

August 2013

# UNIVERSITY Outlook

## Progressive strategies for modern learning

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### The New Student Majority

Recognizing the  
diverse face of a  
changing profile

### Building a Better Brand

The importance of  
being different

### Tech Revolution

Could the traditional  
brick and mortar  
campus crumble?

# Colleges at a Crossroads: New Directions for Higher Education

Exploring the World of Higher Education





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*University Outlook*,  
August/September 2013  
Application to mail at periodicals  
postage rates is pending at Olathe,  
Kan. *University Outlook* is published  
bimonthly, six times a year, in  
February, April, June, August, October  
and December. Office of known  
publication: PlattForm, 15500 W. 113th  
Street, Suite 200, Lenexa, KS 66219.  
Periodicals Postage Paid at Olathe,  
Kan., and at additional mailing offices.  
POSTMASTER: Send address changes  
to PlattForm, 15500 W. 113th St.,  
Suite 200, Lenexa, KS 66219

For more information about  
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# Defining Internationalization vs. Globalization Within Higher Education

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Understanding the difference is the key to successful international student recruitment strategies

By Seth Saunders  
Exceptional Consulting Group

Higher education is going to play an increasingly central role in improving the world we live in. This reality is not confined to one country or area, but rather to the entire planet. Thus, it is becoming more and more important for higher education institutions to find ways to broaden their reach outside of their own countries. They must become more global universities to attract more international students.

For institutions of higher education to find long-term, sustainable success in growing their international presence and student outcomes, they must clearly understand, define and execute strategies that ensure goals are achieved. In doing so, there needs to be a sound comprehension between internationalization and globalization. Currently, there tends to be an assumption that these two words can be used interchangeably, but this is incorrect and a main reason for a lack of success.





To provide important context, here are high-level definitions of internationalization and globalization according to the Global Policy Forum: “Internationalization refers to the increasing importance of international trade, international relations, treaties, alliances, etc. International, of course, means between or among nations. The basic unit remains the nation, even as relations among nations become increasingly necessary and important. Globalization refers to global economic integration of many formerly national economies into one global economy, mainly by free trade and free capital mobility, but also by easy or uncontrolled migration. It is the effective erasure of national boundaries for economic purposes.”

Applying these definitions to higher education can represent a challenge, but here are the applications based on what has been researched, written and experienced:

Internationalization is looking at how a university or institution of higher education can benefit from having more international students. The focus is somewhat limited to certain countries, and there is not a true partnership with other nations.

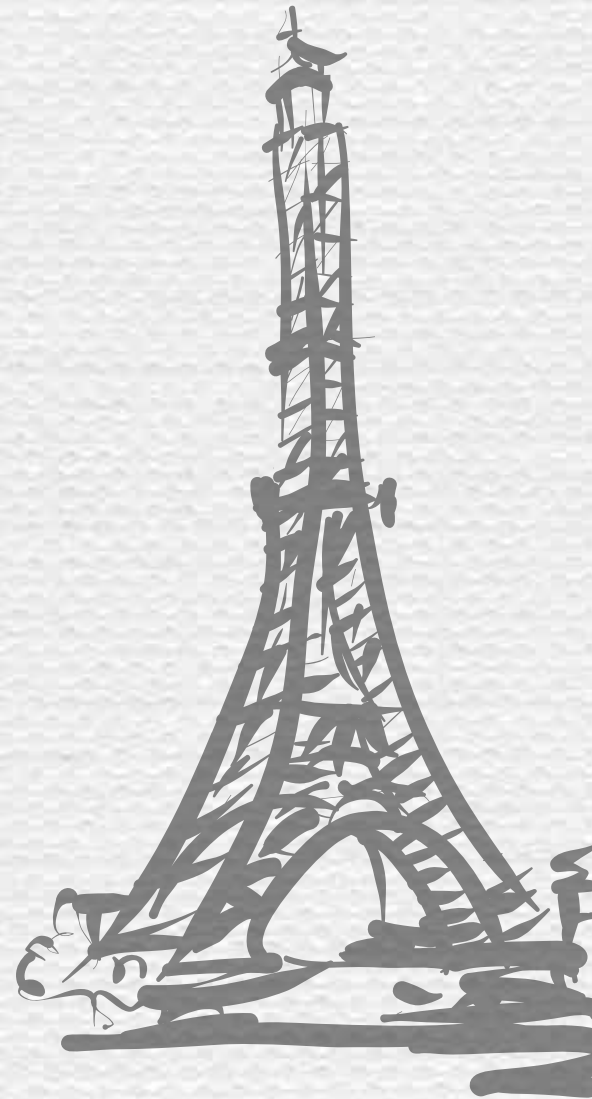
Globalization is more of a strategy that provides a strong foundation on which a university or institution can build long-term, sustainable partnerships. There is a desire to create a win-win opportunity with other countries. It also shows a true commitment to wanting to provide quality education to students outside of one's own country.

The fact is: There needs to be a better, more sustained effort to become more global by universities that want to grow and increase their opportunities. The truth is: Students who are recruited will still be known as international students, but the difference lies within the strategy of the university. There must be a global focus.

In the National Association of Foreign Student Advisors (NAFSA) report “Comprehensive Internationalization: From Concept to Action,” the concept of comprehensive internationalization is defined as “a commitment, confirmed through action, to infuse international and comparative perspectives throughout the teaching, research and service missions of higher education. It shapes institutional ethos and values and touches the entire higher education enterprise.” This is truly the essence of building a strategy that is global.

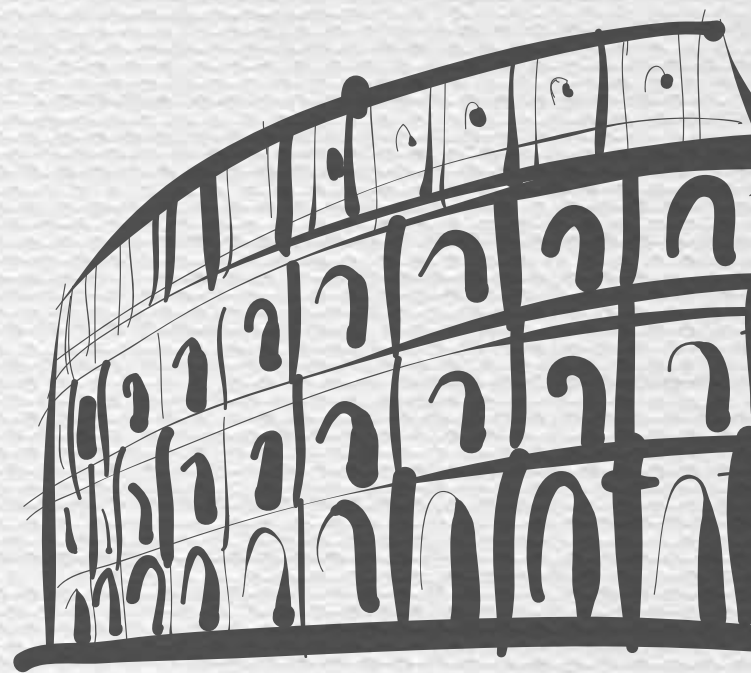
In order to establish an effective global strategy, there is an absolute need for quality collaboration. This collaboration needs to be at many different levels, but the key is being as inclusive as possible. A lack of collaboration and reliance based solely upon their own experiences, goals and behaviors is one reason universities are not as successful with their international student efforts. Authors of *Radical Collaboration*, James Tamm and Ronald Luyet, provide a very simple but imperative definition of successful collaboration, stating, “Successful collaborative relationships require conscious and deliberate action.” If a university assumes it will be successful in its international student efforts simply by saying it or even writing it down, they have almost guaranteed failure.

A global strategy based on a collaborative effort not only creates a greater opportunity for success but ensures relationships with international partners are built on a foundation of trust, respect and communication. All three of these are necessary and establish a university as a true global higher education provider. Research has been conducted on the successes, challenges and disconnects for international students. However, there is still much that needs to be studied to continue to provide important insights and data points that will help build even stronger and more effective global strategies.





Countries will be more willing to work with leaders and institutions that desire to build partnerships rather than just build their own credibility.





Each institution will be different in its approach to building a global strategy, but there are some fundamental areas that should be encompassed within the strategy. As each of these areas is developed, it is important to again state the necessity of ensuring collaboration in developing a successful strategy. This means that potential country partners should be a part of the process in some way to ensure the path leading to success is the right one.

Taking on a global strategy comes with risk, but based on the current trends and continual competition between countries, the key is to minimize that risk to ensure success. The focus should be on the benefits and true value-add that comes with a sound global strategy. There are going to be factors that an institution cannot control, such as government regulations and economic stability, among others, but making the decision to design, implement and execute a global strategy that has focus on truly helping to educate international students will achieve success.

Leaders within higher education need to ensure they are committed to a strategy that is going to create a win-win opportunity. Countries are more willing to work with leaders and institutions that desire to build partnerships rather than just build their own credibility. The vision must be one that is real, tangible and thoughtful. Leaders must know the difference between internationalization and globalization so they do not run the risk of failing. With so much competition and so many institutions wanting to increase their international student body, mistakes can be costly. It is often the same students universities set out to help that get hurt and feel the most pain.

Institutions of higher education cannot afford to have a simple bullet point in their strategic plan that says they want to recruit international students. A complete commitment to a global strategy is necessary. As this takes place, the world we live in will improve, and we will all benefit.



Seth Saunders, President of Exceptional Consulting Group, has been a higher education executive for more than 13 years, and his experience includes both domestic and international education. He is involved with a number of not-for-profits, including sitting on the board of directors for the Urban League of Hampton Roads, the Virginia Beach Forum and the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce. He is also Secretary for the Rotary Club of Hampton Roads and CEO and Cofounder of The Pink Shoe Hero Foundation, an organization focused on empowering youth to reach their full potential. Saunders may be reached at [exceptionalcg@gmail.com](mailto:exceptionalcg@gmail.com).