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Higher Education going global: challenges and opportunities

why me?

- a student of the sixties (development studies activist, international secretary of the Dutch Student Union and a Fulbright scholarship recipient)
- now – after retiring as president of Universiteit van Amsterdam and VSNU – president of Magna Charta Observatory and of Academic Cooperation Association, and a long-time reviewer of (international) strategies in HigherEd across Europe



reflections of a professional

- learning from experience [a kind of ‘ironic’ history, including failure and inconclusiveness]
- following peers [both role models and thinkers]
- practicing in various settings at home and abroad [university governance, strategy reviews and collegial consulting]





“primarily targets quality assurance agencies within and outside of Europe and the European providers of cross-border education. Students, national and European policy makers and the higher education sector are indirect target groups who will benefit from the project outcomes”



congratulations

- it is good news that agencies supporting ① and quality assurance agencies
- are realizing the impact of ① [both in the interest of individual cross border mobility and institutional cross border activities]
- so, congrats to Qache [and Joqar and all the other acronyms]



the broader ⓘ picture

- ⓘ is a container concept with many compartments [and not just the simple, nice to have development rankings love]
- so precision is urgently needed [what are we doing and talking about]
- at the same time ⓘ implies more risks than we often realize [to individuals, to institutions, to systems]
- so more than cheers are in place



international education as a concept has gradually *changed from* specific fields and support programmes stimulating student and staff *mobility*, exchange and scholarships

to curriculum development, international classroom, cross border joint degree programmes,, open educational resources, delivery abroad

in short to *education* in an international context, amidst global issues and challenges, and preparing for changing job markets (across national borders)



ACA Annual Conference 2015: Internationalisation: from strategy to implementation

Brussels, 14-16 June 2015

09.00 **Welcome**

Sijbolt Noorda, President, ACA (Amsterdam, The Netherlands)

09.15 **Opening keynote**

Town-gown relationships in a Globalised World

Eric Corijn, Professor in Urban Studies, Department of Geography, VUB (Brussels, Belgium)

09.45 **50 Years of Internationalisation - Main trends and pointers to the future**

Hans de Wit, Director Designate, Center for International Higher Education, Boston College (Boston, USA)

10.30 **Coffee Break**



Focus of national and institutional strategies tends to be still predominantly on:

- **Mobility**
- **Short and/or long term economic gain**
- **Talent recruitment**
- **International positioning**

Far greater efforts needed to:

- **Incorporate approaches into more comprehensive strategies**
- **Focus on internationalisation of the curriculum and learning outcomes to enhance quality of education and research**



WHERE IS INTERNATIONALISATION GOING?

Perceived Desirable Outcomes

A higher education system capable of producing global citizens and professionals

Respectful and appreciative of other cultures

Able to contribute to the development of knowledge economies and socially inclusive societies.

Better positioned to address global issues

To compete and cooperate, with the rest of the world, including the emerging regions



Key Enablers

- **Technological opportunities for virtual exchange and blended learning (enhanced international student interactivity)**
- **Further development of joint and double degrees**
- **Better mutual recognition of credits and degrees**
- **Enhancement of qualitative indicators for quality assurance and classification systems**
- **Greater commitment to equal partnerships**
- **Stronger fostering of public-private initiatives**
- **More alignment between education and research policies**
- **More alignment with other education levels (primary, secondary, vocational, adult)**



warning signal (1)



a means to an end
no end in itself



what are universities for?

- *teaching and learning*: preparing graduates for a lifetime as academic professionals in a changing world [40 years of future labour market]
- *research*: producing scholarly work that is both robust and sound according to international standards, relevant to education and to the global research community, and serviceable for all sorts of uses in society now and tomorrow [in very few cases *not* internationally connected]



implications

- so ⓘ is *not* a separate task or domain
- but a *qualifier* of the core tasks of the university
- which implies that it ought *not* to be treated (and set apart) as a specific task to be carried out by specialists alone
- it should be part of the habitus of *all*, or at least of many in and around HigherEd



warning signal (2)



*has its brighter
and its darker sides*



wake up call

- Jane Knight (Toronto) *Five myths about Internationalization* International Higher Education 62 (2011) 14-15
 - foreign students as internationalization agents
 - international reputation as a proxy for quality
 - international institutional agreements (more is better)
 - international accreditation (more is better)
 - global branding (more marketing better education)



why 'international' higher education

- good reasons and/or real reasons
 - from *student* perspectives: study abroad because of higher reputation, better quality or greater availability, labour market value & job opportunities abroad, sentimental reasons
 - from *institutional* perspectives: budget gains, shortage repairs, reputation benefits, curriculum quality
 - from *national* perspectives: shortage repairs, budget gains, network build-up



'international' higher education

- risks and dangers
 - from *student* perspectives: uncertain outcomes, high opportunity costs
 - from *institutional* perspectives: quality and reputation damage, volatility of demand
 - from *national* perspectives: brain gain or drain, budget losses or gains



SO

- a *realistic and self-critical* policy approach needed
 - in stead of the cloak of idealism hiding selfish ‘business’ interests and/or real quality differences
- an *educational quality* approach wanted
 - to maximize value to graduates and to be true to core mission in teaching & learning



warning signal (3)



*is all about crossing borders
of very national entities*



homemade hurdles

- Higher Education is a very *national* thing in terms of
 - legal prescriptions
 - financials
 - quality assurance
 - academic calendars
 - professional qualification specs
 - academic culture et cetera



homemade hurdles

- ..and the paradox about *national* things and thoughts is that even when they want to be inter-national
- we often want them to be in full agreement with our local and national preferences and tastes



so we need inter-national *shared values*

-education is to a large degree a matter of trust
-education abroad or delivered by foreign providers for learners themselves often too difficult to judge, measure or benchmark [ante factum]



understatement

- in the present, highly fragmented, individualist and competitive version of Higher Education
- shared values in terms of individualism and competition
- are more common
- than community values and the appreciation of different values



- this brings us to the core concept of *quality*
- quality is about values, implies
 - a culture of shared values
 - well organized responsibilities
 - and oversight
 - inside and outside HEIs
- all of them important because of high stakes and need for trust



some applications (1)

- international student *mobility* is another raw container concept
- there are very *different* types of mobility with very *different* motivations and a great *variety* of success & failure factors
- not one simple set of values will do, covering all cases, from refugee migrants to for-profit multinational provision



variety of types

- *purpose*: mainly for academic reasons – mainly for other purposes (traineeship, family, migration)
- *type*: for credit (temporary short stay abroad, ‘exchange’) - for degree (full qualification / degree)
- *organisation*: as part of a programme - self-organised, free movers
- *and by the way this explains why statistics of student mobility are so unreliable*



variety of success & failure factors

- *students* come well prepared academically, with language & learning skills
- *institutions* offer well planned & delivered programs, recognized results, and good facilities
- *or not*, or only partly



HEIs have a key responsibility here

- *Higher Education is a for-profit-sector above all* in terms of benefits to graduates and their future profits
- → how to acquire international competences in terms of academic qualities, professional skills, and value in the labour market
- → in all cases, not just for a small, rich and/or adventurous minority among students



some applications (2)

- international joint degree programs are among the best possible ways to provide a cross border education



definition (IIE report 2011)

- “*International joint degree programs* are study programs collaboratively offered by two (or more) higher education institutions located in different countries. They typically feature a jointly developed and integrated curriculum and agreed-on credit recognition. Students typically study at the two (or more) partnering higher education institutions (i.e., 1 home institution + 1 institution abroad). Upon completion of the study program, students are awarded a single degree certificate issued and signed jointly by all institutions involved in the program.”



valuable upsides

- structured, safe & simple
 - part of familiar study programme & setting
 - foreign partners of similar level
 - balanced element of the curriculum
 - designed and recognized as such
 - faculty staff implicated & co-responsible
 - logistics usually facilitated by educational partners
 - relevant internationality



valuable upsides

- promoting international classroom beyond mobility
 - impact on all participants, home and abroad
 - blended modes of delivery & participation feasible
 - teaching staff involved at all sides and on all sites



some applications (3 and final)

- off shore “branches” & franchising often present many uncertainties about
 - faculty academic and linguistic competences
 - status of accreditation
 - value in the job market
 - continuity



how about students rights

- the status of foreign students in national and in international programmes
 - clients or co-creators?
 - international experience or just foreign?
 - portable certified qualifications?
 - teaching & learning cultures
 - protection & support



or tabus

- higher education to some of us is just a commodity in a marketplace
- to others a matter of high ethical standards and ideals in a worldwide commons
- such differences of opinion are usually passed over in silence or considered tabu



in conclusion

- this is what I wanted to leave you with
- Higher Education going global is a truly fascinating process of which we are not yet seeing the end
- your creative contributions to it are most welcome indeed

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