Together*, express an institutional commitment to further support Indigenization, decolonization, and reconciliation at NIC and position NIC as an Indigenous-led institution.

At NIC, we've come to realize that the evolution of Indigenization and international education is integrally tied to the concept of what it means to be Indigenous serving. "Our vision of weaving Indigenization and internationalization is rooted in NIC's collective commitment to become a truly Indigenous-serving institution, toward a future reimagined for the well-being of this generation and those yet to come. Our goal is to leave a legacy of hope that aligns with the beliefs and aspirations of the Indigenous people and the communities we serve."²

Our journey to Indigenize international education at NIC started with discussions between representatives from the First Nations on whose territory NIC operates,

Indigenous Elders, our communities, our colleagues, and our international partners. As we began to find our direction through these discussions, the last question we asked was, "Why wouldn't we do this?" Then we were off on our journey together to develop one of the world's first Indigenizing international education plans.

The Office of Indigenous Education (OIE) laid the foundation for this new international education direction by creating NIC's Indigenization plan, established in tandem with NIC's strategic plan. *Working Together* was the result of a broad and deep consultation with more than 150 First Nations community members, Indigenous Elders, the Indigenous Education Council and regional representatives, all levels of institutional administration, students, faculty, and staff. The leadership for the development of the resulting plan, therefore, was built with the input of many voices addressing collective interests through respectful decision-making.

Journeying Together

OIE also held a symposium in summer 2022 that included NIC's Office of Global Engagement (OGE), which sparked a conversation about what collaboration between the two teams to expand Indigenization could look like. This led us to create our Indigenizing international education strategy called "Journeying Together: A transformative approach to Indigenization and internationalization at NIC."

The conversation also happened globally, which further influenced the development of Journeying Together as we engaged with international partners and Indigenous people who have lived experience with colonization and educational systems designed to assimilate Indigenous people into the settler culture. As Sara Child describes, "The struggle of Indigenous people to have our land, territory, languages, culture, ways of knowing and being reclaimed, and our history recognized is a global struggle that has been going on for generations. Is it not time to put an end to mere conversations, ramp up our efforts, and demonstrate a commitment to action?" (S. Child, personal communication, 2023)

NIC brought together key individuals from diverse backgrounds, intentionally including Indigenous and non-Indigenous people from across the Pacific. Together, we created a transformative idea: What would it mean if we were truly Indigenous serving?



NIC Indigenous Language Revitalization Field School students and faculty at signing ceremony with Hawaiian students and faculty from Kapi'olani Community College in Honolulu in spring 2022.



Visit of Kapi'olani Community College Vice Chancellor Nawa'a Napoleon to Ōā pix ʻŌidaʻas at NIC Campbell River to discuss further Indigenous exchange opportunities with representatives from the Office of Indigenous Education and the Office of Global Engagement in April 2023.

As a result of our Journeying Together strategy, and our attempt to become Indigenous serving, together we have developed:

- Increased international student engagement in local Indigenous cultural, language, social, and academic opportunities on campuses and in communities.
- Increased faculty development opportunities locally through Indigenous-focused activities on the land; internationally in Brazil, Mexico, and Costa Rica; and through COIL training and delivery.
- Project support for an Indigenous Language Revitalization Field School in Hawaii and a COIL project in Costa Rica titled "Interculturality: Weaving Indigenous Pedagogies."
- Budget support designated from the OGE to support the OIE to deliver aspects of Journeying Together.
- Financial support for environmental sustainability with Indigenous communities including Kelp Habitat Banking and the Nass Foods (Kelp) Project.
- Federal funding for an Indigenous language revitalization project: Virtual Reality Technology Innovative Solutions.
- Colleges and Institutes Canada funded project: Indigenous COIL/Virtual Exchange Special Topics Framework.

Though the process of internationalization has in many cases become associated primarily with the revenue generated through the recruitment of international students, the OGE/OIE are committed to this Indigenous

international education process not serving a financial/ revenue generating purpose, but an institutionally transformative purpose.

In spring 2024, we're working to bring our international Indigenous partner institutions together on Vancouver Island for NIC's proposed "International Indigenous Partnerships: Transformative Education Symposium" to begin comparing our institutional and community experiences on our shared journey weaving a new future for education.

We're considering a future where Indigenous equity exists in the full sense of the word across the academy and throughout our global society. Working together with Indigenous communities and attracting new Indigenous partners from around the world will focus the conversation and help us to chart our way forward globally for this vitally important journey.

A simple conversation can lead to transformative change if we begin those conversations with open minds. Our journey to fulfil our commitments to Indigenization has led us to realize the integral importance of fully exploring all perspectives (local and international) about what it means to be Indigenous serving. ●

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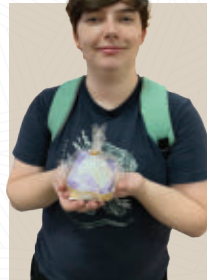
Exchange Together, We Build Tomorrow



Uniquely located in the heart of Hong Kong – Asia's world city, City University of Hong Kong (CityU) is an innovative hub for world-class research and education.

CityU comprises 10 colleges and schools, covering Business, Engineering, Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, Science, Veterinary Medicine and Life Sciences, Creative Media, Data Science, Energy and Environment, Law, and Graduate Studies. In addition, CityU's 28 academic units help people to obtain knowledge in different domains and develop good habits in ethics, intellect and social skills to prepare them for an ever-changing world. CityU nurtures its students as they establish a foundation of interests and positive attitudes looking forward, enabling them to understand their own needs, identify goals and build their lives for tomorrow.

As an international university, CityU emphasises diversity, intercultural learning and a global vision. Our distinguished faculty are recruited from all over the world. We have also established an excellent international network of academic collaborations and developed global agreements with over 400 student exchange parties from more than 40 countries/ jurisdictions. Our graduates are thoughtful, adaptable and open-minded global citizens who go on to make the world a better place.



Living and travelling in Hong Kong

Zoe Cooper, an Australian exchange student who was studying Mechatronic Engineering at Wollongong University, was a true pioneer in experiencing Hong Kong's culture and geography during her year-long visit. Her Hong Kong studies provided her with the opportunity to step out of her comfort zone by meeting various challenges and thriving in Hong Kong's multicultural environment.

Zoe shared her Hong Kong experiences, such as when she embarked on escapades by randomly hopping off a train at any station and just wandering around exploring the local neighbourhood. She visited Prince Edward to get a taste of the old and new Hong Kong culture. She also visited more residential neighbourhoods with a wide variety of local cafes and stores. One day, Zoe even hopped on a ferry to visit the beautiful island of Cheung Chau with its gorgeous fishing village. The journey took 30 to 40 minutes and she enjoyed the island's natural scenery and tranquillity. Zoe really appreciated the secure environment of Hong Kong's highly sophisticated transport network, including both public and private transport, which is very safe even for solo travellers.



Culture shock is considered common among international students who come to study in places that are foreign to them. Zoe may be an exception to this rule. In some ways, she did not experience much culture shock because she had previously moved to new environments and then adapted to the new culture, such as when she moved from the small regional Australian city of Goulburn to embark on her higher education in Wollongong. After that experience, Zoe was not much perturbed by moving to Hong Kong to pursue her studies as an exchange student.

Studying at CityU

Zoe mentioned that one of the greatest factors in her decision to become a CityU exchange student was the University's extensive choices of courses, which gave her the opportunity to add value to her engineering major. She chose a number of courses delivered by the School of Energy and Environment that were not available at her home university. These courses greatly complemented her engineering major by contributing a variety of science- and energy-related knowledge, such as on efficient, environmentally friendly and sustainable energy supply and use.

Zoe was excited about taking part in a research internship at CityU, which would equip her with knowledge and experience in conducting research. This experience would greatly support Zoe in completing her final research after leaving CityU and returning to her home university in Wollongong before graduation. She could not be happier.

Meeting at CityU and the City

Zoe said it was not easy to name a single defining characteristic of her time at CityU, as she had experienced so many unique enjoyable moments during her Hong Kong studies. However, one aspect of CityU that was interesting to her was the people, whom she described as affable and welcoming. She also volunteered to work as a mentor at the English Language Centre at CityU, where she interacted with English language students for 8 weeks. They played Pictionary together, which made learning and speaking in English very easy and natural. Sometimes they even hung out and explored Hong Kong together. Zoe said that she liked how simple, natural and enjoyable her conversations were, which allowed these new friendships to grow easily.

Some of Zoe's fondest memories were meeting her friends and other new students at different social events and activities. In particular, Zoe enjoyed attending the Survival Cantonese Class at CityU, where she learned some Cantonese to make her life in Hong Kong more authentic. Moreover, she mentioned the activities run by different clubs and associations in Hong Kong as being another key difference between her home university and CityU, such as paddling dragon boats and playing mah-jong. She described these activities as opportunities to experience and learn something new outside her field of study and get an authentic taste of the local Hong Kong culture.

Zoe's wonderful time creating many lovely memories with her new friends made Hong Kong and CityU special, and she certainly would like to return to visit Hong Kong again.

REACH OUT TO US

CityU strives to form new partnership collaborations between universities for strong impacts. Please contact us at geo@cityu.edu.hk for further discussion.

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It's About Priorities: Internationalization in Community Colleges

By Robin Helms, Vice President, Membership and Educational Services,
Association of Community College Trustees; Member, National Academy for International Education

In the 18 months since I began my role at the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), I've had the opportunity to take a deep dive into the community college sector, and explore with institutional leaders – including board members, ACCT's primary constituency – how international education is manifested in and impacts their institutions. Overall, I'm finding considerable enthusiasm for global learning in our two-year colleges, and an impressive wealth of talent and expertise for advancing internationalization activities.

In an era of tight budgets and competing priorities, articulating and enacting the connection between international education and broader sector priorities is crucial in garnering support for this work. In my discussions with community college leaders about this intersection, three key themes have emerged, and they inform how leaders can make the case for global learning among their constituents.

Workforce Development: Global and Intercultural Competencies Are Critical

Perhaps more than any other sector of higher education, supporting the local economy by providing a well-trained workforce and graduates with the specific skills needed by local industry is an explicit cornerstone of community college missions. Increasingly, state funding for colleges is tied to workforce outcomes, and institutions are partnering closely with companies and organizations on innovative programs to ensure students get good jobs and are well prepared for employment.

Based on my conversations with college trustees – many of whom are local business leaders – the need for graduates who can operate effectively in a global organization is clear and very



Walnut Ridge High School students enjoy the Be Pro Be Proud Mobile Workshop on the Black River Technical College Campus (BRTC). Jessica Rainwater/BRTC Communication Specialist

much recognized. Some communities are home to multinational companies that require employees to collaborate regularly with colleagues in other parts of the world. But even small local businesses need employees who can navigate different languages, cultures, communication styles, and time zones – such as the manufacturing company owned by a trustee I recently spoke with in Wyoming, which has established a relationship with a supplier in Colombia. Community colleges also are critical providers of service-sector and healthcare education. Graduates in these fields

need to be able to interact effectively with international populations, from tourists to immigrants, to succeed in their chosen work and contribute to the local economy. Community colleges are critical venues for students to acquire these skills in the classroom and beyond.

Enrollment: An International Outlook Can Broaden the Student Base

The community college sector was hit particularly hard by pandemic enrollment declines. Enrollments are showing signs of rebounding, but

ensuring robust student numbers remains top-of-mind for institutional leaders. For some colleges, international students are a significant and growing part of the enrollment equation; others do not have the infrastructure to recruit internationally or to support an influx of degree-seeking international students and ensure their academic and overall success. Because community colleges also are leaders in providing certificates and other non-degree credentials, however, there may be opportunities to enroll students from abroad in shorter term programs. During a recent meeting I had with a delegation from Indonesia, government officials expressed keen interest in enrolling Indonesian university faculty in community college certificate programs to advance their content knowledge and attain a recognized credential in a high-demand field.

An internationally oriented institution, with a curriculum and programs that include global content and intercultural opportunities, is attractive not only to prospective international students, but also to globally minded domestic students, including those with a multicultural background. Community colleges often are the gateway to higher education for immigrant families, both for new high school graduates and also older students who need a U.S. credential or are changing careers. Sending a message that globally diverse cultural backgrounds, languages, and perspectives are valued and cultivated, and that students will have the opportunity to acquire global skills to position them for career success, potentially widens the applicant base and can lead to sustained enrollment over time.

“Divisiveness Fatigue”: Communities Need Examples of Civil Engagement

Glancing at the headlines of virtually any newspaper shows clear evidence of a divided country and society. It can feel like there is continual pressure to choose sides – politically, socially, religiously, and on specific issues – then dig in one’s heels and advocate for one standpoint. As I talk with



BRTC Machine Tool Technology student Caden Eaton displays Nubbins 3D-printed prosthetics. Jessica Rainwater/BRTC Communication Specialist.

campus leaders and more broadly with friends and colleagues, however, I am starting to perceive what I’ve termed “divisiveness fatigue”. While divisiveness may not be decreasing (and indeed continues to increase), my sense is that we are collectively getting tired of the vitriol and rhetoric, and recognize the need for a different operating mode.

This divisiveness occurs throughout colleges, from the classroom all the way to the boardroom and, in extreme cases, impedes institutional governance, and ultimately hurts student success. Beyond campus, it’s playing out in school board meetings, workplaces, and a wide range of settings. Communities need citizens able to acknowledge and respect different viewpoints, work together across differences, and still accomplish collective work. As locally embedded institutions, community colleges are well positioned to model effective civic engagement and to help students acquire the communication skills to work across differences on campus and after graduation. By bringing students into contact with peers from different backgrounds and fostering collaboration across differences in a structured setting, internationalization and global engagement activities are a mechanism to build these skills.

A Compelling Narrative

Framing the goals and outcomes of internationalization and global engagement activities in terms of the three priorities highlighted here, as well as specific institutional priorities at the local level, can be a powerful tool for community college leaders in garnering support for international activities among campus constituents, from their governing bodies and from legislators who determine institutional budgets.

In countless conversations, when the topic turns to global learning, I’ve seen trustees’ eyes light up when they describe examples of targeted, multi-faceted partnerships with counterpart institutions – often catalyzed by a faculty connection – that include short-term mobility, virtual exchange, and other classroom-based collaboration to help students acquire global and intercultural skills. With their deep local ties and community-embedded ethos, colleges often are able to engage community members in these relationships to the benefit of students and everyone involved.

As the international education community enacts its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, we can support community college leaders by ensuring these success stories are told and their voices and expertise are a valued part of conversation about how we ensure all students have access to global learning. ●

Primacy of Process in International Education

By Hilary Kahn, Associate Vice Chancellor for International Affairs, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis; Hilary Landorf, Assistant Vice President of Global Learning Initiatives, Florida International University; Joanna Regulski, Vice Provost and Dean of Global Affairs, University of California, Davis; and Dawn Michele Whitehead, Vice President, Office of Global Citizenship for Campus, Community, and Careers, American Association of Colleges and Universities; Members, National Academy for International Education

Approximately two years ago, and based on our inaugural membership in the newly formed National Academy of International Education (NAIE), a handful of international educators became part of an ongoing knowledge community. We participated in regular zoom conversations on equitable global learning and where to go at this crossroads moment in our profession.

As we discussed the future of global learning, we always came back to diversity, equity, inclusion, and participation in global learning. These issues gradually led us to our own global learning stories concerning foundational moments of global learning in our personal and professional lives. We found we needed to surface our own global learning roots, our paths to our positions as global learning leaders, and what we learned from these moments. In sharing these moments, we realized they serve as touchstones for each of us and our unique approaches to global learning, the ecosystems in which we operate as global learning leaders, and the activities we promulgate. Through writing and conversation, we discovered global learning leadership involves an iterative process of collective knowledge production in which global learning stories are shared, and that setting this process in motion is a leadership goal in itself.

The Holistic Approach

A focus on positionality and critical reflection has direct ramifications on our leadership. Global learning leaders require cultural humility – recognizing everyone has different positions and frameworks, our positions are constantly renegotiated in our encounters,

The following are examples of global learning touchstones that guide our leadership. We are four women and international education leaders, all working at institutions of higher education and associations in the U.S. Three of us are from the U.S. and one is from Eastern Europe; three identify as white and one identifies as Black; one of us identifies as a lesbian.

"There are many ways to think of how we became who we are and what lived experiences we want to recognize in our global journey. My research agenda, feminism, political activism, and engagement in global learning were born out of living under a communist regime, struggling with health challenges, being a single mother and a migrant, living in different cultures. To build a just world necessitates conscious and continued acknowledgment of the diversity of such experiences, recognition of collective power, and a lifelong commitment to creating inclusive spaces for learning for all."

"My global learning touchstone is ensuring that diverse perspectives are included through a collaborative learning process and comes directly from my own learning experiences. I grew up in New Haven, CT, during the height of the movement to integrate schools through busing. As a teenager, I was bused to a predominately African American and Latino public high school. My experience of my teachers' unpreparedness in facilitating students' learning with diversity led to my resolve in finding ways for diversity to become the catalyst for positive learning experiences for all."

"My global learning touchstone is seeing phenomena and people as complex prisms that are given meaning and made whole through multifaceted histories, perspectives, framings, and power. I'm a daughter of a Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany and an adventurous mother who embraced different cultures; I am a mother to Black and biracial children; and as an ethnographer and traveler, I've been a minority. I've come to understand discrimination, to know how the ability to access and wield power is far from equitable, and recognize our expressions of leadership are shaped by the prismatic people we are."

"My global learning touchstone is intentional global learning for all. Growing up in a predominately white community, the majority of my experiences involved being one of a few Black people or the only Black person in classrooms, my neighborhood, and my early international encounters. Initially, I just accepted this as the norm, but while I entered spaces with greater Black participation domestically, I still was one of a few in my global experiences. I became committed to exploring the reasons Black students participate in global experiences and successful strategies, programs, and ways to include all students in institutional global learning."



and there isn't one way to define and conduct global learning.¹ Just as important, and a complement to cultural humility, is the ability and willingness to draw on our own funds of knowledge, the deep-seated resources, understandings, and skills we carry with us,² and to seek out, recognize, and help others utilize their funds of knowledge in their study and work. We must also assume responsibility to amplify ways to confront inequities within international education.

Through our conversations, we have come to imagine the product of global

learning as an iterative process, which starts with self-reflection, continues with the sharing of our global learning stories, moves to action, and cycles back to reflection. Self-reflection and the sharing of foundational global learning moments and their meanings provide a pedagogical prism in which leaders and students alike gain critical skills and develop new knowledge. The process continues with applying the meanings we've gleaned from our stories into actions and engagements.

At this important crossroads in our profession, we offer this iterative

process to jumpstart the conversation on leadership in international education. We encourage your engagement in this process. What is one of your global learning touch stones, and how does it connect to your leadership approaches, strategies, and actions? ●

We thank all the active National Academy of International Education Global Learning working group members for their oral and written contributions to the ongoing iterative process of leadership in global learning: Cristina Alfaro, Wondwossen Gebreyes, Catherine Gomes, Keiko Ikeda, Hilary Kahn, Hilary Landorf, Joanna Regulska, and Dawn Michele Whitehead.

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Employing Collective Impact to Build Access and Equity in International Education:

An Interview with Higher Education Leadership

In an interview with Lindsay Gee Calvert, Director of the IIE Center for Access and Equity, Elizabeth H. Simmons, Executive Vice Chancellor at the University of California San Diego, shares some of her key priorities in leading the university today.

Can you briefly share your path to leadership and what your current role entails?

After earning degrees in physics from Harvard University and the University of Cambridge, I spent a decade as a member of the theoretical high-energy physics faculty at Boston University. I was recruited to Michigan State University to lead Lyman Briggs College, which offers degrees blending STEM fields with the history, philosophy, and sociology of science. In 2017, I became the executive vice chancellor at UC San Diego. As the institution's chief academic officer, I'm responsible for policies and decisions relating to all academic programs and curriculum, instructional support programs, and faculty appointments and curriculum.

As a higher education leader, what are some of the key issues that guide your institutional priorities and decision-making?

As U.S. higher education grapples with the Supreme Court's ban on affirmative action in admissions and state governments' challenge diversity initiatives, universities must sustain their commitment to equity and inclusion. This crucial work begins with efforts to recruit a broad applicant pool and yield diverse enrollees. We then strive to close equity gaps among matriculated students, in part by ensuring that all students have equal access to the high-impact educational practices known to boost students' academic success and personal growth.

The impacts of global educational experiences are clear: they equip students to analyze and adapt in an interdependent world, teach them the value of varied, multicultural perspectives, and immerse them in new linguistic and cultural contexts. All are vital in times like these when economic tensions and military conflicts are straining relationships among long-time allies, as well as traditional rivals and when looming catastrophic climate change makes global partnerships essential. As higher education leaders, we should make international study and research opportunities broadly accessible and compelling so large, diverse cohorts of students will pursue them.



Within international education, where do you think we need to be more focused as we work towards increasing equity and access?

The 2022 *Open Doors*® Report suggests that, despite change during the past two decades, there's much room for improving equitable access to international education. U.S. study abroad students still are overwhelmingly white, female, and typically abled. Areas I'm focused on include first-generation students or those from under-resourced communities who may not realize that global study or research is within their reach via financial aid or targeted scholarships, and students who identify as LGBTQ+ or disabled who may have concerns about safety and logistics.

What are some of the tactics you have employed as a university leader to address some of these equity gaps?

At UC San Diego, we're using a collective impact approach¹ to close equity gaps for our students. This form of structured collaboration,² based around shared goals, metrics, data, and mutually reinforcing activities, is being applied throughout our Global Initiatives division and is helping staff engage more deeply with colleagues from other units. Collective work by vice chancellors, deans, faculty, and staff during our 2019-22 ACE Internationalization Lab³ established the crucial role our university's leaders can play in promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion in global education.

Can you share some examples of these initiatives?

First, **we offer a broad portfolio of international experiences** that serves students of all majors, is affordable to students of limited financial means, is safe for students of varied personal identities, and offers access to disparate cultures and locations.

For example, emphasizing destinations beyond Europe both offers new kinds of learning experiences and encourages more students to see study abroad as relevant to their backgrounds and academic interests.

We are devising innovative ways to provide international experiences and alternative opportunities for students of limited financial means. If your institution is near an international border, leverage that to create flexible programs that minimize housing and travel costs. For example, UC San Diego offers students the chance to do research on transborder marine estuaries or assist at refugee-focused free medical clinics.

We communicate to students that international education is truly “for them”; that it can be a safe, affordable, and life-altering experience that will impact their perspectives on studies and career plans. This requires a sustained, multi-faceted communication strategy, including faculty and peer ambassadors who can speak from personal experience. For instance, at UC San Diego, familiar faculty personally design and lead global seminars that provide study abroad access to students of all identities and regardless of means.

We model the importance of international experiences through the visible engagement of campus leaders. The head of UC San Diego’s Eleanor Roosevelt College emphasizes “developing world citizens” and the college hosts an international living-learning community. The director of our Materials Science and Engineering Program runs a summer research program uniting U.S. and Mexican students.

And we recruit global education staff with an array of identities and life experiences – including international participation. The former will help global education reflect diverse perspectives throughout its programs and services. The latter will help persuade diverse students that the university’s international opportunities are really meant “for them.”

How do you manage to achieve all of this across campus?

Such strategies flourish if the Global Initiatives division collaborates with other campus units. Curating a portfolio of international experiences requires partnering with departments to ensure that experiences are reliably available and address graduation requirements in multiple majors. Funding student participation is best done together with the financial aid office, development, and foundation relations offices. Communicating with students should leverage existing student and academic affairs channels like newsletters, social media, or advising meetings; partnering with student organizations focused on international issues or cultural expression can also be useful.



Is there anything else you’d like to share about your role or leadership in general?

In the current legislative, geopolitical, and environmental context, the power of visible commitment to international education by diverse, innovative, and responsive campus leaders cannot be overstated. UC San Diego is fortunate that the perspectives of our chancellor’s cabinet, deans, and other senior leaders are informed by an unusually wide range of personal identities and lived experiences. Our direct engagement with the globalization of our research portfolio, educational mission, and campus community is steadily building equitable access in an ever-changing world. ●

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The Chief Academic Officer: Catalyzing Connections

By Laura L. Behling, Ph.D., Professor of English, University of Puget Sound

Chief academic officers (CAOs) play a critical role in advancing international education given their responsibility for funding support, curriculum policies, and faculty development.¹ Yet, much of this work focuses on an individual student, a solitary faculty member, or a unique program.² CAOs, however, can utilize their position's broad vantage point across the student learning units of their institution to not only remove barriers,³ but to also serve as the nexus among international education, strategic initiatives, and aspirations.

During my service at four institutions as a director of faculty development, associate provost, or chief academic officer, I was engaged in short-term study abroad programs for faculty. In one iteration, the program had strong social justice and service-learning components that underscored these commitments in our students. In other iterations, I directed our efforts to a specific geographic region due to the long-standing strengths of the faculty and curriculum or capitalized on the theme of education in international sites recently re-opened to U.S. citizens to advance new global connections.

In addition to connecting international education to strategic commitments and other campus initiatives and offices, these programs enhanced the crucial role faculty play in advising students into study abroad programs. Not all faculty have had such experiences themselves and may be less likely to advise students toward international study. Periodic short-term study abroad programs for faculty not only provide firsthand international experience that leads to more effective international education advocacy, but also demonstrate institutional commitments to international and experiential education, intercultural and interpersonal engagement, and community-building among faculty colleagues.

Cornerstones of Success

CAOs are the crucial drivers of such programs. They're ideally situated to

demonstrate the program is part of institutional academic strategic direction and underscore the learning that occurs with new, diverse, and global perspectives. CAOs can suggest how certain themes in the short-term study abroad program for faculty or certain geographic regions already are deeply connected to the institution or could help forge stronger academic connections for the institution. Even more, CAOs also can ensure the program invites faculty in every discipline to participate.

In addition, implementing a short-term study abroad program for faculty requires resources. CAOs have precisely the knowledge of and responsibility for a significant part of an institution's staff and budget and are thus, positioned to champion these ideas. Additional support for international education staff to manage such a program may be necessary, and CAOs can manage such resources. Financially, such programs can be expensive, especially given the importance of institutional support to ensure all faculty know they can afford to participate. Given their high-level view, CAOs can explore options to fund the program, including endowed gifts already committed for international education or global area studies, annual operating budgets collected for multiple years, and support from foundations or other granting agencies – all sources I've tapped in my experiences with these programs.

Cast Your Vision

A short-term study abroad program for faculty is just one example of where CAO leadership can enact a vision that connects international education to other key institutional initiatives, aspirations, or existing programs. Collaborative online international learning (COIL) already links students in different countries as part of a class, utilizing online tools to include global considerations in coursework. A COIL-like experience

also could be instituted as part of U.S. and global institutions' summer student research programs, perhaps even creating a broad research topic to form an even more specialized project group. Students engaged in summer internships also could form such a global group; for example, those participating in internships in communications, public relations, and professional writing fields could share experiences of their work. Or an institution's commitment to global learning, including connecting with local diasporic populations, can be embedded in new student orientation programs. And academic departments, colleges, or multidisciplinary teams could be encouraged, rewarded even, for developing unique approaches to global learning that go beyond the occasional faculty-led study abroad program, such as career services sessions for students with employers and alumni working internationally.

As many institutions are operating within an environment of financial and enrollment uncertainty, connections are key to ramping up international education efforts post-pandemic. CAOs are ideally positioned on a campus to connect international education to other strategic directions, both curricular and co-curricular. Those academic leaders willing and able to serve and thrive as this nexus, will offer their institutions not only connection and collaboration that bring together previously distinct people and programs on their own campuses, but also connection and collaboration between their home institution and the world. ●

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Steering Student Journeys: Alumni Leaders in International Education

By Deborah Rosario, Senior EducationUSA Adviser, Mumbai

"Welcome, students, aboard this pre-departure orientation flight. I'm your captain for this journey. Strap on your seatbelts and get ready to be transported virtually from Mumbai to the U.S. and back." These are the words Ojas Rawal habitually uses when he conducts the annual pre-departure orientation hosted by EducationUSA Mumbai. His commitment is evident in his longstanding ties to EducationUSA and his university alma mater. His words are metaphoric of the powerful impact alumni leadership can have in steering students through the experience of international education. Through examples of Indian alumni from U.S. universities, the value of alumni leadership and mentorship is demonstrated.

Providing Firsthand Information

To use the aviation metaphor, alumni can pilot students from their own experience. After Rawal's graduation in 2008 from the University of South Florida, he served as an adviser to the Students of India Association and the Hindu Students Counsel, counseling them on hosting sessions for academic, professional, and personal development. His work in film takes him to the U.S. at least once a year and he revisits the campus to "learn about the new developments, see the campus improvements, meet faculty, and re-live memories," so he might better represent the university to students.

Yudi Jagani uses a different approach to reach students. After graduating from the University of California, Chico, in 2016, Yudi created a YouTube channel, "Yudi J," that now has 230,000 subscribers, primarily Indians in the U.S. and India, but also from countries in Asia, Africa, and Europe. He since has expanded to another 120,000 followers through LinkedIn, Instagram, and a newsletter. Through his channel, he discusses topics of student interest such as how to strategize with a low GRE score, criteria for selecting U.S. universities, or student life in the U.S.

Another U.S. alumnus, Hersh Gosar, a graduate of the University of Texas, Dallas, also uses YouTube to share his story and advice. His channel, "That Indian Guy," has about 50,000 subscribers. Abhitej Arora, who follows Gosar's channel and recently graduated from the same university, says Gosar's content gave him "a sense of relatability." He expounds further, "Some highlights from [Gosar's] channel are the application process and how to apply for scholarships, how to take care of the financials, and understanding the different education systems. He took time to share details about being an international student and what mistakes to avoid. When I look back, these details



Yudi Jagani filming at the campus of Stevens Institute of Technology, his alma mater.

Having been students themselves, alumni know how to answer the questions and assuage the worries that truly trouble students and are looked to as trusted and empathetic guides.

led to a better college journey for me as well as many other international students that I've talked to."

Having been students themselves, alumni know how to answer the questions and assuage the worries that truly trouble students and are looked to as trusted and empathetic guides. Prospective students perceive their information to be firsthand, authentic, and relevant.

Jagani started his advocacy journey when a 53-year-old classmate advised him to live life with no regrets, but he



Ojas Rawal visiting the University of South Florida campus as an alumnus.

stays involved because he sees “the impact I have had on people’s life because I have voice and reach.”

Rawal says about his role connecting with students, “My sole motivation is to ascertain that no other student has to face the perils that I had to face only because I was naive and had nobody to guide me. I wish that no student has to endure that pressure, bereavement, and culture shock.”

Building Bridges Back to the Home Country

Alumni also can have an impact in building bridges back to their home country. A stellar example of this is Rawal’s involvement with the University of South Florida. After graduation, he designed and taught two courses about India at USF’s Honors College. He also served on the committee that established the Center for Indian Studies.

Over the years, he conceptualized an Indian Healthcare Immersion Program (IHIP), an opportunity “for medical students at the USF Honors College to visit India and experience its private and public healthcare system first-hand.” He’s making progress towards this goal: “I’ve hosted



Yudi Jagani filming in New York City.

four international students at my Mumbai residence already, but the aim of IHIP is to bring an entire class of students.”

Similarly, Jagani has represented the perspective of international students on the CSU Chico Alumni Association board, providing feedback on new programs for students and alumni.

Leveraging Alumni Leadership

Alumni become pioneers – individuals who can organically and impactfully promote international education by demonstrating its opportunities and success. Therefore, it can be beneficial for universities to encourage and empower alumni who seek involvement, and to retain alumni engagement as a bridge to students of the alumni’s home country and in an advisory capacity for academic programs. Alumni passionate about their experiences and purpose make for powerful advocates, synergistically, both for the university and system of education they have studied in, and for their home culture, leading to enriching experiences for all. ●

It's Time for Sustainability Leadership in Education Abroad

By Emily Merson, Executive Director, AIFS Abroad

As international education leaders, we all have many important issues to address, but few present such existential threats to our professional mission as the environmental sustainability of our programs. While we regard our international, intercultural work as virtuous – where more must always be better – it's imperative to consider the impact of our work on the very world we use as our “classroom.” As a field, we must take a collective approach to sustainability and hold to account the market pressures that have become so apparent in our post-pandemic recovery.

The pandemic was another reminder that global threats require collective cooperation to solve. However, when it comes to sustainability in our field, we're far from taking that cooperative view on the collective environmental impact of international education. At the 2023 NAFSA Conference in Washington, D.C., universities and program providers alike lamented students' mass return to short-term programs concentrated in popular cities like Florence and Barcelona. Short-term programs based in program-saturated cities have a significant carbon footprint on a per-day average and are more likely to involve large groups taught by their own traveling faculty, that are high in travel, rather than embedding into a local educational institution.

Not only are longer term programs more environmentally considerate by per-day average, but affiliating with local institutions can be a crucial gateway to host communities' own sustainability initiatives and mitigation through more predictable participation and connection to local sustainability strategies. From understanding regional recycling practices to participating in conservation efforts, environmental action is driven by local priorities and can lend valuable perspective on our own approach.

Mindfulness vs. Normalcy

The trend for short programs in the world's most photographed cities like Florence and Barcelona has allowed for a quick return to student volume for many U.S. universities and providers. While it may be fueled by the temporary “revenge travel” trend as students follow tourists to Instagrammable locations, we need to take seriously its impact and how the pressure placed on local resources by thousands of visiting students is simply untenable for cities their size, and eventually will degrade the very quality of life students purport to seek. Revenge travel may be a marketing opportunity, but it's counter to the need for sustainable growth and fails to protect the communities where we operate programs.

Another pandemic-fueled sustainability challenge is the pressure faced by international education organizations to recover student enrollments and profits to ensure their



Students in Czech Republic work with a local artist to upcycle waste materials into jewelry.



AIFS Abroad students learning from Florentino gardeners about composting practices in Tuscany, Italy.

survival. During the effective shutdown of global mobility in 2020, many program providers had to seek large or wholesale funding from private equity and venture capital to stay afloat. In many ways, this was necessary, saving jobs around the world and preserving programs for students to return to once it was reasonable. But this funding came with an expectation for profits in a way that has not touched this field before. A

numbers-at-any-cost is approach is inherently difficult to reconcile with multipronged sustainability efforts. With three of the largest study abroad providers now owned by private bankers, profit goals and investment return may be at direct odds with environmentally sustainable practices. And so, we must lean into field-wide standards and insist sustainability plays a part in profit calculus through partnership or program approval criteria.

Of course, this requires everyone's involvement and most importantly a large-scale commitment from U.S. universities. The 2022 *Open Doors® Report* data indicated slightly more than half of U.S. universities consider the environmental impact of their education abroad activities, with varying degrees of concrete action. Thirteen percent developed concrete sustainability plans, 3% were funding carbon offsets for flights, and just 2% were members of the Climate Action Network for International Education (CANIE), which seeks collective action for the field. Perhaps surprisingly, a U.S. study abroad student may have a smaller carbon footprint in daily life abroad due to consumption differences like housing, transportation norms, and sometimes more sustainable practices of their host city.¹ However, a single long-haul commercial flight contributes more than most humans' total annual carbon footprint. Frankly, this must be addressed as we consider a goal of achieving environmental sustainability in particular.

Barriers to action are complex and include a lack of problem comprehension, misinformation about the high efficacy of carbon offsetting, and overall "issue fatigue."

Action for Leaders

Fortunately, there are achievable, realistic ways we can demonstrate critical leadership to pursue environmental sustainability in our field.

- **Sign the CANIE Accord:**² This global collective has a framework that engages organizations to make a small or large commitment and helps our field advance together towards sustainable best practices. www.canie.org.
- **Discern and design sustainable programs:** Choose host institutions and providers that demonstrate commitment to environmental best practices. Focus on longer programs to mitigate volume in "Instagram locations" and thoughtfully design short-term program options tied to degree majors rather than programs for all students.
- **Become educated in sustainability:** Action requires confidence, which starts with better understanding the challenges and solutions. CANIE provides a significant public resource library and includes scalable ideas on their website.

Action for the Field At-Large

- **Require sustainability reporting:** Member organizations can demonstrate leadership by requesting annual sustainability reports from members, allowing institutions to be better informed partners.

- **Develop collective standards:** It's time to standardize limits on student enrollment in highly popular locations and environmental standards for onsite housing and program delivery.
- **Set carbon neutrality goals for U.S. study abroad:** Leadership requires goal setting and to begin the serious work of carbon neutrality we need concrete commitments. Senior international officers, program provider CEOs, and international mobility organizations must aggregate emergent research to establish baseline carbon footprints, which can lead to meaningful offset practices in pursuing neutrality.

Moving an organization – let alone an entire field – toward greater sustainability requires significant political and organizational capital, which may be thin in this post-pandemic recovery. But if we do not protect the global environment which makes our programs impactful, we risk losing far more later. It's time to have honest conversations about how our field is changing and how we can lead priorities that ensure we meet our own aspirations when it comes to the important work we do. ●

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