

Academic Cooperation Beyond National Boundaries: Potential Avenues for Growth and Implication

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Extended Abstract

During my time as President of Carnegie Mellon, from 1997 to 2013, the University saw a dramatic increase in its international programs, its international students on its home campus in Pittsburgh and in other dimensions of international activity. In some respects, CMU's experience was typical of other American research universities, but in other respects, especially with regard to degree programs in other countries, CMU is quite atypical. Understanding the nature of these programs and how they came about can be useful to other institutions, governments and others.

Globalization: An Opportunity, not a Threat

In his *New York Times* column of March 11, 2014, David Brooks discussed the results of a recent PEW survey of American attitudes toward the rest of the world.

While a majority of Americans favor less US engagement in foreign affairs and the world's problems, 75% favor greater international economic integration. A majority of Americans support globalization of our work places, universities and culture.

I found these observations very surprising. Just 15 years ago, the dominant American narrative on globalization was the off-shoring of jobs and what a threat all of this was to our prosperity and way of life. While these concerns are certainly still there, the conversation has shifted to how to become more globally connected. Whether it's because we view it as inevitable or we have embraced it as a real opportunity, "globalization" seems to have been accepted as part of lives.

Certainly, American research universities have embraced globalization at least to the extent that it's reflected in the international composition of our student bodies. Carnegie Mellon's student body in Pittsburgh is more than one-third international; the graduate student body is more than half international. And, the number of international students continues to increase: from 2007 to 2012 the number of Chinese students at CMU Pittsburgh increased from 500 to 1,500 (and there are only 11,000 students on our Pittsburgh campus).

The Global University

As part of the strategic plan adopted in 1998, Carnegie Mellon committed itself to becoming more international. In 2013, 15 years later, CMU had increased its international degree programs from one to 20 in 13 countries. The number of international alumni chapters increased from one to 21.

The strategic plan did not identify the specifics of our international programs, nor did it choose regions or countries. Rather, it provided a framework within which the University's international activities grew and evolved. While I will make a few key points here about these activities, an excellent source of information and insight about our international programs can be found in a paper written by my colleague, Mark Kamlet, CMU's Provost and Executive Vice President.

("Offering domestic degrees outside the United States: one university's experience over the past decade," in *Higher Education in a Global Society*, edited by M.B. d'Ambrosio, P. J. Yakoboski and D. B. Johnstone, Edward Elgar, 2010.)

Carnegie Mellon decided early on that it would not subsidize international programs from its resources in Pittsburgh, i.e. every program had to pay for itself, at least. One consequence of this decision is that our programs required substantial subsidy from local sources, since CMU is expensive and will not "discount" its programs wherever they are offered. Thus, we could only go where there were the funds to support us.

Almost every one of our programs came about as a result of the initiative of the host country's (or region's) government. CMU's reputation in computer science and engineering was the major initial attraction, but as our international track record was established, many governments sought CMU as a trusted partner.

Over time, we developed three major strategic considerations which provided a framework for judging new opportunities:

- Long-run strategic importance of the region
- Contribution to major global issues
- Potential for financial resources for CMU

Our program in China aligns strongly with the first of these, while the program in Rwanda was motivated by the second consideration.

Governance and Administrative Issues

As the University Administration and Board of Trustees considered international opportunities, a set of common issues emerged. The Board created a list of principles (“The Pollock Principles” named for the trustee who chaired the special committee.) All international programs must comply with these principles which include the control of admissions, curriculum and faculty appointments, quality control and university policies such as academic freedom.

With one exception, all of CMU’s international degree programs are master’s or doctoral programs, offered with a combination of on-site and distance delivery methods. Transporting these programs from Pittsburgh to another country was relatively straightforward, in an academic sense, but we encountered a host of administrative problems. Over time, as these problems were confronted and overcome, the University created outstanding expertise in international finance, human resources, legal and tax issues and IT infrastructure. We did this the hard way, and this is probably the one area in which CMU’s experience can be most valuable to other universities.

The one exception to the graduate programs are our Bachelor’s degree programs in Doha, Qatar. We, along with several other universities (including Cornell, Georgetown and Northwestern), are part of the grand vision which is Education City. International undergraduate education presents additional challenges, but these programs have been highly

successful, in part because of the outstanding support of the Qatar Foundation.

Conclusion

Carnegie Mellon is one of the few US institutions to create several international degree programs. Only time will tell how successful and impactful these programs will be, and how many other institutions – in the US and elsewhere – create their own programs. The experience at CMU may prove instructive and helpful.