**The Center for International Higher Education (CIHE)**

The Boston College Center for International Higher Education brings an international consciousness to the analysis of higher education. We believe that an international perspective will contribute to enlightened policy and practice. To serve this goal, the Center publishes the *International Higher Education* quarterly newsletter, a book series, and other publications; sponsors conferences; and welcomes visiting scholars. We have a special concern for academic institutions in the Jesuit tradition worldwide and, more broadly, with Catholic universities. The Center promotes dialogue and cooperation among academic institutions throughout the world. We believe that the future depends on effective collaboration and the creation of an international community focused on the improvement of higher education in the public interest. Opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of the Center for International Higher Education.

The Center is closely related to the graduate program in higher education at the Lynch School of Education, Boston College. The Center offers an M.A. and a Certificate of International Higher Education. For additional information see: https://www.bc.edu/IHEMA https://www.bc.edu/IHECert

**Editor**
Philip G. Altbach

**Associate Editors**
Laura E. Rumbley, Hans de Wit

**Publications Editors**
Hélène Bernot Ullerö, Lisa Unangst

**Editorial Assistant**
Salina Kopellas

**Editorial Office**
Center for International Higher Education
Campion Hall
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, MA 02467- USA
**Tel:** (617) 552-4236 **Fax:** (617) 552-8422
**E-mail:** highered@bc.edu
http://www.bc.edu/cihe

***We welcome correspondence, ideas for articles, and reports. If you would like to subscribe, please send an e-mail to: highered@bc.edu, including your position (graduate student, professor, administrator, policymaker, etc.), and area of interest or expertise. There is no charge for a digital subscription; a fee of $35/year applies to a subscription to the print version.***

ISSN: 1084-0613 (print)



# Are We Facing a Fundamental Challenge to Higher Education Internationalization?

**Philip G. Altbach and Hans de Wit**

*Philip G. Altbach is research professor and founding director, and Hans de Wit is professor and director, Center for International Higher Education, Boston College, US. E-mails: altbach@bc.edu; dewitj@bc.edu.*

The global landscape for higher education internationalization is changing dramatically. What one might call "the era of higher education internationalization" over the past 25 years (1990–2015) that has characterized university thinking and action, might either be finished or, at least, be on life support. The unlimited growth of internationalization of all kinds—including massive global student mobility, the expansion of branch campuses, franchised and joint degrees, the use of English as a language for teaching and research worldwide, and many other elements—appears to have come to a rather abrupt end, especially in Europe and North America.

Trumpism, Brexit, and the rise of nationalist and anti-immigrant politics in Europe are changing the landscape of global higher education. We are seeing a fundamental shift in higher education internationalization that will mean rethinking the entire international project of universities worldwide.

## First, the Good News

Knowledge remains international. Cross-national research collaboration continues to increase. Most universities recognize that providing an international perspective to students is central in the 21st century. Global student mobility continues to increase, although at a slower rate than in the past—with about 5 million students studying outside of their home countries. The major European mobility and collaboration scheme, ERASMUS+, remains firmly in place—and might even receive additional funding. The ASEAN region is moving in similar directions as the European Union in promoting harmonization of its academic structures, improving quality assurance, and increasing regional mobility and collaboration in its higher education sector. "Internationalization at Home" and comprehensive internationalization have entered the vocabulary of higher education around the world.

But these positive trends do not hide that 2018 is adding some troubling trends to 2017 realities. The major eruptions of 2016—Brexit followed by the election of Donald Trump—have proved to be as problematical as pre-

dicted. Increased problems obtaining visas, an unwelcoming atmosphere for foreigners, and other issues are causing a decline in international student numbers in the United Kingdom and the United States.

Recent developments portend future trends that are likely to influence the international aspects of higher education in profound ways at least in the medium term. Several examples illustrate these trends.

### Limits to the Rise in Numbers of International Students and Use of English

In the Netherlands, arguably one of the most internationally minded countries in the world, an intense debate about the limits of internationalization has started, in the media, in politics, and in the higher education sector itself. Comments from the rector of the University of Amsterdam, arguing that English-taught academic programs are too widespread and should be cut back, and that there are too many international students, received wide support, and the expansion of such programs may be curtailed or reduced.

In other countries, including Germany, Denmark, and Italy, there is also debate about the negative impact of English on the quality of teaching. English will remain the predominant language of scientific communication and scholarship, but its dominance may be reaching a ceiling.

**Trumpism, Brexit, and the rise of nationalist and anti-immigrant politics in Europe are changing the landscape of global higher education.**

### The Challenges of Transnational Education

Separately, a branch campus established by the University of Groningen (The Netherlands) in Yantai, Shandong province, with China Agricultural University was suddenly cancelled by the university after protests by faculty and students in Groningen concerning possible limitations on academic freedom in China, and because of a lack of local consultation about the project. This might well affect other joint ventures in China, and perhaps elsewhere, as both sides look more critically at the structural, academic, and political implications of branch campus development and other initiatives. Overall, it is possible that the halcyon days of growth of branch campuses, educational hubs, franchise operations, and other forms of transnational education are over.

### Academic Freedom vs Control

The issue of China's influence on Australian higher education has become widely discussed. Chinese student groups in Australia and the Chinese government have been accused of trying to limit criticism of China and disrupt academic freedom. Combined with criticism, in Australia and elsewhere, of Chinese-funded Confucius Institutes for seeking to influence universities, these trends reflect a growing concern about the influence of China, and potentially of other countries, on universities. Academic freedom, also a strong argument in the cancellation of the Groningen branch campus and in American branch campuses in China and the Middle East, is challenging the future of transnational education and international student recruitment, particularly in countries where academic freedom is not assured.

### Increased Concern about Ethics

The Danish government has found that some foreign students and students from immigrant backgrounds in Denmark were using false addresses to claim student financial benefits. Reports from several other countries have claimed that international students were cheating on examinations. Such stories increase negative views of international students.

### Free Tuition for International Students to an End

Norway has increased visa fees for international students—a move that critics claim is a first step toward charging fees to international students. Two German states also have started to introduce fees for international students, a drastic break with the past. Discussions concerning increased fees for foreign students are more common, as countries seek to use international students to subsidize domestic higher education—a practice that has been employed in Australia for decades. While the debate about free tuition for local students is more intense than ever, it looks like tuition fees for international students are continuing to be on the rise.

### The Nationalist–Populist Factor

The success of right-wing nationalist and populist forces in many European countries will have a significant impact on higher education policy—although the specifics are not yet clear. The controversy relating to the Central European University in Hungary shows one effort to eliminate an international university known for its liberal views by an increasingly authoritarian government. The advent of nationalist governments in Austria, the Czech Republic, and Poland will likely have an impact on higher education policy and on international higher education in those countries. Even where not in power, as in France, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands, the ideas of these parties, once relegated to an unimportant fringe, now have an influence on the pub-

lic discourse. The Conservative government in the United Kingdom is still struggling with the consequences of Brexit on British universities' participation in the European programs, and with the importance of international students and faculty for its knowledge economy.

### Countervailing Trends?

While there are increasingly powerful political, economic, and academic challenges to the internationalization process in Europe and North America, the non-Western world shows an increasing interest in internationalization. But, even there, there are problems. The two largest players, China and India, present some challenges.

Many have commented that China, in some respects, is becoming more "academically closed," in spite of significant increases in inward student mobility. Increased restrictions on internet access, increased emphasis on ideological courses, problems of academic freedom (especially in the social sciences), and other issues are indicative.

For the first time, India has made internationalization a key goal of national higher education policy. But India lacks relevant infrastructure, and it struggles with problems in shaping its academic structures to host large numbers of international students. The logistical challenges are considerable.

It is likely that students seeking foreign academic degrees or an international experience will, to some extent, shift their foci away from the major host countries in North America and Europe, which are seen as less welcoming. But these potential beneficiaries have their own problems.

### Needed Perspectives

The first thing that is required is that all involved with international higher education explicitly recognize that realities have changed and that current, and likely, future developments are beyond the control of the academic community. These new realities will have significant implications for higher education in general and for internationalization specifically.

The current criticism about the unlimited growth of teaching in English, recruitment of international students, and development of branch campuses, is coming from two completely opposite sources. On the one hand, there is the nationalist–populist argument of anti-international and anti-immigration. More relevant are concerns about quality, academic freedom, and ethics in the higher education community itself. The call for an alternative approach, with stronger emphasis on "Internationalization at Home" by the rector of the University of Amsterdam, as well as by Jones and de Wit (UWN 486) for a more inclusive internationalization, may be seen as an opportunity for internationalization, with a shift from quantity to quality. If the nationalist–populist argument prevails, though, then indeed this might lead to the end of internationalization. Leaders in higher education around the world must make a strong stand in favor of the quality approach. ■

DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.6017/ihe.2018.93.10377

# Higher Education Leadership and Management Training: Global Maps and Gaps

**Laura E. Rumbley, Hilligje van't Land, and Juliette Becker**

*Laura E. Rumbley is associate director at the Boston College Center for International Higher Education, US. E-mail: rumbley@bc.edu. Hilligje van't Land is secretary-general, and Juliette Becker is programme and membership development officer at the International Association of Universities, Paris, France. E-mails: h.vantland@iau-aiu.net and j.becker@iau-aiu.net.*

Successful leadership of higher education institutions in the contemporary context worldwide requires a remarkably sophisticated set of skills, knowledge, and sensibilities. Yet, globally, there is limited information about how higher education's leaders, managers, and policymakers are provided with the training they need to carry out their work. Furthermore, where information about such training and capacity-building programs is available, the picture remains incomplete and often disheartening. In fact, the structured opportunities on offer to build leadership and management capacity in higher education are limited in number, almost universally small in scale, and largely unable to offer systematic accounts of the long-term impact of their efforts. This is a critical concern in the face of the myriad opportunities and imperatives facing higher education institutions and systems around the world, now and into the foreseeable future. Without question, the vast majority of higher education leaders and managers enter their positions with no training whatsoever—they learn "on the job"—or run the risk of failure.

### Uncharted Territory

Two recent studies—one by the Boston College Center for International Higher Education (CIHE), on behalf of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and German Rectors' Conference (HRK), and another by the International Association of Universities (IAU) on behalf of