



Gaps in Achieving Campus Goals for Internationalization

Gretchen M. Bataille and John Waterhouse

Recently, Navitas celebrated ten years of an educational partnership with Simon Fraser University. Fraser International College was established as the first pathway program for international students in North America in 2006, and in its first year admitted 85 students. Today, FIC has over 2700 international students a year preparing to enter as full-time degree-seeking students at Simon Fraser University.

The ten-year celebration prompted us to consider both the history of pathway programs and the future of pathway programs in North America. Comparative data provide the background for international student mobility, the politics affecting pathway programs and campuses and some conversation about current trends and how they will affect institution as well as students. There are also gaps in international education that affect progress. For example, there are:

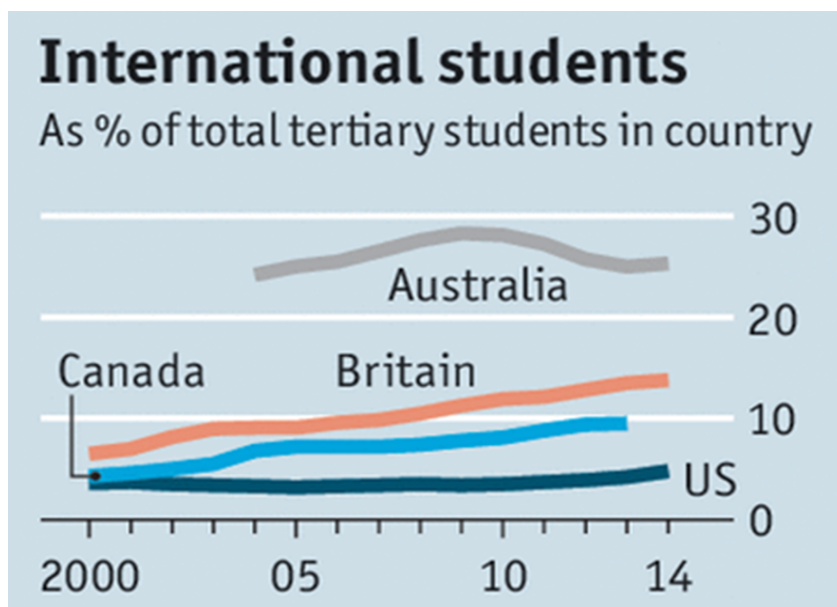
1. Gaps in numbers of students among countries
2. Gaps between goals and accomplishments
3. Gaps in understanding and commitment.

Addressing these gaps provides an opportunity to focus on opportunities and challenges for pathway programs.

At the heart of any discussion about pathway programs is the enterprise of globalization in its broadest sense, a trend that affects students, faculty and staff, communities and countries.

International students comprise about 11% of university enrollment in Canada and in the US that figure is about 5%. In the UK international students comprise about 14% of student enrollment. In Australia international students are about 25%, of total enrollment, making international education Australia's second

largest export industry. In Canada about 30% of international students come to universities through pathway programs—about 10,600 students now with the expectation that by 2020 there will be 17,500 students coming through pathway programs in Canada. About one-half of these students are coming through English language programs alone and are not enrolled in a full academic pathway program. Full pathway programs are designed to recruit international students and provide them with a specialized first year of study designed to address English proficiency if needed, provide cultural orientation and have students complete a year of academic coursework. Programs typically include both credit and non-credit instruction, tutoring, social and cultural support and overall orientation to the university. In this discussion, we are focusing on full pathway programs designed to prepare students for entry into academic programs, retention and graduation.



“Brains Without Borders,” *The Economist*, January 28, 2016

There are now nearly one million international students studying in the US, an increase of 10% from 2013 to the most recent data. Yet, these students are not spread evenly among the over 4500 US institutions. Eight US institutions enrolled over 10,000 students each during 2014-2015, and 69% of international students are enrolled at 5% of US institutions. In the US, about 41% of the students are undergraduates and 37% are graduate students, with non-degree and post-graduate students making up the remainder. Interestingly, the US market share

of international students is in decline; in 2000 22.9% of international students were studying in the US. Today, 19% of international students are studying in the US.¹

The gaps among countries in international students are obvious. But there is also a gap between where each country is and its aspirations. For example, Canada has a national expectation to double the number of international students studying in Canada by 2022. This is a big gap which would require annual growth in student numbers of at least 10% per year.²

The US has equally ambitious expectations for the growth of international students. There are many reasons for the expansion, and institutions with pathway programs are clear about the reasons for partnerships. Michele Hawkins, Associate Provost at Florida Atlantic University, is responsible for that campus' pathway program and she reported at a recent AIEA meeting, "For the first time in university history, recruiters representing all of our colleges and academic programs have engaged prospective students in-person throughout more than 50 cities across the globe. As a result, our current enrollment includes students from Asia, Europe, Africa and South America and represents 36 countries. This diversity of perspectives is essential in preparing our entire student body for success in today's global economy." Presidents and provosts of the 50+ North American universities with pathway programs understand that a large measure of that globalization is to bring international students and scholars to their universities.

English-speaking countries have an advantage in a world order that prioritizes English as the language of trade and diplomacy, and the US, Canada, Australia and Great Britain have the added advantage of being viewed as safe countries with both wealth and popular culture. These countries are also seen as lands of economic opportunity by many students. In spite of these relative advantages, it is not clear how the gap in numbers will be filled.

There are obvious benefits of international education that cross many interpersonal and geographical boundaries.

1. **For domestic students.** Only 1.6% of US students and 3.1% of Canadian students study abroad, so being in classes with international students has

¹<http://www.iie.org/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors/Data#.VxPjf8sUXIU>

² <http://international.gc.ca/global-markets-marches-mondiaux/education/strategy-strategie.aspx?lang=eng>.

the potential to provide North American students with an international experience without ever leaving home. With a critical mass of international students on a campus, events such as Chinese New Year and Diwali bring international experiences to all students. Working in groups with students from other countries prepares all students to participate in global affairs and prepare for the global workforce they will enter.

2. **For the economy.** Not only do institutions benefit financially from having international students on campus, the economies of receiving communities and countries see increased spending from students who choose to study there. It is estimated that each international student spends about \$35K annually in their host country. Additionally, those students who choose to stay in the country where they were educated add talent to the workforce, representing a significant brain gain.³
3. **For the country.** At a time of international unrest, every country benefits from opportunities to share languages, religions, customs and cultures across boundaries. Many thoughtful leaders have expressed the desire that all students worldwide have the opportunity of interacting with those who are different from themselves.
4. **For international students.** Key to all of what partnerships do is to provide opportunities for academic success. Many students will return to their home countries prepared to live, to work, to lead, and to better understand the world. Others will remain for a short or longer period in the country where they were educated, contributing to the economy, to the creation of new knowledge and to a better global understanding for communities and countries.

In spite of the advantages of international education there are a number of factors operating on students and their families and on the universities and governments that limit opportunities. These factors contribute to the gap in student numbers among countries and the gap between aspirations and accomplishment. Some of these factors are:

1. **Suspicion about agents.** Agents can and do play a very important role in helping potential students and families to understand a very complex global market in higher education. Yet suspicions about the motives and knowledge of agents exist especially in institutions and also with students.

³ <http://www.iie.org/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors/Data/Economic-Impact-of-International-Students#.VxPkz8sUXIU>

In many countries it is nearly impossible for students to find an international university without engaging an agent.

2. **Lack of quality international pathways.** In Canada and the United States such programs are often limited to English language instruction. Too many so-called pathway programs fail to provide comprehensive introductions to academic programs or cultural orientation. There are a number of programs that use the label “pathways,” but often they don’t provide student services, social support or ensured progression to the university.
3. **Lengthy processes.** Visa requirements, rejection rates and processing time are too long and too high in many cases.
4. **Work rules for students and graduates.** Train them up and ship them home seems to be a rule, not the exception. International students are looking for more.
5. **Populist bias.** Fear of the unknown and illogical assumptions lead to biases against immigration and often poor treatment of students in local communities.
6. **Zero sum thinking about university costs.** Too often we hear the refrain that each international student “takes the place” of a domestic applicant. In fact, international students in pathway programs contribute full tuition to universities, providing needed funds that can be used to support more domestic students.
7. **Academic conservatism.** *The Comfortable Pew.* In the mid-sixties a Canadian author, Pierre Burton, wrote a book with that provocative title which applies to too many universities. Many institutions and faculty believe that there is no reason to disturb the comfort of the niche that they so complacently occupy. There is too often a gap between the rhetoric of the academy which pays lip service to the benefits of international education and the willingness of the academy to actually do anything to change from the comfortable status quo.

There clearly are very real challenges to change, often coming from our own institutions. Additionally, there are global trends that affect the long-term opportunities for international students. In some cases, the trends work to the advantage of pathway programs and universities, but, too often, national and international events prevent successful internationalization of a campus.

1. **Declining state support** for higher education results in less funding for public institutions, but the same legislators who want to cut funds for higher education often also express suspicion about enrolling international students. These are often the same governors and legislators who believe that preparing students for a job is the only purpose of higher education.
2. We are already seeing how **the price of oil** affects the ability of governments to support their students—Russia, Venezuela, Brazil, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, and Canada have seen changes in their economies and US and Canadian institutions have experienced how these changes affect their enrollments.
3. The **refugee crisis** has put undue attention on immigration with many fearing the immigrants themselves as well as the strain on a nation's economy.
4. **Elections** affect policies. Changes in Canadian immigration policies that allow graduates to remain longer in Canada are positive results, but the ramp up to the US election of 2016 has demonstrated the xenophobic element in the US that could derail many policies that support student visas, student enrollments and training periods following graduation.
5. Another trend that affects a university's ability to recruit is the rapid dissemination of **new technologies**, particularly technology used in marketing institutions. Students worldwide use mobile devices and instant messaging. The ability to access both information and courses such as MOOCs means that international students and their families are savvier about their opportunities than ever before.
6. On those campuses without a history of enrolling international students, **international student needs** are often not anticipated. Universities located in rural areas may not have access to halal or kosher foods and often do not have mosques, synagogues or prayer rooms for students. Worse yet, some communities are simply not ready for the influx of a population that they deem "different."

We live in a global society and, more importantly, university students—wherever they come from—will live in a world that will demand that they understand how to live and work together. Globalizing campuses through the diversity of students, the expansion of the curriculum and expanding opportunities for faculty is what pathway programs support. The ancillary effect of an expanded revenue stream for the institution allows partners in pathway programs to expand services and opportunities for all students. In the end, the world benefits.

About the authors:

Gretchen M. Bataille is the Senior Academic Advisor for Navitas in the US. Prior to joining Navitas, Gretchen held several senior positions including Senior Vice President for Leadership and Lifelong Learning at the American Council on Education; President, University of North Texas (Denton, TX); Senior Vice President, University of North Carolina System; and Provost at Washington State University and the University of California, Santa Barbara. She has consulted in higher education in the United States and abroad and has been invited to speak in over twenty countries. Gretchen has served as a member of the Board of Trustees of The College Board as well as a Board member for ACE. She is a member of the Board of Directors for SAGE Publications and serves as a trustee for Drake University.

John Waterhouse serves as the Senior Academic Advisor for Navitas in Canada and as Provost at Simon Fraser University; he was responsible for initiating the pathway program on that campus that now has an annual enrollment of over 2700 students in Fraser International College. John Waterhouse is a professor emeritus at Simon Fraser University. He has held academic appointments at the University of Alberta, the University of Waterloo and Simon Fraser University as well as visiting scholar appointments at Cornell, Stanford and Harvard Universities. Professor Waterhouse has held leadership roles at Simon Fraser University where he was Dean of Business from 1996-2000 and Vice President Academic and Provost from 2000-2008. Professor Waterhouse has international teaching experience in China, Turkey and Australia and has advised the University of Liberia. He has served on a number of public service organizations, including chairing the Board of Academics Without Borders.