

## **Internationalizing Student Affairs: Capitalizing on Leadership, Citizenship, and Scholarship**

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*This article advocates internationalizing student affairs by using leadership, citizenship, and scholarship to help college students understand, appreciate, and effectively navigate the many cultural differences among the human race. Preparing students to lead and serve in a global community is more than an ideal; it is an ethical obligation for all educators. The author also describes current opportunities and suggests a practical starting point for such efforts.*

The fall of international trade and investment barriers, as well as the advent of affordable intercontinental transportation and the information superhighway, have very quickly made national products into global ones. Higher education is no exception. In the 2000-2001 academic year, 547,867 international students studied in the United States, an increase of 6.4% over the prior year (Hey-Kyung, 2001). In the 1999-2000 academic year, 143,590 U.S. students studied abroad, an increase of 11% over the prior year and 61% over the past five years (Hey-Kyung, 2001). Furthermore, in spite of the terrorist attacks of September 11, international educators have reported little or no change in the percentage of international students returning home or U.S. students planning to study abroad (Hey-Kyung, 2001).

In addition to the transnational changes across the globe, there are many cultural changes taking place within the United States that affect higher education's global reputation. These changes are primarily due to the birthrates of ethnic minority groups and the influx of immigrants over the past century. In 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau projected

that by 2060 the present racial-ethnic minority population will exceed the White, non-Hispanic population in the United States. Further, the most recent profile of the U.S. economy reveals that between 1992 and 1997, minority-owned businesses grew 30%, more than four times faster than the national average (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001). In the United States, therefore, the aim of higher education is not only to address global issues but also to give students and community members a better understanding of the nation's diversity.

According to De Wit (2002), the internationalization of higher education is the process by which an institution integrates an international and intercultural dimension into its teaching, research, and service functions. Not surprisingly, higher education is internationalizing its organizational structure, leadership, curriculum, programs, students, and educators for a variety of reasons, including: capitalizing on more than \$11 billion that international students contribute to the United States economy (Hey-Kyung, 2001), accommodating the various cultures on college campuses and in the workplace, and preparing all students for a global future (De Wit, 2002). Student affairs is at the forefront of this complex process to increase understanding and appreciation for human differences (Ping, 1999).

Traditionally, the primary responsibility of the student affairs practitioner has been to provide student services and programs that facilitate the development of college students by applying various psychosocial, cognitive, typological, and person-environment interaction theories in their daily practice (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). Today, however, the student affairs practitioner must also facilitate the development of college students into individuals who know themselves as well as others, who are engaged by

diverse values and cultures, and who are able to function in a multicultural milieu (Ping, 1999). This involves preparing college students to live and work within an increasingly interdependent world, by providing them with the leadership skills necessary to succeed in a global marketplace and helping them to understand themselves as intercultural citizens of a global community (Cornwell & Guarasci, 1997; Dalton, 1999). It also involves securing the support of sound scholarship. Thus, this article advocates internationalizing student affairs by using leadership, citizenship, and scholarship to help college students understand, appreciate, and effectively navigate the many cultural differences among the human race.

#### Preparation

The first and most crucial step is preparation; before scholars and practitioners can internationalize student affairs and college students, they should internationalize themselves by developing intercultural competence (Ebbers & Henry, 1990; Paige, 1996). Interculturally competent people are knowledgeable about different attitudes, beliefs, values, religions, hierarchies, meanings, experiences, material objects, notions of time, relations of space, and concepts of the universe (Samovar & Porter, 1991). They have the ability to function for long periods of time in multicultural, national, and international settings and have the motivation to continually develop cultural identities tantamount to the term “globalism” (Diaz, Massialas, & Xanthopoulos, 1999).

Developing intercultural competence requires commitment and can take place in a variety of ways. Student affairs scholars and practitioners can seek to understand the international connections of their institutions and regions (Latham & Dalton, 1999). They

can use their institution's international programs to visit foreign countries, invite international colleagues to their institutions, and sponsor joint teaching and research projects with worldwide partners (Kruger & Dungy, 1999; Latham & Dalton, 1999). They can spend professional development time taking culture-related courses, learning foreign languages, working with international student organizations on campus, collaborating with international student offices on projects and programs, assisting with health and safety issues in study abroad programs, and participating in international orientations and events, among many other options. Lastly, they can get involved with the NAFSA: Association of International Educators and the International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS).

NAFSA is the leading professional association in the field of international education. It promotes the exchange of educators and students to and from the United States, in an attempt to further the cross-cultural understanding and knowledge pertinent to effective U.S. leadership, security, and competitiveness. Its members believe that such exchanges advance leadership and scholarship in a global community and that internationalization is education for an interdependent world.

IASAS is an international community of higher education and student affairs professionals working together to define the need for and to create the organization of an international community of student affairs and services professionals. While only an informal confederation, IASAS has already collaborated with the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and various student non-governmental organizations (NGOs) affiliated with UNESCO, to develop a manual

representing the cross-cultural principles and values of student affairs and services around the world (Ludeman, 2002).

Some of the most prevalent international opportunities for student affairs scholars and practitioners, in particular, are the Fulbright Scholar Program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State; the International Exchange Program, sponsored by National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA); and the International Faculty Development Seminars, sponsored by Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE). The Fulbright Scholar Program is long-term, ranging anywhere from 3 weeks to 12 months and usually involves study tours, teaching and/or research and requires an advanced degree.

For those with more limited time schedules, the NASPA exchanges and the CIEE development seminars may be more manageable. The NASPA exchanges to Australia, New Zealand, China, France, Germany, Mexico, South Africa, Spain, and the United Kingdom are short-term and highly structured. They are specifically designed to familiarize practitioners with how student affairs work is conducted in other countries. They do not require any particular degree, but they do require participants to be actively involved in the profession both in practice and as NASPA members. The development seminars offered through CIEE's are intensive short-term experiences designed to stimulate campus initiatives towards internationalization. These seminars take place in 19 different countries, and higher education faculty and administrators from all academic disciplines and administrative areas are eligible to participate.

More than simply acquiring general intercultural competence, it is important for student affairs practitioners to gather some job-specific knowledge and skills necessary to prime students for a global future. For example, those practitioners working with study abroad programs should have the knowledge and skills necessary to prepare students to live, study, and/or work in other countries. They should also have a thorough understanding of learner issues involved with pre-departure, international experiences, and re-entry with U.S. students going abroad. Likewise, those practitioners working in multicultural affairs should be familiar with ethnic identity development models and have the knowledge and skills necessary to facilitate learning in sensitive areas of race and gender relations, oppression, discrimination, and the other types of social problems that result when people from all different cultures and nations live and work with each other in the same community.

With some preparation, scholars and practitioners can begin to educate students for an interdependent world. Leadership, citizenship, and scholarship together form a comprehensive framework for the exploration of this ideal.

### Leadership

One purpose of higher education is to pioneer the future by preparing knowledgeable and competent graduates to lead the way. Because countries are becoming more integrated and dependent on each other, international understanding and leadership appears to be one of the most important skill sets graduates will need to move this country forward in peace and prosperity (Bush, 2001; Clinton, 2000; Paige, 2001; Riley, 2001).

While peace comes by way of mutual understanding and cooperation (Bush, 2001), conflict is often the result of misunderstandings between people. A prime example is what happened in the United States after the attacks of September 11, 2001. Everyday people, judged to be of Arab decent or Muslim, were stereotyped and targeted for harassment and violence. Although the attacks were acts of terrorism committed by fanatics, some people understood them to be fostered by the Arabic world's hate against the United States. Such misunderstandings prevail where international understanding and cooperation is lacking. International education can alleviate cultural misunderstandings; prevent stereotyping, racism, and hate crimes; and create leaders who value cultural diversity and foster an environment of tolerance. In fact, educators and politicians seem to agree that international education is equally or more important now than it was before the terrorist attacks of September 11 (Alliance for International Educational and Cultural Exchange, 2001; Bush, 2001; Hey-Kyung, 2001; Paige, 2001)

The U.S. government, in particular, has and continues to acclaim the importance of international education to leadership. The Fulbright Program (1946), the Peace Corps (1961), and the National Security Education Act (1991) were established to increase mutual understanding between the people of foreign countries and the people of the United States, to strengthen the viability of the U.S. economy in a global marketplace, and to enhance international security and cooperation through leadership. The National Security Education Program (NSEP) awards between \$25,000 to \$450,000 a year to U.S. institutions of higher education to increase and enhance the study of cultures and languages critical to U.S. national security and to develop and expand a cadre of future leaders with

substantial knowledge of languages and cultures that can be used to deal with global issues.

In 2000, then-President Clinton signed an executive memorandum to fortify the government's dedication to internationalize U.S. citizens through education and to lay the groundwork for an international education policy. In his memorandum, Clinton directed the heads of executive departments and agencies to (a) partner with others to increase not only the number, but also the diversity of students who study and work abroad; and (b) take the appropriate steps necessary to attract qualified international students to the United States.

In fact, every president since 1954 has commented positively about foreign exchanges and international education programs (NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2001). In observance of International Education Week 2001, President George W. Bush said, "The relationships that are formed between individuals from different countries, as part of international education programs and exchanges, can...foster goodwill that develops into vibrant, mutually beneficial partnerships among nations." International understanding comes by way of communication, and communication is built with trust, unity, and peace between nations (Bush, 2001).

While there are many ways of developing international leadership skills in students, foreign exchange and study abroad programs are two of the most effective. Consequently, more and more of these programs are being offered as experiential education components at colleges and universities around the country. First advocated by John Dewey in the early twentieth century, experiential education is learning through personal experience (Smith,

Roland, Havens, & Hoyt, 1992). Students develop international leadership skills by studying or working abroad and exposing themselves directly to foreign cultures. Through this exposure, they typically develop a superior understanding and appreciation of other people and learn how to constructively deal with cultural differences. In addition, they acquire other leadership skills such as maturity, communication, flexibility, adaptability, ingenuity, independence, and eagerness to thrive in new and/or challenging environments. Having seen the positive effects that international education has on students, most nations are committed to fostering foreign exchanges (Riley, 2000).

Another very effective way of developing international leadership skills in students at home may be through challenge education (Smith et al., 1992). This type of education involves outdoor adventure trips, high and low ropes courses, or other complex activities implemented in small groups of diverse students, within an institution or through the partnering of institutions. One purpose of these activities is to place culturally and nationally diverse students in situations where they must rely on each other to complete challenges. In this way, they not only have the opportunity to learn about each other's cultural norms and values, they can learn to interrelate diplomatically, much as they do through international exchanges.

A typical challenge education activity used to facilitate the learning of international leadership skills involves a group of culturally diverse students and a twelve-foot wall. The students are asked to work together to get everybody in their group over the wall without using anything but their bodies. After they finish the activity, a trained challenge education facilitator then asks the students to reflect, describe, analyze, and/or

communicate what they experienced (Nadler & Luckner, 1992). He or she may ask a variety of questions to help them process the experience. More often than not, assumptions, beliefs, stereotypes, personal defenses, inner fears, trust issues, communication patterns, and behavioral problems arise. It is during this process that students begin to learn and grow because they are challenged to work together in a multicultural environment, and to analyze and communicate their feelings about it. Through this activity, and other challenge education activities, students develop cross-cultural understanding and diplomacy, which translate into leadership skills in an interdependent world.

### Citizenship

Higher education institutions do more than educate students for careers; they help prepare them for responsible citizenship. According to most dictionaries, citizenship is the quality of a person's response to his or her membership in a community and is measured by various forms of community involvement. Without citizenship, there would be no community or social order; thus, the teaching of citizenship is crucial. College campuses are designed to solicit purposeful, open, just, disciplined, caring, and celebrative community involvement from students, so as to facilitate the growth and development of students into responsible citizens (Boyer, 1990).

In the United States, citizenship can be conceptualized as a *mélange* of democracy, capitalism, and multiculturalism (Cornwell & Guarasci, 1997). Far too often, however, the ideals of democracy conflict with the realities of capitalism and leave people with a disjointed sense of what being a citizen really means. On the one hand, people are led to

believe that the United States is a land of equality for all, while on the other hand, they are confronted with the reality that it is based on an economic and social system which essentially treats members of society unequally (Dudley, 1998; Cornwell & Guarasci, 1997). This dissension is exacerbated by the globalization of the U.S. economy and the implied expectation that people will be involved in both their social and political communities (Cornwell & Guarasci, 1997).

In 1949, T. H. Marshall clarified the concept of citizenship by separating it into three areas of obligation: civil, political, and social (Torres, 1998). He defined civil obligations as individual freedoms, political obligations as local and national elections, and social obligations as economic welfare and security (Torres, 1998). While this definition of citizenship still applies, it has shifted from a national to an international level. Hence, intercultural citizenship may be a more fitting term; it equates civil obligation to human rights, political obligation to global leadership, and social obligation to international growth and development. The term also helps to sort out any dissension about citizenship because as intercultural citizens, people can promote capitalism in favor of global competition, and democracy in favor of multiculturalism and equality, without detracting from their national identity and pride (Cornwell & Guarasci, 1997).

While the concept of intercultural citizenship can be easy to grasp, it may be difficult for college students to actuate in their lives. Most college students have a basic understanding of citizenship, but they may not have the ability to look beyond their national identity and see themselves as viable members of a global community. By helping students grasp intercultural citizenship, student affairs practitioners are essentially

preparing them to become active members of an increasingly interdependent world (Cornwell & Guarasci, 1997). Moreover, by bringing students to understand their place in an interdependent world, student affairs practitioners are helping them to better understand themselves as members of a multicultural community (Hanson & Meyerson, 1995).

While there is little research about how to help students develop into intercultural citizens, service learning is a form of education commonly used by colleges and universities to emphasize the importance of citizenship (Bingle & Hatcher, 1996). Service learning fosters growth and development because it allows students to put theory into practice and solve real problems in communities. In much the same way, service learning can be used on an international level to develop students into intercultural citizens.

Bringing students in contact with the social, economic, and political struggles in other parts of the world may allow them to put theory into practice and solve real international problems. College students can participate in many different international service learning programs; more information about these programs can be obtained through international offices on college campuses.

International service learning can be implemented on domestic campuses also. Programs that pair international and U.S. students in various orientations have proven to be successful in helping international students adjust to American culture and get more involved in their campus communities (Abe, Geelhoed, & Talbot, 1998). They have also been useful in helping U.S. students get more information about studying or working

abroad. More importantly, the pairing of international and U.S. students helps all students develop intercultural citizenship through volunteerism and international relations.

Beyond service learning, any program or setting that unites people from different cultures, through community involvement, is one that promulgates intercultural citizenship. International houses, team sports, student organizations, speaker's bureaus, fairs, symposiums, and festivals are just a few examples. Obviously, the more diverse the student population on college campuses, the easier it is for student affairs practitioners to purposefully create opportunities for intercultural citizenship development (Boyer, 1990). Students with different national, ethnic, religious, and linguistic backgrounds, peacefully involving themselves with each other, are good signs of intercultural citizenry on a college campus.

### Scholarship

Scholarship is the primary conduit by which higher education institutions facilitate the development of college students into leaders and citizens. Educators across disciplines are aware that the U.S. economy is becoming more integrated with the economies of the world and have, consequently, called for the internationalization of scholarship (Johnson, 1998). Since U.S. higher education as a whole has a generally positive international reputation and is facing competitive external pressures of globalization and international approbation (Slaughter, 1998), hundreds of colleges and universities have joined counterparts abroad in collaborative research efforts to create global scholarship and solve worldwide problems (Riley, 2001).

The globalization of scholarship requires a multifaceted approach because the concept of scholarship is made up of discovery, integration, application, and teaching (Boyer, 1990). With respect to student affairs, it requires scholars and practitioners alike to think about developing new theories, techniques, applications, and models that are relevant in today's global society. Global scholarship comes in a variety of forms, including but not limited to international connections through institutions, student and faculty exchanges, visiting scholars, foreign language training, corporate partnerships, and development projects.

When developing scholarship for a global society, it is impossible to accommodate all cultures, as there are so many of them. It is possible, however, to recognize the cultural limitations of a theory or model and not mistake it for universal reality. For example, different cultures hold to different value systems. Some cultures put persons before groups, and value self-efficiency, autonomy, and responsibility above all, while other cultures put groups before persons, and value harmony, collaboration, and interdependence (McGoldrick, Pearce & Giordino, 1996; Ting-Toomey, 1999).

In designing a student affairs theory for a global educational community, it is inappropriate to assume that all people will admire autonomy and responsibility as virtues or aspects of character to be attained. The objective must either include other worldviews or be used only with those cultures that have individualistic worldviews. Likewise, in designing a student affairs model for a global educational community, it is inappropriate to assume that all people will buy into a linear system when more than half of the world views systems as non-linear. Scholar-practitioners should alter current models to

accommodate the worldviews of more cultural groups or should advocate use of models with appropriate populations. Recognizing cultural differences in scholarship takes a great deal of cross-cultural understanding, but it is good practice for the future.

There are many ways that student affairs practitioners and scholars can work together to develop globalized scholarship. Higher education needs theories, applications, and models that: (a) help recruit and retain multicultural students and faculty from around the world; (b) inform classroom discussions of diversity, multicultural, and international issues; (c) help students develop knowledge and skills necessary to live and work with people and cultures different from themselves; (d) aid the training of students and educators on how to manage cultural differences in their personal and professional lives; (e) internationalize the curriculum in higher education departments and programs; (f) modify campus culture to increase inter-group harmony and decrease conflict; (g) exhibit how higher education institutions can function effectively across national boundaries; and (h) promote social change to reduce various forms of inequality and discrimination (Paige, 1996). These theories, applications, and models, as well as others not mentioned, will contribute directly and indirectly to the development of international leadership and intercultural citizenship in students.

### Conclusion

In 2000, then-President Bill Clinton wrote, “Today, the defense of U.S. interests, the effective management of global issues, and even an understanding of our nation’s diversity require ever-greater contact with, and understanding of, people and cultures beyond our borders.” U.S. Secretary of State Rod Paige said, “Complex global

interactions, once reserved for the diplomatic corps, are today the stuff of everyday business deals and cultural exchanges. If we expect students to navigate international waters, we need to give them an international education that meets the highest standards” (Paige, 2001).

International Education Week is an ideal place to start the internationalizing process. It is a joint effort between the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of State to provide a forum for promoting and celebrating international education. Student affairs practitioners can get involved in the planning of their institution’s activities and events for the week, from putting together an international festival to organizing a symposium with an international theme. It is a perfect opportunity for celebrating, and more importantly, educating students about the many people and cultures of the world.

Student affairs practitioners and scholars can no longer afford to define themselves or their institutions primarily by local missions (Dalton, 1999). “The global interconnectedness of economics, politics, communications, and travel make it necessary for student affairs leaders, even at the local level, to be ‘international minded,’ if they are to be effective institutional leaders” (Dalton, 1999, p. 7). Preparing students to lead and serve in a global community is more than an ideal; it is an ethical obligation for all educators. Consequently, international leadership, citizenship, and scholarship are indispensable missions for student affairs.



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