Students from North America (29,697 from Canada and 410 from Bermuda) comprised about 5 percent of all international students in the United States in 2008/09. Canada was the top place of origin of international students in the United States from the beginning of the *Open Doors* survey until 1971/72, when it was surpassed by India.

The 5,053 students from Oceania still comprise slightly less than 1 percent of the overall international student total. The proportion of students from Oceania in the United States has never exceeded 2 percent. Enrollments from Australia increased 18 percent in 2008/09 to an all time high of 11,042 students, accounting for 63 percent of the regional total.

Recent Trends

As has been the case since 2001/02, graduate international students outnumbered undergraduate international students in 2008/09, but by a smaller margin than in previous years. While the number of undergraduates increased 11 percent over the past year, driven by large increases from China (61 percent), Vietnam (56 percent), Nepal (38 percent), and Saudi Arabia (31 percent), graduate enrollment increased only 2 percent. Recent rates of increase indicate that undergraduate international students may once again outnumber graduate international students in the near future. ∎

Deciphering "Educational Hubs" Strategies: Rhetoric and Reality

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Over the past two decades, an increasing number of governments have recognized their higher education sectors as important to their economic development. In part, this recognition has prompted governments to adopt innovative, albeit sometimes untested, higher education development policies. Of late, many of these policies have been focused on the development of private higher education, where it had often been an underutilized tool in national strategies. One of the more prominent developments in this policy arena, particularly in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, is the increasing interest by government officials to reposition their region as an "education hub." In its most recent assessment of cross-border higher education, the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education (OBHE) highlights the notable increase in "hubs" over the past decade, and identifies seven currently in existence and five more in development.

As an evocative metaphor, education hub has great rhetorical power that likely contributes to its adoption by both the media and policymakers. The widely used slogan encompasses several different types of strategies, almost all of which incorporate the development of private-sector institutions and often include international branch campuses (regulated as private entities); but, the term lacks a commonly acknowledged operational definition. For example, in the OBHE report, hub sites mentioned a lack of commonality across multiple dimensions including size, number and type of institutions, and students enrolled.

While some governments enact policies with the goal of becoming a hub, others use the phrase to give greater definition to an existing agenda. Even more, the level of government involvement can vary (e.g., cities, states, nations). Hubs can include different combinations of domestic institutions, international branch campuses, and foreign partnerships. For example, in the early 1990s, the Australian city of Adelaide used the phrase "education city" (a variant of the hub lingo) to describe its new focus on education, specifically for recruiting foreign students from Southeast Asia to attend local universities. More recently, Qatar's "Education City" is comprised of six branch campuses of American universities. Elsewhere, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand have all developed different policies intended to boost their respective reputations as a Southeast Asian education hub, while in East Asia, South Korea and Hong Kong use similar language to describe dissimilar activities.

Assumptions and Reality

In this article we focus on the strategies used by entities that self-identify as educational or academic hubs. We examine four assumptions in the emerging discourse about educational hub strategies. By beginning now to disentangle the rhetoric from reality in the current discourse, we hope to provide greater clarity for ongoing policy and scholarly analysis.

Assumption 1: institutions in educational hubs exist in close proximity to each other.

Reality: in some intended hubs, institutions may be located anywhere in the country. In others, hub institutions are within walking distance of each other. The first arrangement reflects what we call an Archipelago hub, where institutions are dispersed throughout a state or nation with no geographic concentration of academic efforts. The second arrangement is what we call the Acropolis hub, which brings together several institutions in one location. This latter form has recently been used to recruit institutions to establish branch locations in

places such as the Dubai International Academic City and Qatar Education City. Governments seeking to develop education hubs may adopt Archipelago or Acropolis strategies or a combination of both. In Malaysia there are at least two Acropolis hubs, along with several foreign branch campuses dispersed in Archipelago fashion throughout the country.

Assumption 2: education hub is primarily a governmental strategy.

Reality: Although establishing educational hubs requires government involvement, many Acropolis and Archipelago hubs involve, and are sometimes supported by, quasi-governmental and nongovernmental entities as sponsors or partners. In the case of Dubai International Academic City, most foreign and domestic institutions rent space in buildings owned by TECOM investments, which supports shared facilities such as the Student Hub and the Food Court. In Malaysia, following an Archipelago strategy, foreign institutions have been required by law to partner with a locally owned company, often a property developer who takes legal responsibility for building and maintaining the facilities. Of course, governmental bodies themselves may also take a leadership role, as in the case of Malaysia and the Iskandar Regional Development Authority. On the other hand, some intended hubs are distinguished by government policy that more directly frames and guides the initiative, led by central ministry-level government officials as part of economic development plans. This is the Singapore case.

> *Although establishing educational hubs requires government involvement, many Acropolis and Archipelago hubs involve, and are sometimes supported by, quasi-governmental and nongovernmental entities as sponsors or partners.*

Assumption 3: education hub and education city are interchangeable concepts.

Reality: All education cities are designed to be education hubs, but not all education hubs are designed as education cities. The phrase "education city" refers to the Acropolis strategy used to develop an area into an educational hub. Nations may seek to become educational hubs, without creating an educational city. Indeed, development of a hub is usually supported by a broad policy agenda of a government to become a regional or international destination for education. The agenda may or may not include developing an education city. For example, until very recently Malaysia pursued the goal of becoming an education hub without building an educational city (this has changed with the development of Iskandar and Kuala Lumpur Education City). However, the intent remains

for the nation, not just the capital and Johor regions, to be the educational hub. Similarly, Thailand's goal to become a regional hub for education in Southeast Asia does not foresee the development of any education cities to achieve that goal.

> *The emergence of educational hubs is part of a larger evolution in the international higher education marketplace, whereby countries are turning to their private higher education sectors to increase their global competitiveness.*

Assumption 4: education hubs are driven by excess domestic demand for higher education.

Reality: Whereas the literature on the recent growth of private higher education suggests that new institutions mostly aim to absorb growing demand for higher education within a nation, education hubs represent a supply-side argument for developing private higher education—if you build it, they will come. The creation of educational hubs, in part, is meant to attract focus to the nation's education sector and to build interest from foreign students, faculty, and institutions to become part of the local higher education marketplace. In fact, both the Middle East and Southeast Asia/Oceania have experienced increasing competition among governments to become the regional education hub, with the hope of emerging as the destination of choice for students throughout their region.

Conclusion

The emergence of educational hubs is part of a larger evolution in the international higher education marketplace, whereby countries are turning to their private higher education sectors to increase their global competitiveness. Whether focused on capacity-building foreign institutions or encouraging the expansion of domestic institutions, the private sector in many emerging economies is seen as a strategic asset in the race to attract new students, build a more robust knowledge economy, and supply the country with more knowledge workers. However, the popularity of the phrase and its metaphoric impressions may contribute to the nuances of strategy and policy to be overlooked. Many governments are interested in creating educational hubs, the resources required to support such endeavors, and the international competition likely to be fostered because of it. Thus, it is important for scholars to focus on the various policy approaches and implementation strategies countries are using, rather than letting the metaphor muddy the discussion. ∎