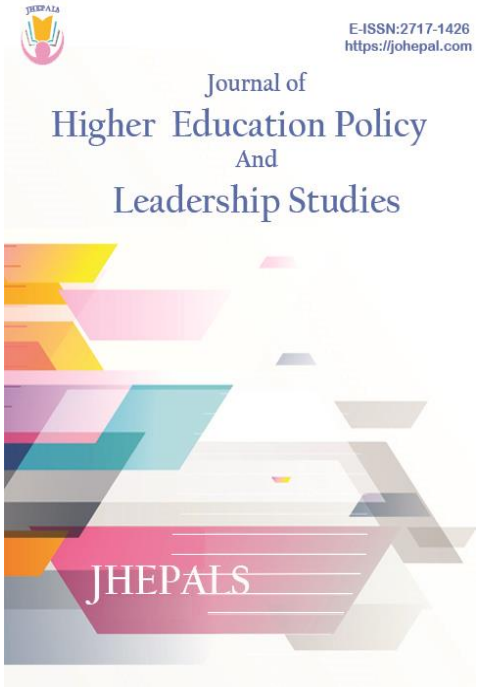
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Reconsidering Internationalization and Global Cooperation: An Interview with Dr. Cheryl Matherly

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Cheryl Matherly *



Dr. Cheryl Matherly is the vice president and vice provost for international affairs (SIO) at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. She provides leadership for the university's global engagement strategy, and directs a division that includes international students and scholar services, academic and professional English, study abroad, international internships, international partnerships/ UN partnerships, and global leadership programs. Lehigh was recognized in 2021 with NAFSA's Paul Simon Award for Comprehensive Internationalization.

Dr. Matherly is a past president of the Association of International Education Administrators, and was named Senior International Officer of the Year by the Institute of International Education in 2020. She is a practitioner-scholar on strategies for comprehensive internationalization, having consulted with institutions throughout the US, Latin America, and Asia.

She most recently co-authored a chapter in *The Sage Handbook of International Higher Education, 2nd edition* on comparative strategies for comprehensive internationalization in the US, Chile, Japan, and Germany. Dr. Matherly has an Ed.D. from the University of Houston, an M.S. in education from Indiana University and a B.A. in English and political science from the University of New Mexico. She is the recipient of two Fulbright grants for International Education Administrators, in Japan and Germany. She is a member of the National Academy of International Education.

https://global.lehigh.edu/about/staff/cheryl-matherly

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Interview

It is an honor and privilege for us to host Dr. Cheryl Matherly as the vice president and vice provost for international affairs (SIO) at Lehigh University in Bethlehem and as a globally renowned scholar and higher education leader whose research, talks, interviews, and notes are extensively cited and acknowledged worldwide.

We are sure that Dr. Matherly's insightful, illuminating and critical responses enriched with her academic/ leadership experience in internationalization of higher education and global cooperation will be of interest to a broad audience of international researchers, students, policymakers, and leaders in Higher Education.

Question #1

How is (and what does it mean?) the internationalization of higher education in the era of artificial intelligence and ChatGPT? Will we witness a new generation of internationalization of higher education in the coming soon?

Answer:

To understand how AI and ChatGPT will impact internationalization, we have to first consider how it is already impacting higher education. AI is already disrupting administrative, teaching, learning and research activities. Institutions are already using tools to crunch large data sets for research, provide students with personalized tutoring and feedback, or detect plagiarism. This will no doubt become more widespread as major tech companies such as Alphabet, Google and Microsoft further embed AI into their applications.

The real challenge for higher education, then, is to decide whether new technology such as ChatGPT should be considered a threat or a resource for its students. If it is a threat, or even more to the point competition, this suggests that our definition of research, teaching, and learning is very narrow and transactional because those activities can be replaced by a machine. If it a resource, then it suggests that higher education should prepare students to work with a sufficiently high level critical thinking that will enable them to use AI wisely.

In an important way, this may shape how students understand the value proposition of higher education. Consider that Futurist Thomas Frey estimates that almost 50% of today's jobs will cease to exist by 2030, replaced by technology such as AI. Those institutions that students (and employers) believe add value by preparing graduates with those skills that can't be programmed will be in demand. In a 2019 report by QS, "How Artificial Intelligence is Influencing Graduate Employability and the Global Higher Education Sector," employers considered analytical/quantitative skills, technical skills, problem solving, depth of knowledge, and language skills as abilities that AI will be outperforming humans by 2030.

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However, communication, teamwork, creativity, and other interpersonal skills are less likely to be easily adopted by AI.

How does this, then, shape internationalization? The American Association of Colleges and Universities defines global learning as preparing students to engage with "complex, interdependent global systems and legacies (such as natural, physical, social, cultural, economic, and political) and their implications for people's lives and the earth's sustainability." I believe that graduates who are prepared for this type of thinking are also equipped with exactly the kind of skills that cannot be replaced by AI. Our global systems remain very interconnected, and AI, while a useful tool, will not replace the kind of creative thinking that will be required of our graduates.

Question #2

To what extent can the internationalization of higher education facilitate the technology transition and equal distribution of knowledge? What obstacles do you see against the transfer of knowledge and technology from the Global North to Global South? What are your recommendations for the rapprochement between the Global North and Global South?

Question #3

The economic, political and cultural costs of the internationalization of higher education are, more or less, high for the universities of the Global South. What policies or solutions do you suggest to reduce these costs?

Answer (Questions #2 & #3):

I would like to address these questions together, since they both address the impact of internationalization on institutions in the Global South. I think that to respond to the issues raised in these questions, we have to first insist that partnerships between institutions in the Global North and Global South be equitable, grounded in the fair and equal distribution of participation, exposure to risk, and personal benefit, and social benefits derived from research activities. The Swiss Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries outlines 11 principles for equal partnerships in research cooperation that include mutual respect, co-creation of knowledge, capacity building, joint planning and decision making, adequate research, and a long-term commitment.

While institutions in the Global South have benefited from internationalization, there are many aspects of it that have also been extractive. Internationalization can exacerbate brain drain and hinder progress with innovation when countries loose highly skilled faculty, researchers, and students. It can reinforce cultural hegemony and knowledge dominance, where Western perspectives and knowledge systems take precedence over local knowledge

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and indigenous ways of knowing. It can lead to the replication of educational models from more developed regions without considering the unique needs and contexts of the Global South. It can create an overreliance on partnerships with better funded institutions in the Global North, reducing the local capacity to respond to local problems. It can privilege cooperation between the best-known institutions in a country, ignoring the needs of local, less prestigious institutions that in fact educate the largest numbers of students.

At the same time, internationalization should not be viewed exclusively through a lens of North-South cooperation. There are many examples of successful South-South collaborations that are models for how internationalization can build capacity of local institutions to respond local, regional, and global challenges. As a just a few examples, the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS) promotes scientific training and collaborations for individuals across Africa. The International Solar Alliance (ISA), initiated by India and France, facilitates cooperation among solar-rich countries in the Global South to promote solar energy adoption, technology transfer, and capacity building. The South-South Meeting Point is a multilingual, interactive virtual space where people from different countries meet, engage, exchange and cooperate within the framework of the South-South and Triangular Cooperation towards the advancement of the SDGs. These are examples of successful South-South strategies to address distribution of knowledge and technology.

Internationalization has benefited higher education in the Global South; however, the risks that these questions identify, make it even more important partnerships be rooted in principles of equity.

Question #4

In a situation where the global economy is influenced by global politics and also regional tensions have increased between countries, how effective do you consider the strategy of internationalization at home (IaH)? Is there any alternative strategy?

Answer:

I think that the premise of this question – that geopolitics have increased global tensions – is the very compelling rationale for internationalization at home. As a strategy, IaH assumes that institutions have integrated international and intercultural learning into to the curriculum and co-curriculum. If we return to the definition of global learning used by AACU that I introduced above, that students are prepared to engage with complex, interdependent global systems, then integrating this into the curriculum and co-curriculum ensures that this is an expected learning outcome for all students in higher education.

It is important to keep in mind, however, that IaH is a strategy, and like all good strategies, requires that it be implemented with intentionality. Consider some of the features of IaH:

- It ensures that global perspectives are part of the curriculum and not just something introduced to students who participate in mobility schemes;

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- It assumes that intercultural perspectives are deeply integrated across the curriculum;
- It makes focused use of cultural diversity in the classroom and community;
- It involves faculty and staff at the university, by bridging global learning with the co-curriculum.

The tactics for how an IaH strategy will be implemented will vary by institution. Initiatives such as virtual exchanges, living-learning centers, courses designed around the SDGs are examples of different approaches to integrate global learning. They can co-exist with well-designed internationalization abroad programs that still provide opportunities for faculty, staff and students to interact in person. And they can be more or less impactful, depending upon how well they are designed and implemented.

I strongly argue that institutions that are committed to internationalization should do so with a sense of purpose and intentionality. There are many examples of institutions that have effectively used IaH strategies to promote global learning with their students – I wrote about institutions in Germany, Chile, and Japan that did this very well as part of a chapter on internationalization strategies in the second edition of *The Sage Handbook of International Higher Education*. In each case, the IaH approaches were consistent their respective missions, responsive to the learning needs of the types of students they enrolled, and supported by leadership. And, in each case, IaH initiatives were complemented by other mobility-based schemes.

As we consider the existential crisis that confront our graduates – geopolitical threats, climate change, global pandemics, systemic racism – then it seems that making global learning central to the curriculum and co-curriculum is essential.

Question #5

What negative effects do you think about the military tensions in some regions such as Europe (Ex. Russia and Ukraine war) have on the current and future of internationalization of higher education in European universities? Won't these events make international higher education more prosperous in some other areas like East Asia or North America? How?

Answer:

The Russian and Ukraine war of course has an immediate impact on global higher education. The war has disrupted the studies of not just Ukrainian students, but also the more than 70,000 international students studying there. It has disrupted academic scientific collaborations. A recent article in *Science* described the impact of bans by European countries, the US, and Canada on their researchers collaborating with Russian scientists on climate research in the Artic, as an example.

I think it is far too soon, however, to assume that the war will cause the kind shift in global balance of higher education, as the question suggests. European higher education is

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resilient. It still enjoys an excellent reputation, is reasonably funded, and deeply embedded with global research collaborations. ICEF predicts that the UK, Germany, France and Spain will continue to seek growth in the number of international students enrolling.

Geopolitical tensions – hot or cold – will continue to shape global higher education. We only need to look at the impact of tensions between the US and China on the number of student mobility and scientific collaborations as evidence. However, we need to also not lose sight of the fact that higher education is part of complex system that is influenced by politics, economics, technology, and population demographics, and will also influence which systems prosper.

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