

# Foreword

In the quarter-century since the end of the Cold War, American colleges and universities have become increasingly engaged in international curricula and relationships along a variety of dimensions. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the rapid rise of transnational exchange networks of all types, often called *globalization*, brought a new set of challenges to the United States and its institutions of higher education. Growing numbers of foreign students are enrolled on US campuses, and growing numbers of American students are participating in study abroad programs. The faculty of our colleges and universities are increasingly international both in their countries of origin and their research specializations. Interdisciplinary centers dedicated to foreign language and area studies, international relations, and global issues are well established. The STEM fields are increasingly international not just in personnel but also in the scope of research collaborations. Professional fields such as management and medicine, which once were US-centered, now conceive their missions in global terms.

These developments have been well received, but not without anxious reservations. Academic institutions are communities with deep traditions and strongly held commitments. Presidents and provosts have learned from experience that innovation in academic communities, to be successful, must be a consensual participatory process. Thus, the process of internationalizing a college or university requires visionary leadership for planning, building consensus, and dealing with management issues that cross disciplinary boundaries. The emerging challenges of internationalization have necessitated new senior administrative positions to sustain challenging innovations.

Despite the diversity of leadership roles delegated to international strategies, there are now well-developed initiatives at many national higher education associations designed to promote appropriate public policies and to foster interuniversity collaborations. Currently we do not have a consensus on an optimal institutional structure for international studies, nor do we

have a well integrated set of national practices. Nevertheless, much progress has been made, and there is a growing awareness of best practices.

In this book, ten former senior international officers provide accounts of their careers in a variety of college and universities. Collectively, their narratives offer insider views of how their institutions developed international programs. The reader will be impressed by the frankness of these narratives and by the realism of their portrayal of the politics of internationalization. These are not just success stories but are also unvarnished accounts of stalemates and even failures.

Academic leaders—chancellors, presidents, provosts, deans, and directors—will find these experiences both familiar and decisive for making their institutions more international. As a former chancellor, I was struck by one theme that emerged over and over again in these accounts: namely, the importance of support and commitment from the highest leadership. When that leadership was present, the senior international officer was able to serve as a successful change agent. But when that connection was broken, usually due a change in leadership, the internationalization effort often stalled.

Another theme presented here that resonates with my experience as a former chancellor is the scale and complexity of internationalization initiatives and programs. We have long recognized that the university is enriched intellectually by international teaching, research, and service and by the diversity of cultures and languages brought to the campus by international students and faculty. However, each new layer of international activity also challenges established organizational structures. For example, how should inoculations and medical advice be provided to those about to travel (assessing overseas risk, finding insurance for overseas activities), how can we ensure compliance with federal export controls (including restrictions on the content of laptop computers taken abroad), how do we withhold taxes and make payments to foreign residents, and how should we assist foreigners in confronting the exigencies of campus life in the United States?

It makes no sense for each school or college of a university to devise its own ad hoc solutions to such administrative challenges. The initiation of and coordination among such service activities should be led by the core campus leadership, which is one of the reasons that so many institutions have appointed senior international officers. To be effective in overcoming

the bureaucratic obstacles endemic to any large organization, these officers need support from the top. Once the international support mechanisms are in place, they tend to function smoothly. But putting them in place is not a simple process.

*Internationalizing the Academy* does not merely offer a deep look into the ongoing process of making US higher education more international in scope and content. Nor is it a cautionary tale about how hard it is to bring about change in higher education. In the final analysis, it paints an optimistic picture of a variety of colleges and universities in the midst of change, each finding its own path with the assistance of deeply committed senior international officers. While the journey is hardly complete, American higher education is well on the way to coping with the challenges of globalization.

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