
GLOBAL DIMENSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION: THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

Donchenko Viktoriia, Sumy State Pedagogical University, Ukraine

Abstract: Globalization is an important force of higher education, the mission of modern university is changing under its influence. Knowledge society presents new challenges to institutions of higher education; global dimension becomes an integral part of their mission. Introducing global dimension to higher education is expected to help reduce mismatch of skills between the workforce and labor market, meet the needs of university graduates and contribute to research and innovation development. In this context, international activity acquires particular importance. All over the world, the recognition is growing that successful internationalization requires commitment of every member of university community. However, despite this fact, international office of higher education establishment still carries the main responsibility for developing and implementing of university internationalization strategy. Therefore, international office takes the blame if the university's performance does not meet its objectives. The paper explores structure and functions of modern university international relations office, as well as its role in international activity management process and examines practices of public universities of the USA.

Keywords: *global dimension, internationalization, university international activity, international office*

Global dimension of higher education.

For centuries universities have been agents of economic, social and cultural change, centers of knowledge and innovation, during recent decades rapid expansion of information technologies changed the dynamics of society's development intensifying globalization and creating new strong ties between nations all over the world. Modern higher education has to respond to the changes in order to satisfy the needs of globalized world. The notion 'global dimension' is frequently used in regards to modernization of higher education. Universities experience major organizational and behavioral changes, face higher competition, search for new funding sources, seek international recognition.

According to D. Held globalization is a process of forming global dimension. It is marked by more extensive and intensive worldwide relationships and quickening of global awareness. Global structures are partly open, changing, provisional and continually revitalized by other parts of the field (Marginson, 2011) Globalization, as it applies to higher education, involves information technology and the use of a common language for scientific communication. Global dimension in higher education consists of world systems of knowledge and information flow, networks and people movement between institutions and systems. It is constituted by worldwide thinking, activities, mobility and relationships. (Marginson, 2011)

Over the years, many researchers attempted to define globalization. This study understands globalization as a force that influences higher education and internationalization as a reaction of higher education institution to the changes brought by the former (Altbach, Knight 2007). The most commonly used definition of internationalization of education is given by J. Knight, where internationalization is defined as integrating international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, function or delivery of higher education

(Knight, 2008). The recognition of changes, brought about by globalization, by higher education institutions led to the phenomenon known as professionalization of internationalization (Taylor, 2012). It consists in emergence of internationalization as a core activity and management function; appreciation of potential benefits and risks (academic, reputational, financial); increasingly strategic, planned and directed, less *ad hoc* management of internationalization; growing need for coordination of international affairs and efficient administration, as well as for effective leadership and management. It provided rationale for establishment of International Office.

Structure and function of international office.

H. Neave presented a model of internationalization management by higher educational institutions; he considered centralization / decentralization of international activity as one of the most important factors that determine the nature and directions of international activity development. He states that nature of international activity organization can be proactive and reactive, the former one emphasizes planning, initiating activity, elaborating mechanisms of activity, while the latter concentrates on coordination, control, researching and implementing (Neave, 1992). Certainly, the degree of centralization influences international activity. Thus, there are institutions, which lay the responsibility for all the activity relating internationalization on a central international office, the centralized model requires links between all administrative units of the institution. In decentralized institutions, international activity is administered on a faculty or department level. M. Van der Wende understands internationalization as innovation process and singles out four stages of innovation development process: 1) recognizing the need for change; 2) planning and formulating a solution; 3) initiating and implementing a plan; 4) institutionalization or termination (Van der Wende, 1999).

A fully internationalized HEI is likely to have most of the following features (Fielden, 2011):

- a significant proportion of international students;
- offshore teaching activities delivered in some form;
- international collaboration in research;
- academic staff from many nationalities;
- an internationalized curriculum;
- social and academic integration between native and international students;
- staff and student mobility and study abroad activities

As higher education institutions faced the necessity to introduce global dimension into their functions, they understood the need to establish specific structural units to manage international activity. Thus, international offices appeared in most universities throughout the world, they acquired various names in different institutions, such as Office of International Affairs, International Relations Office, Department of International Cooperation, Office of International Education, Office of International Development, Office of Global Engagements and so on. All these units served the same purpose, namely to foster international initiatives and promote internationalization.

Factors that determine functions and structure of international office:

- reflects (shifting) local circumstances and priorities;

- abinitio or emerging out of other offices (territorial tensions);
- new leadership positions (academic or management) and issues of line management;
- central or devolved (centralized core functions with network of departmental contacts);
- equivalent status as key functions vs. 'second tier' and less influential (Hunter).

The structure of international offices varies, but the following functions are usually managed, coordinated by or closely integrated with the international office:

- international student recruitment;
- first point of contact for individuals and outside organizations interested in international education;
- close monitoring of application processing (if the applications are processed outside the international office, manage and monitor minimal turn-around time)
- negotiation and monitoring of university-wide institutional links;
- repository of information on the university's international activities;
- promotion and administrative support of student exchange programs (for both incoming and outgoing students);
- international student welfare and support, including services on multi-campus universities (if these services are not closely associated with the international office, students can have difficulties with accessing services and the international office loses the critical feedback mechanism gained by close interaction with the students);
- effective referral to other student services that are not specific to international students (study skills, counseling, health, and so forth);
- management of international projects and offshore programs (it would be expected that student support services would be established in situ for students studying by distance);
- source of intelligence for international opportunities;
- international alumni support (in association with general alumni office);
- liaison with the providers of pre-university studies (ELICOS, foundation, and academic bridging courses) (Back, Davis, and Olsen, 1996).

J. Fielding (2011) classifies the functions of international office in three categories: core, core plus and comprehensive functions, which are presented below.

Core functions:

- international marketing;
- liaison with agents;
- handling international enquiries;
- managing international admissions;
- student support before and after arrival;
- compliance with legislations and code of conduct.

Pre-core functions

- study abroad, student mobility, support for incoming international staff and their families;
- staff travel and research abroad;

- review and due diligence for agreements and Memorandums of Understanding;
- support for academic exchange and teaching partnerships;
- English language support;
- financial and welfare advice for students assisting with access to scholarships;
- management of overseas offices.

Comprehensive functions:

- overall responsibility for the internationalization strategy;
- looking after incoming international visitors/ scholars;
- international market intelligence and due diligence on potential partners;
- international alumni relations;
- fostering global employability;
- Integrating the experience of international and domestic students;
- discovering staff and student development in cross-cultural matters;
- management of international volunteering, relationships with international networks.

The given groups of functions display widening of functions of the unit. All offices carry the core functions, while pre-core and comprehensive functions show the shift in responsibilities of international office.

Another classification divides functions of international office in the following groups:

Service function involves assisting departments and faculties in solving specific problems connected with international activity (preparing international agreements, inviting international scholars, administration of international project and so on);

Consultation function includes providing consultations of various aspect of international activity to faculty and students;

Information function consists in informing the academic community about new international programs, policies, project and so on;

Educational function entails teaching departments and faculty to perform various aspects of international activity, e.g. interacting with international students, seeking international partners etc.;

Organizational functions includes various activities aimed at providing constant development of international cooperation;

Coordination involve acting as a central unit to organize and control international activity on institutional level (Arsienieva, Aleksankova. 2008).

Structure and functions of international office depend on political, social and cultural dynamics, the type and size of higher education institution and internationalization policy, namely the place of internationalization in the university mission and strategic vision, central or marginal approach to internationalization and focus on internationalization at home or abroad. While in certain countries international offices dealt mainly with strategic planning, policy making and international development, in other they were established to administer international exchange programs or provide services to foreign students. Their main function is often reflected in the name of the unit itself, thus, 'office of international education' is most likely to prioritize foreign student support and international exchanges, while 'office of international development' would make international strategy its core responsibility. The

word ‘global’ in the name of the unit usually denotes geography of international activity, meaning that the institution has or is open to partnerships all over the world. The responsibilities and priorities shift over time depending on national and global changes.

Practices of the US institutions.

The USA is one of the countries that recognized the need to change and started to respond to challenges of globalization effectively. F. Altbach states that USA has a considerable privilege under the given circumstances since the United States have the most dominant higher education system. Many countries adopt American practices of higher education; it is the most important academic center and a leader host country for international students (Altbach, 2005).

The government of the USA encourages institutions it internationalize campuses. A major campaign was started to promote internationalization and increase global awareness of the US academic communities. American Council on Education published manuals on internationalization of higher education, conducted series of activities for institutional leaders aimed at promoting policies and programs that help advance the internationalization of U.S. colleges and universities, enhance their capacity to collaborate with partners around the world, to help colleges and universities prepare students to work and live in a globally interdependent world. A number of surveys were performed to determine the needs of academic community in regards to internationalization.

University of California, Berkeley is among the top 10 best global universities, according to the Times Higher Education Rating, it is the first among public US universities. The institution is highly selective and the student body is diverse, 13% of international students. It participates in many cooperative agreements with educational and research institutions throughout the world.

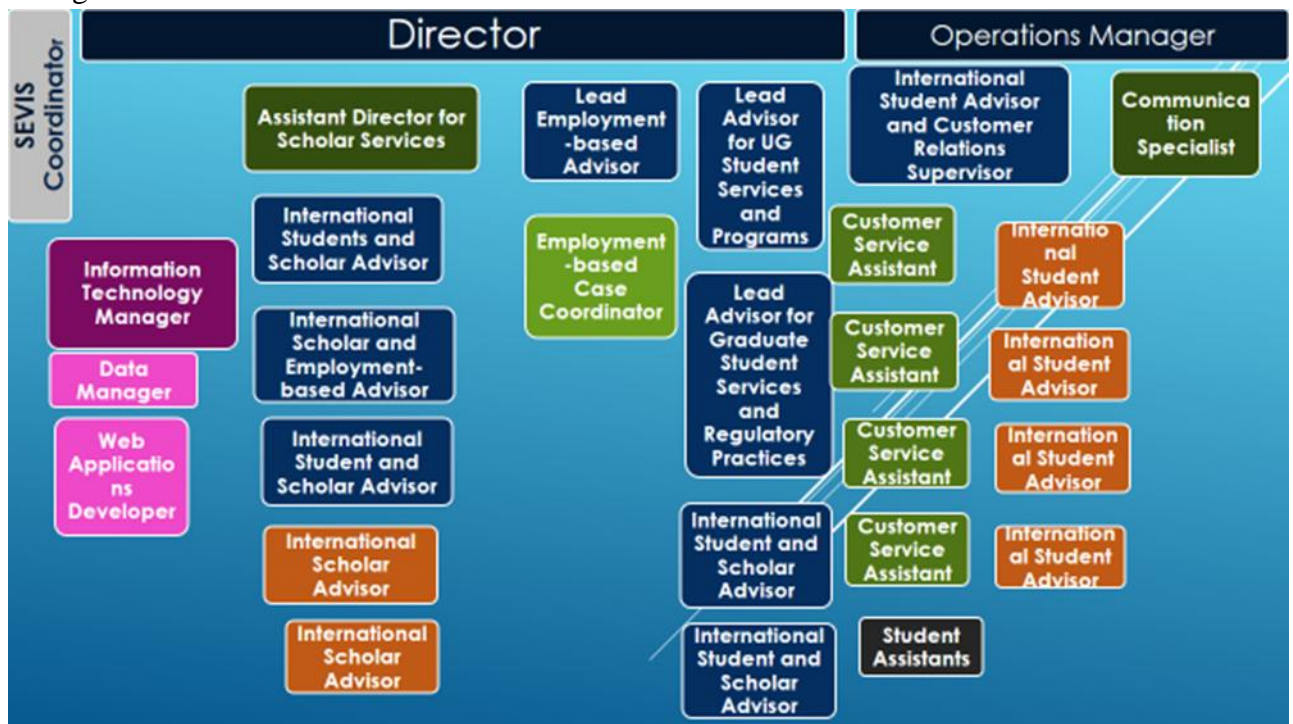


Fig. 1. Structure of International Office at the University of California Berkeley

International office of UC Berkeley puts an emphasis on using modern information technology in organization of international activity. Plenty of resources on initiatives for different members of academic community are available on-line; the latest technologies are employed in work with students, faculty and administrators.

Except International office, Global engagements office functions at the UC Berkeley, it is responsible for international cooperation of the institution. Its key functions and services include: gathering and disseminating information about UC Berkeley's global activities, maintain data of international initiatives, partnerships and collaborations; identify potential global and campus partners, host international academic and government delegations; assist in review and approval of program proposals and agreements; coordinate with faculty and administration to set and amend policies; manager Partner Exchange Program.

University of Colorado Boulder is a public research university, considered a flagship university of the State of Colorado, ranked 97th by Times Higher Education World University Ranking. Thousands of students and faculty engage in international teaching, research and service each year, collaborating with scholars from every continent. Office of International Education is in charge of international initiatives of the university. It consists of three main sections, namely Global Education Initiatives (Global CU), responsible for guiding and assisting campus with global education endeavors; International Student and Scholar Services and Study Abroad Programs.

Slippery Rock University is a comprehensive university offering a broad array of undergraduate and select graduate programs, one of the 14-campus Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education. It is a teaching university, its endowment fund, student body, as well as the number of international students is considerably smaller than those of previous two institutions are. Therefore, the structure of international activity management is also different. Structural unit in charge of international initiative is Office of Global Engagements. It mostly deals with international students, study abroad programs, faculty international initiatives and fostering internationalization of curriculum.

University of Utah is a public space-grant research university, 9% of international students. Office of global engagement provides infrastructure for the University to become a hub of collaboration across academic disciplines and with partnering organizations to transform teaching, learning, scholarship and service in the context of addressing pressing issues in complex and interconnected world.

HEI	University of California Berkeley	University of Colorado Boulder	Slippery Rock University	University of Utah
Structural unit	International Office	Office of International Education	Office for Global Engagement	Office for Global Engagement
Mission of the department	to enhance the academic experiences of international students and scholars by providing the highest levels of knowledge and expertise in advising, services, advocacy, and programming to the Berkeley campus community	to actively promote international and intercultural understanding and to enrich the academic and cultural environment of CU-Boulder by facilitating the exchange of people and ideas. OIE brings CU to the world and the world to CU.	to provide meaningful international experiences for SRU students, faculty and staff in pursuit of academic, professional and cultural exploration and growth.	to facilitate transformative global learning, innovative scholarship, and cross-cultural engagement opportunities for all students and faculty, and to promote intercultural competence and understanding.
Main responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> advising for nonimmigrant students, scholars, staff, and faculty; visa document production for nonimmigrant students and scholars; programs and workshops for students and scholars; training and support for campus administrators and faculty; U.S. permanent resident petitions for international faculty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> promoting international and intercultural community and culture on campus enriching the academic and cultural environment by facilitating the exchange of people and ideas; collaborating with faculty, staff, and students to make international opportunities accessible and sustainable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> serving as a resource center; providing services to international students, faculty and scholars; assisting students and faculty going overseas; integrating international students and scholars into campus and local community life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> international student and scholar services (assist international students, departments who are inviting visiting international faculty and researchers, international alumni etc.); host official international delegations and visitors to the university of Utah and serve as a single point of contact for local or international entities with an interest in partnering with the University on global initiatives leaning abroad programs management and consultation

Fig. 2. Mission and responsibilities of international offices at different US public universities

As we may observe from the table above, the names, missions and responsibilities of the units differ according to type and size of institution, prioritized activity, funding and students and faculty diversity. The UC, Berkeley has a wide range of international activity, its administration is divided between International Office and Office of Global Engagement, its International Office deals mainly with international students and faculty and exchange programs. The University of Colorado, Boulder divides the task of international activity administration between three sections within the Office of International Education, Office of Global Initiatives is one of those sections.

Both Slippery Rock University and University of Utah have Offices of Global Engagement, which comprise the traditional functions of international office highlighted above. Slippery Rock University is a small institution; international activity is mainly focused on international student services and study abroad programs. University of Utah established several sections within the Office of Global Engagement to manage specific types of activity, namely International Student and Scholar Services office and Learning Abroad office.

Conclusions. While the fact that effective internationalization of higher education institution is achieved by commitment of every member of academic community is commonly recognized, international office of higher education institution remains integral unit, its performance is still crucial to institutions global success. The responsibilities of international offices are rapidly changing under the influence of current social transformations and global tendencies of education modernization.

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