

Professors: The Key to Internationalization

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Universities continue to position their professoriates for internationalization. As the heartbeat of the university, the professoriate clearly has a special role in helping drive knowledge economies. This is particularly true in developing countries with aspirations for a closer integration into the global system. However, internationalization is a double edged sword for many countries. A university can hardly become world class without it. Yet, it wildly skews the balance of brain power in the direction of those few countries with world-class universities. In order to get the best out of globalization, the professoriate in all countries would need to increase its profiles and attitudes geared toward internationalization. At present, the willingness of the academic profession everywhere to deepen their international engagement appears stalled.

It would seem obvious that those who teach at a university, the academic staff, are the key to any academic institution's internationalization strategy. After all, the professors are the people who teach the classes at a branch campus, create

the curricula for franchised programs, engage in collaborative research with overseas colleagues, welcome international students into their classrooms, publish in international journals, and the like. Indeed, without the full, active, and enthusiastic participation of the academics, internationalization efforts are doomed to fail.

Without the participation of the faculty, internationalization efforts often become highly controversial. Examples include Yale and Duke universities in the United States, where major international initiatives planned by the university president quickly became contentious on campus. Many of the New York University's faculty members have questioned some of that institution's global plans. There are many additional examples of faculty members refusing to take international assignments for the university, being unsympathetic to international students in their classes, and in general not "buying in" to the international missions expressed by many universities. Thus, the challenge is to ensure that the professoriate is "on board."

However, data from the two major international surveys of the professoriate reveal a puzzling array of indicators with respect to internationalization.

WHAT THE DATA SHOW

The two important international studies of the attitudes and values of the professoriate, one undertaken in 1992 by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and another known as the Survey of the Changing Academic Profession in 2007, have surveyed 14 and 19 academic systems, respectively.

These studies included a number of questions about the international commitments and interests of the faculty. In the United States, academic life is already known to be far more insular than in other parts of the globe. Most American academics earned all their degrees in the United States, including their highest degree. Less than one-third collaborate with foreign partners on research, even though a good number of them are foreign-born academics working at American universities; and they are the ones most likely to constitute the international collaborators. Only 28 percent of American academics have published in an academic journal outside of the United States, and barely 10 percent have published in a language other than English.

Yet, unlike universities in Japan or Korea, American universities are open to foreign born and foreign trained faculty. In fact, in most countries, nearly all academics are citizens of the country, and the percent of noncitizens are in the single digits—even in the United States with 9 percent. The percentages are somewhat higher in a few other English-speaking countries such as the United Kingdom (19% noncitizens), Canada (12% noncitizens), and Australia (12% noncitizens). The only other exceptions are small European countries like The Netherlands and Norway, where border crossing reflects the new reality of the European Union. The Hong Kong system is extraordinarily unique with 43 percent of academics being noncitizens, something that undoubtedly contributes to its having the highest concentration of globally ranked universities in one city.

Besides noncitizenship, doctoral study location also drives internationalization. In eight countries surveyed in 2007, more than 10 percent (and as many as 72%) of academics earned their doctorates in a different country than the one in which they are employed. Only a few countries were in that

category in the 1992 survey. Exceptions include Japan and the United States, where most academics earn doctorates domestically.

It should be no surprise that academics nearly everywhere say that they emphasize international aspects in their teaching and research. Large numbers include international content in their courses, but not nearly as many have engaged in study or teaching abroad. In a good many countries, less than 10 percent have taught abroad. Only in places like Hong Kong or Australia have large numbers of academics taught elsewhere. Thus, academic attitudes toward internationalization are not a hindrance to a country's efforts to internationalize its universities, but it is the actual engagement of faculty that matters more.

Academics in developed countries often resist their universities' efforts to establish international campuses, and the professoriate in research universities of some developing countries often faces obstacles to becoming internationally wired due to state control. Surprisingly, the percent of academics collaborating internationally in research has dropped in many countries since the 1992 survey. The reasons are surprising and worthy of concern. Junior academics are collaborating less than their older counterparts, and everywhere junior academics are unlikely to have taught abroad. The fact is that the most productive academics, in terms of referred publications, are those with the most international collaboration, including copublication of articles and publishing in a foreign country. Again, the United States is the exception with less of a gap in research productivity, between those who do and do not collaborate internationally.

The international survey reveals what is perhaps one of major hurdles for internationalizing the professoriate—the economic driver of the university

system. Unlike state or professor driven systems, market economies have high proportions of academics who view their universities as bureaucratically onerous. Moreover, academics in market economies are more likely to view their universities as being managed by administrators who are less than competent. This naturally works against the professoriate having a high level of institutional affiliation. The result means they are less likely to support the vision of their university leadership's about how to internationalize—including overseas campuses.

On the more positive side, those who publish in a foreign country journal increased since 1992 in all countries surveyed, except Australia, Japan and the United States. Those who have published in a foreign language increased more in countries such as Mexico and Brazil (presumably in English). The relevance of this research is that the academic profession globally seems to be less internationally minded than might be expected—with inevitable implications for internationalization.