

ERD 2016: Education, Reflection, Development, Fourth Edition

Comprehensive Internationalization at HAN University of Applied Sciences. Student Mobility

Florentin Popescu ^{a*}, Jannemieke Geessink ^b

* Corresponding author: Florentin Popescu, florentin.popescu@han.nl

^aHAN University of Applied Sciences, Ruitenberglaan 31, 6826 CC Arnhem, the Netherlands, florentin.popescu@han.nl, tel:0031618361707

^bHAN University of Applied Sciences, Ruitenberglaan 31, 6826 CC Arnhem, the Netherlands, jannemieke.geessink@han.nl

Abstract

<http://dx.doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2016.12.64>

The Netherlands Universities Foundation for International Cooperation (Nuffic) conducted a study (van Gaalen, Hobbes, Roodenburg, & Gielesen, 2014) into institutional policy on internationalization in 2014 in the Netherlands. This study included most Dutch Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Of these, 27 (59%) had a internationalization central-level plan, eight (17%) were developing such a plan, whilst seven (15%) did not have a separate central- level plan. Only four of the HEIs (9%) in the study did not have a central-level internationalization policy. It can be concluded that the penetration of internationalization in terms of policy is high in the Netherlands. This article is a part of an extensive research project developed by the International Business Centre of Expertise at the HAN University of Applied Sciences and traces the recent institutional developments within the context of its strategic planning and internationalization policies. In particular, this article deals with the “Student Mobility“ dimension of the CIGE model (CIGE, 2013).

© 2016 Published by Future Academy www.FutureAcademy.org.uk

Keywords: Comprehensive Internationalization; Higher Education; Internationalization Policies; Internationally Connected University.

1. Introduction

European internationalization has reach its intended limitations and has been growing strong since the Erasmus program was first launched by the European Commission almost thirty years ago. Almost three million students have exchange faculty and university experiences and Erasmus made a lasting

footprint upon how internationalization should be rethought and reform within a global higher education system.

The Erasmus for All Programme set for 2014-2020 was proposed by EC (European Commission) in November 2011 for the purpose of creating a new Erasmus Exchange programme that offers more flexibility in shorter times and phases of mobility periods, while also stimulating the creation of future strategic partnerships from curriculum level courses to more structures needed to cooperate between host and partner universities. The Key Action I of the programme focuses on the learning mobility of individuals, while also offering better loans and guarantee mechanisms for youth mobility with the International dimension from HE mobility for EU and non-EU beneficiaries.

This article is using the Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement's (CIGE) model as a strategic basis for comprehensive internationalization; this process brings programs, policies, and initiatives into alignment with university strategic plans to become globally oriented and internationally connected (CIGE, 2013). The model contains six target areas / dimensions: (1) Articulated Institutional Commitment, (2) Administrative Leadership, Structure, and Staffing, (3) Curriculum, Co-curriculum, and Learning Outcomes, (4) Faculty Policies and Practices (5) Student Mobility, (6) Collaboration and Partnerships; and will help identify implementation strategies that support internationalization at the university level. This paper seeks to document how these aspects of internationalization are perceived by university faculty and higher management in form of institutional strategic planning and policies. In particular, this article deals with the "Student Mobility" dimension of the CIGE model.



Fig.1. CIGE Model for Comprehensive Internationalization (CIGE, 2013).

The researcher is planning to encompass a consideration/evaluation of the specific university policies and practices in relation to the theme and the model used as well as an evaluation of institutional responses of University to a range of issues, policies and strategies concerning internationalization.

This paper contributes to knowledge by attempting to develop faculty leadership in the strategic planning of the internationalization process by determining the best practices while creating a process for internationalization to increase the university global competitiveness. It positions the responses to internationalization of chosen university within the policy context that the university sets. In a

conceptual context, this research is exploring the various tiers of internationalization and tries to equate them to the overall context of institutional strategic planning made by the studied university.

2. Problem Definition and Research Design

This paper traces the chosen university recent development and seeks to account for this in terms of institutional strategic planning. It seeks to document how these aspects of internationalization are perceived by university administrators and faculty. In addition, this paper highlights some of the major issues in connection with institutional responses to the impact of internationalization with respect to responsibilities that range from being local to international in nature. In particular, the strategic planning is explored, and as the literature shows this aspect is critical in identifying reasons for institutional responses of complex organizations, such as universities.

According to the American Council on Education (CIGE, 2013), student mobility, which refers both to the outward flow of domestic students to other countries to engage in an education abroad experience and the inward flow of international students to study at international campuses, is often a focus of internationalization efforts. Orientations, re-entry programs and other support structures and activities help facilitate student adjustment and maximize learning:

1. Credit transfer policies.
2. Financial aid and funding.
3. Orientation and re-entry programs.
4. Ongoing support and programs for international students.

In line with these recommendations, I chose a combination of interviews, archives, and observation, with main emphasis on the first two. In line with the explorative nature of the study, the goal of the interviews was to see the research topic from the perspective of the interviewee, and to understand why he or she came to have this particular perspective.

Policy and other documentation for the university was collected on site, to supplement the primary and secondary data gathered, when made and recorded. For the international policy context, sources of documentary information were used to scale the international, national and local position on higher education in selected university. Several governments and other websites were used to glean policy and positional information. Sources referenced in research papers were also utilized as resources from online searches through various electronic databases and search engines. The documentation from institution was collected to gain insight into the institution and the strategies and policies in place. Sources of this information included: strategic plans; management and academic structure charts; annual reports; internationalization policy documents; websites etc. These documents were the first types of units of observation.

3. Results and Outcomes

The core objective in the creation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is to promote an intra-European physical mobility of students and academic staff while also resolving some of the core

objectives of the intergovernmental Bologna Declaration of 1999. Many years after the start of the Erasmus programs, more core objectives have been added for student and staff mobility. Since late strategy of March 2010, (European Commission, 2010, p. 11) and its July 2013 Communiqué on 'European higher education in the world' (European Commission, 2013) had made it clear that mobility programs are not enough for the long term objectives; internationalization is a rising phenomenon with a global dimension: beyond the intra-EU cooperation and mobility' (European Commission, 2013, p. 2). It clearly states in some cases that several member states and many HEIs do not have higher education internationalization strategies in place; the reason being that is too occupied with student mobility and are fragmented rather than linked to an institutional or national strategy.

Both the states members and HEIs must respond to this new setting with a comprehensive internationalization strategy while also adding to mobility beyond Europe as comprehensive internationalization includes cooperation and partnerships and students mobility that help improvement of curricula and digital learning (European Commission, 2013, p. 4). According to EU statistics (European Commission, 2014), Dutch HEIs have ranked seventh in terms of the number of selected ERASMUS Higher Education Co-operation projects in the 2007-2013. Furthermore some of the Dutch HEIs are often project coordinators, while others rank behind Belgium and the UK in numbers of selected projects. The Dutch coordination of so-called intensive programs was also above average: thirty-four IPs, ranking fourth behind Italy, Germany, and France. 900 Dutch students and 338 academics participated in these IPs in 2011. In the same year Germany, Italy, Spain, and Belgium were sending more participants while Dutch HEIs coordinated 21 Erasmus Mundus A2 scholarship projects (2007-2013).

Social and economic developments are ever present within international and intercultural competences and create necessity rather than a luxury. This information applies to HAN students who spend their study experience not only in the Netherlands but anywhere else in the world where preferred partners exist. Thus HAN University of Applied Sciences has set its priorities to target all performances within its courses and curriculum, thereby achieving this dimension in 2016, while progress will be made in this direction until 2020. Some examples include Internationalisation@home, a learning environment that offers students and staff alike a possibility to develop international and intercultural competencies while also being introduced to the internationalization process within the first years of most of the courses and projects.

The increase in student mobility is obviously a good starting point for illustrating the internationalization trend. UNESCO has presented a report for international educational statistics, while in recent years together with OECD and EUROSTAT has informed every institution on how many foreign students are and students studying abroad. Moreover, student mobility is a key channel in which high-skilled immigrants arrive (Suter and Jandl, 2006) and offer their particular set of skills towards higher integration within a potential future system dedicated to them (Chiswick and Miller, 2011). Some literature that is specific to this subject has pointed out, that the number of higher education policies is affected by tuition fees, language of instruction or the quality of their respective institution they study at (De Voretz, 2006).

Thereby HAN's aim is to improve the quality of its international partners network by analyzing from down to up its list of partners, while a better approach is needed for international network and also a prerequisite for improving the efficiency and effectiveness needed to realize international grants. Since 2014, the faculties initiated a frame in which their strategic partner policies may include HAN wide partners' policy which will be given further shape the coming years. The increase in student's numbers is paramount for establishing HAN's international dimension, by increasing its intensity and focusing on some efforts of enrolling new units of institutions. In this way both the Bachelors and the Masters courses are structured and developed in such way that in-bound and outbound exchange for student mobility will match the need of the students, not to mention student's numbers has increased and the outgoing mobility rose up to 19% (391 outgoing students in 2014), while incoming mobility went up 4% (279 incoming students).

HAN University of Applied Science has seen 334 students going abroad for work experience, and 51 more went for foreign graduation projects abroad. Two years ago, the trend diminished and new incoming international students have flocked to study for courses and degrees within the programmes on offer and this intake was of 558 students against an intake of 718 in 2013, showing that mainly German students are decreasing. In this regard, mobility has taken center stage for increasing its student numbers while also promoting its international in higher education.

OECD (2011) found that languages of instruction remain an important factor to attracting most students and it is vital that multiple spoken languages, such as English, French, German, Spanish or Russian, will attract a greater number of students. However, English is the most important and spoken language within the higher education and research areas and students that increase proficiency will be more likely to benefit from this (Altbach 2007, Zheng 2010).

When applying for a study abroad, HAN students are advised to take the language of instruction into account. Programmes are taught in English, French, German, Spanish, etc., but the language of instruction may not necessarily be the language of the country, therefore students must check with the Study Abroad Coordinator if the programme is fully or only partially in English. Also when not studying in the language of the country students go to, HAN advises them to familiarize with the habits of the country they go to and also prepare for at least being able to communicate on a very basic level with the local people. Often HAN's partner universities offer introductory courses in the local language.

Also the quality of education has an important position for picking the right place to undergo a student mobility program, these two indicators being based on the position of students (Bourke 1997, OECD 2011). The reputation is paramount to the higher education institution and second, the recognition of the degree within the home country or international labor market is pivotal for future career building (Bourke 1997, Park 2009). Reputation was build up in the position higher education institutions for the purpose of being relevant to the international ranking system. Degrees recognition is formally governed by national legislation in each country; also labor markets are related to the reputation and relevance of the degree obtained by the postgraduate in a higher education institution. As mentioned before, some factors are combined with others in order to attract students;

multiculturalism is one such thing while safety, weather and the friendliness of those who live in the country of study is another (Bourke 1997, Park 2009).

HAN University of Applied Sciences is very much concerned about high-quality education and has established various methods for supporting, guiding and supervising (from a distance) its own students at their work placements and/or during their study abroad. They recognize that a precondition for integrating a study abroad period into the set-up of a study programme is a reliable structure of support and guidance. Therefore, HAN University of Applied Sciences has chosen to provide its guest students with an Exchange Course Coordinator and an assistant. They take care of the educational part of the Exchange Course students' stay in Arnhem. For the various other items concerned with a stay abroad, such as accommodation or visa, HAN's International Office and international administrators can help the incoming students. Every year some enthusiastic students organize an introduction week for the new Exchange students. Information on this introduction week is sent to students in June (1st semester students) and in December (2nd semester students). Alternatively, students can contact the Exchange Course Coordinator or the assistant on this matter.

Towards a mobility scoreboard, Conditions for learning abroad in Europe (Eurydice, 2013), is a study made to show how to improve the quality of information and recommend much needed guidance lines for mobility prospects while also granting grants and loans for the purpose of enticing more learners to take part in such programs. The quality of this learning mobility prospects have shown that students experience and host institutions offer a plethora of support needed to ensure recognition of learning outcomes. This study has showed the importance of language learning and acquiring intercultural skills in early stages of education while using innovative IT methods to promote virtual mobility.

Statistics have presented an increase recently but the periods of time spent abroad are typically shorter (de Wit et al., 2012). European universities have often used policies to promote student exchange, and less attention was given to a systematic attempt to promote staff mobility and training administrative staff through the Erasmus programs. Many university agreements provide bilateral opportunities for academic exchange, or students' staff that teach and research, but this is left to the respective departments or the individual academics whether to partake in this opportunities. Yet some studies show that persons who do engage in academic mobility are rarely generally recognized within their career progression (Racké 2013).

To help students cover additional costs while studying abroad, HAN advises students to apply for an Erasmus+ grant in certain instances. Erasmus+ is the European Union programme that supports students of higher education in Europe by providing Erasmus grants. When planning on studying at one of HAN's partner universities in a country participating in the Erasmus+ programme (European Union), students can apply for an Erasmus grant. If they go back to the country of origin for their study abroad, they are not eligible for the Erasmus grant. If they qualify for an Erasmus grant, students are required to complete several forms before, during and after their study abroad as HAN International Office will help with all these administrative issues. If students decide to study abroad outside the EU/EEA, there are, unfortunately, no grants available from the EU. There are, however, a very limited number of Holland Scholarships available for students of all nationalities studying abroad outside the

EU/EEA. In some cases there are other grants available, for example from the Nuffic (Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation in Higher Education – www.nuffic.nl; www.beursopener.nl). Application for any grants is advisable with the help of the International Office staff members.

4. Conclusions and Further Research

After summarizing the findings of the interviews at the university and analyzing the CICE Comprehensive Internationalization model regarding the Students Mobility Dimension, we find that HAN University of Applied Sciences goal is to promote students and staff mobility; still some insights into the benefits of further more concrete steps towards this goal can be advisable.

For a better mobility, a more defined structure is needed to contribute to the attractiveness of the curricula in order to attract students from international areas and outside of partner institutions. Students are indeed future stakeholders for the international curricula and fields of study, and they should be taken seriously into account.

Academic mobility has clear gain for enhancing research and teaching and offers a strategic approach towards a general specialized development (Colucci, Ferencz, Gaebel and Wächter, 2014). Staff that gained international experience adds value to the classrooms where restrictions of many natures maintain the countries national education profile low within international community of academic enrollment. Staff mobility is also highlighted to as being less cared for, although small institutions have some kind of professional development to the opportunities within their respective human resources departments (Colucci et al., 2014). Administrative and academic mobility must gather more support and strategic direction at national, institutional and international levels. Postiglione and Altbach (2013, p. 11) clearly argues that, 'It would seem obvious that those who teach at a university, meaning the academic staff, are key to any academic institution's internationalization strategy. Professors are the people who teach and educate the classes at a subdivision of the campus, while also taking a part in creating the curricula for franchised programs. They engage in collaborative research with overseas colleagues, thereby welcoming international students into their classrooms and publishing in international journals. Indeed, without the full, active and passionate participation of the academics, internationalization efforts are destined to fail.'

Programmes and curricula should become more cost-effective in order to attract more staff and resources, moreover pooled and shared resources must be invested within areas of specialization and expensive infrastructure, while also offering a joining forces venture in order to get the complementarities, from organization of certain specialized programs, for the purpose of becoming financially feasible. This endeavors are still elusive for a single university to offer that kind of a programme, nevertheless some costs for developing this kind of collaboration should be administrated from the scheme in which mobility will cost for students less and will be fully covered by Erasmus grants.

References

- Gaalen, A. van, Hobbes, H.J., Roodenburg, S. & Gielesen R. (2014). Internationalising students in the home country – Part I. The Hague: Nuffic.
- Gaalen, A. van, Roodenburg, S. Hobbes, H.J., Huberts, D. & Gielesen R. (2014). Internationalising students in the home country – Part II In Practice. The Hague: Nuffic.
- American Council on Education (ACE). (2013). Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement (CIGE) Model for comprehensive internationalization. www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/CIGE-Model-for-Comprehensive-Internationalization.aspx
- European Commission. (2013). European Higher Education in the World' Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Brussels: COM (2013) 499 final. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2013:0499:FIN:en:PDF>
- de Wit, H. (2010). Trends and Issues in International Student Mobility. *International Higher Education*, Number 59, spring 2010, pp. 13-14.
- Council of the European Union, (2011). Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing, ERASMUS FOR ALL: the Union Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport", 17188/11, <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/11/st17/st17188.en11.pdf>
- Colucci, E., Ferencz, I., Gaebel M., Wächter B. (2014). Connecting mobility policies and practice European University Association. Brussels: EUA.
- Altbach, P. G. (2007). The Imperial Tongue: English as the Dominating Academic language, *Economic and Political Weekly* 42(36), 3608-11.
- OECD. (2010). Education at a Glance 2010: OECD Indicators, Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.
- European Commission. (2010). Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/COMPLET%20EN%20BARROSO%20%20%20007%20%20Europe%202020%20-%20EN%20version.pdf
- European Commission. (2014). Erasmus Facts and Figures 2012-13. http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/statistics/ay-12-13/facts-figures_en.pdf
- Suter B. & M. Jandl. (2006). Comparative Study on Policies towards Foreign Graduates: Study on Admission and Retention Policies towards Foreign Students in Industrialised Countries, Vienna, International Centre for Migration Policy Development.
- Chiswick, B. R. & P.W. Miller (2011), Educational Mismatch: Are High-Skilled Immigrants Really Working in High-Skilled Jobs, and What Price Do They Pay If They Are Not?, in B. R. Chiswick, High-Skilled Immigration in a Globalized Labor Market, American Enterprise Institute, Washington DC, 111–154.
- De Voretz, D. J. (2006). The Education, Immigration and Emigration of Canada's Highly Skilled Workers in the 21st Century, Georgetown's Institute for the Study of International Migration, Washington DC.
- Zheng, J. (2010). "Neoliberal Globalization, Higher Education Policies and International Student Flows: An Exploratory Case Study of Chinese Graduate Student Flows to Canada", *Journal of Alternative Perspectives in the Social Sciences* 2(1), 216–244.
- Bourke, A. (1997), The Internationalisation of Higher Education: The Case of Medical Education, *Higher Education Quarterly* 51(4), 325–46.
- Park, E. L. (2009). Analysis of Korean Students' International Mobility by 2-D Model: Driving Force Factor and Directional Factor, *Higher Education* 57(6), 741–755.
- European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, (2013). Towards a mobility scoreboard: Conditions for learning abroad in Europe. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/162EN.pdf
- de Wit, H, Ferencz, I & Rumbley, L. E. (2012). International Student Mobility: European and US Perspectives. In Perspectives – Policy and Practice in Higher Education, *Journal of the Association of University Administrators*, 17-23. London: Routledge.
- Racké, C. (2013). Staff mobility in higher education: National policies and programmes. Brussels: European Commission.
- Postiglione, G.A. & Altbach, P.G. (2013). Professors: The key to internationalisation. *International Higher Education*, 2013(73), 11-12.