

branch-campus establishment and are more often looking for sponsors and entering into public-private partnerships to share and reduce such risks. ■

Gulf State Branch Campuses: Global Student Recruitment

SPENCER WITTE

Spencer Witte is a recent graduate of the University of Oxford. His master's dissertation was titled, "Higher Education in the Gulf: America's Universities in Qatar and the UAE." E-mail: Spencer.Witte@sant.oxon.org.

As one of the more overt symbols of a perceived movement toward the Westernization—indeed the Americanization—of the Gulf tertiary system, incoming New York University-Abu Dhabi (opening fall 2010) has naturally drawn comparison to the six American degree-granting branch campuses presently operating in Doha's Education City. At first glance, the terms of agreement established by the government of Abu Dhabi and the Qatar Foundation appear similar: both projects are comprehensively funded and concede full autonomy in decision making to the universities. Standards of admission are ostensibly maintained, and completion of the requisite curriculum is followed by the provision of degrees indistinguishable from those awarded at the home campus. The effort to enroll students in adequate numbers, however, reveals a significant divergence in strategy. These differences will carry major implications for New York University-Abu Dhabi's integration into the social fabric of Abu Dhabi.

QATAR FOUNDATION AND QATARI STUDENTS

Qatar—much like the other Gulf Cooperation Council states—has long struggled with a central dilemma: how should the diversification of the local economy optimally proceed if it is necessarily accompanied by an influx of both skilled and unskilled expatriate (non-national) labor. By 1975, just four years after independence from Britain, 98,000 of Qatar's population of 158,000 were migrant workers, and South Asian laborers outnumbered Arabs by a margin of three to one. Education policy has largely been driven by a desire to legitimately qualify the national population for work in the growing mixed and private sectors and, in so doing, contribute to at least the partial reversal of this demographic imbalance.

In accordance with this goal, the Qatar Foundation has established explicit targets for the number of Qataris each of the six universities in Education City should aim to enroll. At present, Qataris make up 46 percent of a student population that, in any case, is not very large (the classes of 2009 totaled

around 200 graduates). The Qatar Foundation would like to see these numbers increase. Its strategy to counteract low enrollment has been multifaceted but mostly local in focus. Since 2001, Education City has played home to the Academic Bridge Program, which provides up to two years of preparatory work for students hoping to qualify for otherwise unattainable Education City admission. To similar ends, Texas A&M-Qatar has developed the Aggie Opportunity Program, a foundational scheme that sets standards for provisional acceptance and effectively increases the number of Qatari students the institution admits. Seven of nine Qataris enrolled in this program in the 2006/07 academic year were later welcomed as full-time students. Lastly, an outreach to potential applicants has been directed at the Gulf Cooperation Council states, if not Qatar. Georgetown University School of Foreign Services in Qatar, for example, made more than 30 visits to Qatari high schools during a five-month span in 2007.

A DIVERGENT STRATEGY

In working toward an eventual (and much more ambitious) goal of 2,000 undergraduates, New York University-Abu Dhabi has taken a separate approach. The Abu Dhabi government has not made the enrollment of a desired number of Emiratis explicit policy, and John Sexton, president of New York University, believes that nationals in the United Arab Emirates will likely become only a tiny percentage of the student population. As such, there is no foundation year program.

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Instead, Sexton and the Abu Dhabi branch campus have ramped up admissions requirements. The "global education" offered at the university will attractively combine with unparalleled financial aid packages. International students, who would otherwise attend the Ivies or else New York University's Washington Square campus, will opt for Gulf-style freshman orientation. An estimated 40 to 50 percent of the student body will be made up of Americans. To help fill the rolls, school counselors from the world's most elite secondary schools are being encouraged to nominate two students for possible admission. Recruitment events are taking place in every continent except Antarctica.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

Simply put, to approach their enrollment goals in Abu Dhabi, an elite university such as New York University must appeal to expatriates. While in line with the university's hopes for an enhanced international profile, this policy is a departure from

Abu Dhabi's historically ambivalent stance toward its non-national demographic. Relative to Dubai, Abu Dhabi has leaned on smaller influxes of culturally similar Arab and Pakistani workers. A more cautious approach to the diversification of the local economy has been enabled by Abu Dhabi's massive oil reserves, over 90 percent of the United Arab Emirates' total supply. Former United Arab Emirates' president, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, is on record as saying that a majority expatriate population would continue to pose "a grave problem which threatens the stability of our society and the prospects for future generations."

Indeed, these anxieties are reflected in present-day Abu Dhabi as well as in the development of the local tertiary education structure. The government declared 2008 "The Year of National Identity," and apart from the selective pairing with two elite branch campuses (Paris Sorbonne University-Abu Dhabi being the other), it has only allowed powerful indigenous families to open its private universities. Prominent examples of this include ALHOSN University (established in 2005 with the university slogan, "Global Knowledge with Local Vision") and Abu Dhabi University (established 2003, with the motto "Universal Knowledge, Timeless Truth"). Admissions standards for these universities are relatively low, with the end result being that Emiratis are able to enroll locally in large numbers.

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LINKS TO THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

If New York University-Abu Dhabi succeeds it will assuredly become the premier tertiary institution in the Gulf region. Yet, in its present form, its enrollment strategy is likely to inspire dynamic tension between the availability of world-class education—comprehensively funded by the Emirate—and its relative inaccessibility to the local population.

Questions about Education City's interconnection with the rest of Qatari society are common. Its officials and academic administrators have been sensitive to charges of elitism and isolation, particularly when coupled with an expressed concern that Qatar University—the institution representing over 90 percent of Qataris in tertiary education—is being forgotten. The Qatar Foundation has attempted to counter these accusations with demonstrable links between the branch campuses, the local business community, and the national university. One of the major benefits of Education City is understood to be the ready supply of experts at the disposal of Qatar University faculty. In short, Education City acts as a long-term, local consultancy.

New York University-Abu Dhabi is already making comparable inroads—in 2008 inaugurating its Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed University Scholars Program with collaboration from the Abu Dhabi Education Council. The program identifies a handful of the most talented upper-year students from the United Arab Emirates' national universities, who then participate in select academic and leadership programming provided by New York University. Given the projected enrollment aims of the branch campus and some of the cultural unease that pervades a demographically imbalanced Abu Dhabi, reaching out and expanding tangible links to the community and its existing universities will be of paramount importance. ■

Transnational Higher Education: Why It Happens and Who Benefits?

VIK NAIDOO

Vik Naidoo is a strategy adviser to the Enterprise Connect Division of the Australian Federal Government's Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research. E-mail: viknaidoo@gmail.com. He was previously the associate director (international relations) at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Australian federal government.

Transnational higher education programs have become an increasingly integral part of the internationalization of higher education. The students are located in the receiving country rather than the source country where the awarding institution is based. While not an entirely new phenomenon in the tertiary education landscape, the scale of the global expansion of contemporary transnational developments is substantially different. Until my recent article entitled "Transnational Higher Education: A Stock Take of Current Activity" (*Journal of Studies in International Education*, September 2009), an understanding of the growth of transnational developments was largely based on anecdotal evidence, given a dearth of comprehensive statistics. Through an analysis of secondary data, synthesizing a range of intelligence scattered around books, academic journals, newspapers, and institutional Web sites, the article quantified the scale of contemporary transnational higher education in mid-2008. This sector involved approximately 3,800 to 4,300 programs.

While transnational higher education is not a new phenomenon, the pace of its global expansion, however, is. This growth has taken place amidst liberalization of foreign direct investment policies in the education sector. However, foreign direct