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The Internationalization of Higher Education: Examining Issues, Maximizing Outcomes

In its original usage, the term *internationalization* refers to “the process of planning and implementing products and services so that they can easily be adapted to specific local languages and cultures.” This internationalization refers to business and economics, and to a lesser extent, computing. In discussing the internationalization of higher education, de Wit (2002) says that “higher education is a central enterprise of the twenty-first century and a key part of the knowledge-based economy” (p. xi). Given that much of the impetus for internationalization in higher education is economically driven, this word seems fitting in the phrase *internationalization of higher education*.

In the last five years, many colleges and universities with student profiles that have traditionally included more immigrant than international students have begun to enact increased international recruitment plans; international student enrollments are increasing, and the number of US higher education institutions recruiting such students is also increasing. This is not surprising, as international students contributed more than \$30.5 billion to the US economy in the 2014-2015 academic year; in California alone, international students contributed \$4.5 billion to the economy and helped create more than 50,000 jobs within the state (Indiana University, 2015). The impact of this phenomenon is not limited just to academic discussions. The title of a *Washington Monthly* article (Stephens, 2013) captured the issue well: “International Students: Separate but Profitable.” Despite, or perhaps because of, these economic benefits, there are several questions that educational institutions must consider with such enrollments, not the least of which is “Are we prepared to meet international students’ needs once here?” (Hudzik & Briggs, 2012).

After international students have interacted with recruiters, advisers, and other staff, often their first academic contact is with Eng-

lish-language or writing-program faculty. This influx of international multilinguals not only poses particular challenges for these faculty and faculty across the disciplines but it also presents opportunities for “globalizing” curricula and emphasizing global citizenship (see American Council on Education, 2012; Leventhal, 2012; UCOP, 2013).

In order to best prepare students for undergraduate study in the US, better serve these students on college campuses once they matriculate, and take advantage of the resources international student populations bring—which in economic terms we may simply say “lead to localization”—it is important to

- Examine how well students’ academic literacy skills and prior educational experiences prepare them to meet instructors’ expectations (e.g., Lin, 2013);
- Engage these instructors in dialogue about the appropriateness of these expectations;
- Work with content and composition instructors, as well as writing center personnel, to support international multilingual writers;
- Create a clear picture of students’ educational backgrounds and experiences as well as their preparation for study in the US (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005); and perhaps most important,
- Craft curricula and encourage campus discussions that embrace globalization and highlight the benefits international students bring to our campuses.

The articles in this theme section attempt to add to the current conversation by presenting recommendations for supporting international students, their instructors, and their tutors, but also by highlighting the opportunities for change that this population brings to our campuses. The opening article, “Developing Global Competency in US Higher Education: Contributions of International Students” by Megan M. Siczek, discusses the economic benefits of the enrollment of international students, rationales and strategies for the internationalization of higher education, but also the important role of second language students in helping to enact the global mission of universities both within the campus community and within writing classrooms.

The remainder of the articles provide a glimpse into responses and initiatives on various UC campuses. Maggie Sokolik’s contribution, “In Their Words: Student Preparation and Perspectives on US Study,” reports on student responses from different geographic locations concerning preparation and course work before studying in the

US. “Writing Instructors’ Perceptions of International Student Writers: What Teachers Want and Need to Know” reports on a survey of mainstream writing-program faculty working with international students. This report by UC second language–writing specialists Dana Ferris, Linda Jensen, and Margi Wald outlines instructors’ beliefs about their own needs and those of international student writers and explores ideas for expanded faculty-development programs.

The next article, “Beyond First-Year Composition: Academic English Support for International Transfer Students” by Jan Frodesen, describes a writing course developed for upper-division international transfer students declaring Economics as a major, reviews the performance of students in the course, and summarizes input from portfolio reflective essays and individual conferences to present implications for L2 writing instruction in community colleges. The final selection, “International Students at the University of California: The Impact on Writing Center Practice,” is a compendium of responses by various UC writing centers—enhanced tutor training, expanded student services, and increased cross-campus collaboration—to the increased presence of international students.

We hope this theme issue goes beyond the economics of the internationalization of higher education by raising issues and providing solutions for eradicating the notion and practice of “international students: separate but profitable,” a doctrine that has no place in education.

Guest Editors

Gena Bennett has been working with English language learners in a variety of contexts for approximately 15 years. She received her PhD from the University of Birmingham in England and her research interests include second language writing, corpus linguistics, and their intersections. She teaches in TESOL teacher-training programs.

Margi Wald, lecturer in the College Writing Programs and director of the Summer ESL program at UC Berkeley, co-edits The CATESOL Journal and is the conference chair for TESOL 2017 in Seattle, WA. Publications include Exploring Options in Academic Writing: Effective Vocabulary and Grammar Use (with Jan Frodesen, Michigan ELT) and Teaching U.S.-Educated Multilingual Writers (with Mark Roberge and Kay Losey, Michigan ELT). Her research focuses on corpus-based materials development and academic literacy development for immigrant and international students.

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