

University Research, Training, and Cooperation into the 1990s

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International Conference on Unity of the Sciences

Introduction

During the past decade the international context for scientific and educational exchange has experienced a process of transformation that promises to change our understanding and style of interuniversity cooperation. Some of these changes are obvious, others more subtle, but taken together they constitute a new educational initiative, perhaps as significant as the post-World War II educational explosion that has provided the force of our educational cooperation for almost two generations.

Because no cataclysmic event, no wartime pronouncements herald these changes, they come to us gradually, almost imperceptibly affecting the content, structure, and form of international scientific cooperation between universities. This reflects, of course, a shift in the rationale, indeed, the philosophy of international educational enterprise since the expansionist decades of the 1950s and 1960s.

It is this new philosophy, this new approach to university cooperation that I want to discuss with you today.

The Mystique of Economic Development

As all of us know, the post-war expansion in international educational cooperation drew on a powerful, almost mystical belief

in the power of economic development. We believed then, that the expansion of trade, commerce, investment, and industry around the world would bring with it peace and prosperity for all. We had faith that a relatively clear cut application of Western European and United States economic, social, and political models would bring a reasonable approximation of the good life to those societies still in the development process.

This faith, well intentioned and generous in the main, impelled countries such as my own to invest substantial effort and treasure in the promotion of economic and social development around the globe. Because education and especially higher education plays such an important role in our society and economy, the economic and social development plans we promoted overseas also included a strong educational component. A substantial portion of our current international activities in the university derive from that period.

During this phase of scientific and educational cooperation overseas, we often found ourselves working with colleagues in a peculiar imbalanced relationship. We often arrived overseas with a package of educational goods developed in the United States to meet our needs, and then, we tried to install this package of educational and scientific skills and procedures with the cooperation of but little contribution from our hosts. Informed with the dogmatism that comes with faith, we simply thought that what the US university had to offer ought to work just as well overseas as it did at home.

Perhaps at that time this prescriptive approach to

international scientific and educational cooperation may have had its place in countries without strong educational traditions of their own. Excellent scholars and institutes appeared around the world, developed with the assistance and collaboration of foreign universities and institutes, often with considerable training in the United States and Western Europe. Scholars and scientists from this generation, however, have in subsequent decades developed the skills and tools to identify their own sets of educational issues and establish their own scientific agendas. The maturation of this generation of scholars, coupled with a variety of changes in our world order, has brought about a fundamental modification of the environment for international scientific cooperation.

The Indications of Change

Without the catastrophic event of war to focus our understanding and highlight the changes in our environment, we find it necessary to notice small, cumulative changes that, when taken together, clearly mark the beginning of a new style.

Some of these changes have been in process for a decade or more, others are but straws in the wind today. Nonetheless, a careful observer can see the new direction and identify many of its characteristics.

Let us look at but two:

International Students and International Study: Foreign students have been with us since soon after the founding of our universities. Over the years they have come from various parts of the world in response to fellowship opportunities, missionary

activity, or development programs. Generally they have come as individuals, although from time to time a group program might appear. They took regular courses plus perhaps some special language training, and they returned home with our knowledge delivered as we thought appropriate.

Today, however, we see foreign students whose interest in our educational skills and services has changed. No longer satisfied to take whatever program appeared, our foreign students and especially their official sponsors have definite ideas of their own about what type of higher education their students need, how they should get it, what they should pay for it, and how agreement should be reached. This assertive stance often shocks and puzzles us, but we should be delighted because it means that our foreign students and their sponsors are now prepared to become collaborators in the educational process, not simply unknowledgeable consumers of education.

We find ourselves discussing special curricula, new delivery systems, and special programs tailored to the needs of our counterpart institutions and governments. This encourages us to reexamine our own procedures and content, frequently leading to an improvement or readjustment in what we offer our domestic students. Moreover, it assures us that the education we provide and the cooperative programs we develop with counterparts overseas become the joint responsibility of the participants and the design responds to a true partnership.

This is not to imply that the relationship between major universities in developed countries and those in developing

countries is one between universities with equal resources and skills. Of course not, but our counterparts overseas now have the sophistication to diagnose many of their own needs and the skill to help design programs that meet those needs. Together, then, the design of exchange and educational collaboration becomes less a case of our prescribing and their following and more a situation where we and they match capabilities, needs, and skills to achieve the objectives of the cooperation.

Direct Government Involvement: We discover greater and greater involvement of government agencies in the process of defining and directing international educational and scientific exchange. In many countries our participation with host institutions is mediated not by an international agency or the United States government, but by the government of the host institution's country. Where earlier we might have designed a project in scientific cooperation, convinced the US government of its worth, and requested cooperation from the host institution and its faculty, we now respond to project proposals substantially developed by the host government with criteria and goals matched to local educational and scientific concerns.

This, of course, forces us to develop much more sophisticated cross cultural skills if we want to participate in the second stage of university development and scientific cooperation in the developing world. Now and increasingly in the future, the easy relationship of United States university, United States government agency, and United States educational values and assumptions gives way to the much harder but more valuable confrontation of values

and assumptions between societies and cultures with quite different expectations, goals, and capabilities.

Education and science cost money, often quite a lot of money, and with the changes in the sources of funds (from unilateral grants and loans to multilateral assistance and host country financing) it is only fitting that the education and science purchased meet the perceived needs of the purchaser. In many cases, the agenda for educational cooperation comes via the host country's national government, complicating in some ways our ability to cooperate with counterpart institutions but aiding in other ways by committing the national governments to the goals of the collaboration once it is designed.

The Universities and the Challenge

As this world environment for education and science has changed, the universities have responded, albeit slowly in many areas. If we in the major research and scientific universities want to capture the initiative in international education, training, and science, we must move with more skill and speed to respond to what has become an increasingly complex and changeable environment.

Take the pace of change:

From the experience of the past decade we know that the apparently stable, large-power dominated world of the 1950s and 1960s will not return soon. Instead we can expect to exist in a world with many influences, many centers of power and wealth, many sources of wisdom and expertise. Moreover, because of the multiplicity of medium level world centers and the inability of

the great powers to control or manage events, rapid and sometimes dramatic change will characterize the world of the next few decades. Whether we talk energy, nuclear arms, economic development, international debt, or social revolution; change, movement, and instability will be the watch words of this generation.

Change, of course, does not always mean war, revolution, debt, and destruction. It also brings computers, telecommunications, satellites, and advances in health. Some of these advances occur with dizzying speed, such as has happened with computers and communications, others take much longer such as health and nutrition. The pace of change, however, appears to be accelerating in many areas spurred on by rapid communications, efficient media, and computerized skills.

Universities, by nature stable and enduring rather than fast moving and innovative, must learn to respond quickly to these changes rather than wait for a lull in the activity to design a response. We must learn to design and execute useful effective programs of scientific and educational collaboration in the space of weeks not months, months not years. We must learn how to adjust our designs quickly and relatively painlessly to accommodate changes in the project environment.

If universities fail to become flexible providers of knowledge and skills, we will lose the initiative in science and education to private commercial concerns selling these skills either outright or as part of industrial expansion plans. If universities want to define the content and capture the direction

of educational and scientific development, they need to learn the new skills of rapid adaptation and quick flexible cooperation.

Such a challenge does not imply a diminution of standards or quality, only a flexibility in delivering and arranging the quality content and the high standards of performance. Quality and performance always do well, but unless the universities can learn how to work in new collaborative arrangements, we have no way to demonstrate the importance and utility of our resources and skills.

Take the issues of Research and Training:

Universities think they know what research and training mean. But when we talk to our international counterparts we often find a considerable divergence of opinion about the content and purpose of research and training. For institutions and countries engaged in the development process, research means practical research, applied research, useful research, not theoretical studies or very long range exploratory studies. Some of our universities have quickly adapted to this approach, principally those with strong specialties in agriculture and engineering, practical result oriented disciplines by tradition.

The humanities, arts, social sciences, and sciences have had much less success in moving from the theoretical concerns of traditional university research to the practical concerns of a developing country's research agenda. Unless universities choose to abdicate their leadership in these fields, we must invent ways of preserving the traditional research strengths of the university while creating opportunities, incentives, and support for the

pragmatic research that should accompany more theoretical pursuits. We've done enough to know how it can be done, but as our own educational support has declined, we have tended to withdraw from the world into the ivory tower of a university mission defined centuries ago.

Because we often think of the university and university life in terms of traditional curricular patterns, and because we often allow ourselves to be tyrannized by the university calendar, our response to the training needs of our colleagues in other countries frequently proves rigid and inflexible. The goal of universities is to advance, transmit, and preserve knowledge, not to impose arbitrary boundaries around the content and pace of training.

We must make our institutions flexible at home and overseas in delivering training. That means curricular designs that may differ from the traditional United States pattern either in content, duration, or delivery.

We must, to be sure, guarantee that the quality of the training be outstanding, that the content be rigorous, and that the controls be strong. Nowhere, however, is it written that good training and education require two semester academic years, three credit hour courses, or four year diplomas. We need to work more closely with our colleagues overseas to develop programs in training that take place in the United States when it's needed, overseas when it's appropriate. We should look first to the appropriateness and quality of the content, last to the formalities of credit hours, course numbers, or degrees.

Our universities need to think in more complicated ways about the combinations of resources needed to deliver training and conduct research. We now mostly think in terms of a United States resource base and an international host collaborator. But three, four, or multi directional collaboration needs to be developed. Why not United States, Brazil, and Indonesia? Why not institutions in West Germany, the United States, Japan, and Malaysia?

Such complexity frightens us, but the multinational corporation does it by effective use of telecommunications, satellites, and computers. We need to redesign appropriate parts of our international research and training mission to exploit such multilateral advantages whenever it is cost effective, and we should be willing to spend some resources to learn how to do it. We may not get it right the first time, not the second either, but by the third or fourth time such a collaboration will bring results as long as the cooperation is genuine and the partners bring their best to the task.

Take political and social change:

One of the most difficult obstacles to achieving the goals outlined briefly here comes in the familiar guise of politics. Education, research, and science while politically neutral in theory embody such powerful skills and ideas that they automatically become subject to the political and social agendas of every society. No useful purpose is served by assuming a neutrality in education, training, or research that does not, in practice, exist. Instead, we must recognize and deal with the

political issues.

The universities must labor hard to reduce their direct participation in fulfilling the political agenda of their home governments. While the content of education, training, and research usually contains many values that support successful political systems, and this content can not be easily removed from the enterprise, all of the participants should be able to develop the sophistication to recognize political and social overtones without rejecting the skills and the knowledge that accompany them.

Complex, multilateral cooperation managed by universities offers one way to minimize difficulties of this kind. Carefully designed programs with content prepared in cooperation with host governments and host institutions can also reduce political difficulties. But even so, much political content can never be eliminated, and this should not be taken as grounds for dismissing knowledge that carries some political content. Since governments are, by definition, in pursuit of political and social goals, much of the burden of effectively managing this problem rests with the universities whose position and whose cooperative experience provides the best location for solving such issues.

Even with the best of cooperation, political controversies and social issues may well arise in the course of educational exchange, but universities should be prepared to tolerate complex political and social environments until quality education no longer becomes possible. When quality can no longer be delivered, rejection and isolation are not the appropriate responses.

Universities need to develop flexible measures to continue what can be done, discontinuing what can not, without accepting an obligation to validate or reject particular political or social approaches. This objective stance will prove difficult to maintain, for all universities are part of the cultures that support them and find it almost impossible to avoid direct involvement in issues of value, worth, and justice. This may be the greatest challenge of all.

What Can Be Done?

These principles and ideas, for all their attractiveness and their inspirational quality, mean nothing unless we can find ways of putting them into action, translating them into programs. Each region, country, or institution must develop programs that fit their resources and their traditions, and we can learn by exploring each other's experiments in international cooperative and collaborative education. Let me offer two case studies that demonstrate how we at Indiana University have worked to achieve the goals outlined above.

Indiana University, one of the United States' major public research universities, represents a system of eight campuses located throughout the agricultural and industrial state of Indiana, right in the center of the American heartland. Its central campus, situated in Bloomington, Indiana, houses an extraordinary complement of high quality research and instructional programs in the arts, sciences, social sciences, and professions, far removed from the major international centers of the United States.

Thanks to the vision of a succession of university presidents and strong support from state government, national government, and private foundations, Indiana University has developed one of the United States' most successful and well developed international programs, with preeminent centers of excellence focused on Asia, Africa, Latin America, Russia and Eastern Europe, Western Europe, and the Middle East. These resources have given the university a heightened sense of international awareness and built a spirit of international enterprise into the academic traditions of the university.

Because we operate so far from the principal international centers of New York, San Francisco, or New Orleans, Indiana University must create its own international opportunities, for few international issues take place in Indiana although the state is very dependent on international trade for its economic prosperity. Thus, we have not only invested in what are crucial academic resources in research and teaching capabilities in international studies, but we have found ways to use these centers of excellence in support of programs with a broader impact on the university community. While we have a full complement of exchange programs for students and faculty throughout the world, these activities primarily affect those who have an academic interest in studying the region or language in question, leaving other faculty and students unable to participate.

To address the continuing internationalization of our university, we have developed two pilot programs in Eastern Europe designed to test some innovative mechanisms of cooperative

international education. Let me briefly outline the experience we have had with these programs, in hopes that some of this experience will prove useful to others and can prompt suggestions and new ideas useful to all of us.

American Studies in Warsaw, Polish Studies in Indiana

Some seven or eight years ago, we began discussions with officials from Warsaw University about the possibility of developing a joint, collaborative program that would create an American Studies program at Warsaw University and a Polish Studies program at Indiana University. The basic premise for this discussion appeared quite simple. Warsaw had an interest in strengthening its ability to teach about American subjects in language, literature, history, politics, and economics. While a number of Warsaw faculty had strong academic expertise in language and literature, other areas needed more help.

On our side, our East European program, while strong in many areas, demonstrated considerable interest in improving its Polish dimension especially in areas of language training. Moreover, we needed ways for our students specializing in Polish subjects in economics, history, or language to gain access to the country and culture of their academic specialty.

This community of interest led to the expansion of the traditional faculty-student exchange model to include an institution building dimension. We agreed with Warsaw University that IU would establish a Polish Studies Center with an IU Director and an Associate Director nominated by Warsaw University. The Polish Studies Center would develop, with the assistance and

advice of the Associate Director and other visiting colleagues from Warsaw a program designed to enhance the university's ability to teach about Poland and carry out public activities and academic projects focused on Poland.

In turn, Warsaw University agreed to establish an American Studies Center with a similar structure, using an Associate Director from Indiana University to help develop a strong American Studies program at Warsaw.

Both programs involved colleagues from other institutions besides the primary partners. Indiana has hosted a number of Polish scholars from universities other than Warsaw and Warsaw has hosted many American scholars from other United States institutions. But the important element of this activity is the joint involvement in the creation of academic institutional structures within our institutions that could not have happened without the cooperative and collaborative work of the two institutions.

To focus the academic efforts of the two centers, Indiana and Warsaw also collaborate on an academic conference focused on a topic of interest to both faculties, hosted by each institution in alternating years. These conferences tend to focus on broad topics that involve experts in many disciplines and professions. The collaboration involved in developing the themes and selecting the participants for the conferences has built a strong and enduring link between our faculties that is rare in our experiences with regular academic exchanges.

While I could go on for some time about the success that this

program has enjoyed, let me just indicate two symbols of the usefulness of this approach. First, our exchange, academic institution to academic institution, has survived the recent difficulties between the governments of Poland and the United States without a serious break. Warsaw continues to send us excellent, outspoken, and independent faculty, and they continue to receive our nominees without major difficulties. Where other forms of academic exchange collapsed with the political problems, this university to university program remained not only a functional link but a vital link between scholars in the United States and Poland.

Second, our exchange has made it possible for faculty at Indiana University without any expertise in Eastern European affairs or Polish language to participate in an international program overseas. Faculty in business, economics, American studies, and the like have traveled to Poland, participated in conferences and lectureships, and returned much more aware of the importance of international issues and concerns within their disciplines, even if those disciplines have no explicit international content.

Of course our relationship has had its difficulties, not every exchangee or participant has performed as we would have hoped, not every university or government official has been as supportive as we think they should have been, but the result of Warsaw and Indiana perseverance has been a program with major impact on both university's ability to understand and work in international education.

Yugoslav-American Joint Seminar

Our successful experience with Warsaw University led us to respond with enthusiasm to another idea for collaboration in Eastern Europe focused on American Studies. The Association of Yugoslav Universities, headed by Zagreb University, proposed a collaboration that would involve three American universities and the Yugoslav universities to promote the development of American Studies in Yugoslavia and Yugoslav studies in the United States. Indiana joined with UCLA and Johns Hopkins to respond to this initiative.

After extensive discussions, we all agreed to try out this plan. Indiana University took responsibility for organizing the American Studies initiative in the United States and UCLA took on the Yugoslav Studies activities in the US. Our experience with this American Studies seminar has taught us some valuable lessons about international scholarly collaboration.

The design of the Joint American Studies Seminar included the following characteristics. First, the topic and themes of the seminar are developed by a joint American-Yugoslav committee that meets and defines the parameters of the seminar. Second, the seminar takes place during a week of intensive discussions in Dubrovnik. Third, the participants include 5 American scholars, 5 principal Yugoslav scholars, and some 25 Yugoslav advanced graduate students and young faculty. This group has as its purpose a five day series of lectures and discussions that confront the differing perspectives of American studies scholars in both countries on the same set of issues.

In practice, this design has produced some remarkable benefits for Indiana faculty. We discovered that our faculty in American Studies, in the preparation for these seminars, ended up carrying on a much more intense and profound discussion of American Studies issues than they had done in other contexts within the United States. We learned that in the seminar itself, our American Studies faculty found many new perspectives and insights into their own research and thinking about American Studies from the interaction with the often quite different perspectives of Yugoslav colleagues on American Studies.

As a result, a group of our faculty with traditionally little international interest, has become intensely interested not only in their own subject of American Studies but also in the Yugoslav academic environment. Some have pursued this interest through Fulbright lectureships and others have maintained academic and personal contacts with their Yugoslav counterparts long after the seminar experience itself. Because the interaction of the seminar is so productive, involves many people in both the planning and execution of the project, and takes place in a very intense and productive environment, the impact on our university has been substantial, much more so than most international seminars and conferences. To some extent this happens because the seminar is an annual, in effect, continuous event involving past and future participants in discussions almost year round.

In any case, our experience with these two Eastern European projects has made us very receptive to experiments in international cooperation that involve substantial cooperation and

collaboration. We look for occasions where our faculty and students must become involved in a continuous process rather than one-time interactions, and we know that to succeed in these more complex programs we must support and nurture the infrastructure that supports continuity.

These examples are but two of many different programs Indiana University operates to achieve the purpose of internationalizing our approaches to education, science, the arts and humanities, and the professions. Each of us can offer other examples which can provide ideas and inspiration.

If we are to succeed in adapting to the coming changes in international education, if we are to bring the principles of international academic cooperation into action, we must begin with small, effective, and sustainable programs. We can not wait for a universal answer to international cooperation, for there is no such answer. There is only hard work, cooperative conviction, and imagination.

Conclusion

We can not, of course, survey the entire panorama of educational change and adjustment that faces us as we approach the decade of the 1990s, but it is clear that we will need to adjust our international educational activities to meet the needs of a diverse, polycentric, contentious, and fast moving world. If we meet this challenge, the opportunities for dynamic educational leadership will grow, enriching our intellectual and research capabilities and maintaining the position of higher education at the center of major issues of economic and social development. If

we fail by emphasizing our internal difficulties and retreating to defend the rigidities of past years, the international leadership and initiative will pass to other institutions whose educational and scientific capabilities may be less than ours but whose cooperative and innovative skills allow them to capture the initiatives in international scientific cooperation and training.

It is my belief that our universities have the skills to lead international educational and scientific cooperation into the 1990s, and I am convinced that the result of our cooperation will be a dynamic, complex, fast moving, and effective network of universities, providing quality research and training in a cooperative and collaborative context.

It promises to be an exciting decade.