

Globalization, Internationalization, and EDUCAUSE

Globalization, an idea and a time that has come to most sectors of the economy, is now having an impact on higher education. In his best-selling book *The World Is Flat*, Thomas Friedman argues that geopolitical changes, networks and information technology, and the emergence of English as a universal second language have changed the way business is conducted and, now, the way that higher education is provided to changing populations with changing demographics.

For decades, the academic research enterprise has been global. Now, however, the instructional mission of our campuses is also being affected by these global forces, as are too a variety of related service functions. Although for many years U.S. colleges and universities have attracted hundreds of thousands of “foreign” students, today an increasing number of colleges and universities are establishing formal degree programs, joint ventures, and other partnerships in Eastern Europe, China, Qatar, and elsewhere. Still, globalization is not the same as internationalization.

EDUCAUSE has never claimed to be an international organization. EDUCAUSE (and its parent organizations) evolved as a U.S. national professional organization, holding conferences in the United States and explaining the U.S. higher education position to the various governmental and regulatory agencies in the United States. These activities are critical to U.S. members of the organization but, understandably, cannot be scaled to work similarly in other countries. Currently, EDUCAUSE has more than 200 international institutions as members (about 10.4% of the

total membership), but they do not benefit from the efforts of its Washington, D.C., office, nor can they easily participate in many of the conferences and programs that EDUCAUSE provides. And since EDUCAUSE cannot offer equivalent services for its international members, the institutional membership dues are substantially reduced.

Yet in the rapidly emerging global world in which higher education operates, EDUCAUSE highly values the participation of its international members and fully recognizes the need to draw on the knowledge and innovations of other countries. Just as students and scholars throughout the world expand learning through study abroad, so can our members from all countries advance their institutions by promoting the intelligent use of information technology through understanding and sharing.

In our annual member survey, we have found that international participants rate EDUCAUSE highly, about the same as do U.S. respondents. To strengthen this relationship, this past spring EDUCAUSE began a set of conversations with our international members to determine in what ways we could better serve them and to clarify what they could expect from EDUCAUSE. We developed a set of FAQs (<http://www.educause.edu/InternationalMembership/10307>), as well as a set of goals based on principles (<http://www.educause.edu/InternationalPrinciples/10547>) that will guide our international efforts. EDUCAUSE believes that we should as-

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sist all of our members in developing an international perspective and that EDUCAUSE should become a conduit for worldwide developments in higher education.

To move these goals into reality, EDUCAUSE will be undertaking a number of efforts: collaborating more fully

with organizations, around the world, that have similar interests and focus; exploring ways to formalize and regularize information exchange about IT innovation and information resources being effectively applied to transform higher education throughout the world; creating Web-based resources for sharing content and perspectives about globalization and global issues; publishing regular international content in *EDUCAUSE Review* and *EQ*, such as the interview in this issue of *EDUCAUSE Review* with President Shimizu of the National Institute of Multimedia Education (NIME) in Japan; and actively seeking articles, written by U.S. and international authors, about globalization and about IT innovations around the world. Additionally, EDUCAUSE is committed to becoming more actively engaged in policy and legal issues that transcend geographical and national boundaries.

EDUCAUSE is prepared to assume its role in a global world largely facilitated by the advent of information technology. It would be negligent on the part of this IT association not to embrace the give-and-take, the innovation, and the changing face of higher education wherever it occurs, irrespective of national borders.

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