

This is a self-archived version of the original publication.

The self-archived version is a publisher's pdf of the original publication.

To cite this, use the original publication:

Donnellan, J. & Roslöf, J. 2020. Reflection on Internationalization of Higher Education. Talk-verkkolehti, Puheenvuoroja / Comments 23.11.2020.

Link to the original publication: [URL](#)

All material supplied via Turku UAS self-archived publications collection in Theseus repository is protected by copyright laws. Use of all or part of any of the repository collections is permitted only for personal non-commercial, research or educational purposes in digital and print form. You must obtain permission for any other use.

Reflection on Internationalization of Higher Education

23.11.2020

Kirjoittajat

John Donnellan Associate Professor and Chair, Management, New Jersey City University, School of Business

Janne Roslöf Principal Lecturer, Master School, Turku University of Applied Sciences

The internationalization of higher education is a multibillion-dollar industry that is currently going through an evolution. Enrollment on average is steadily declining and international exchanges of students is under increased pressure in both the EU and US.

Finland has estimated that, mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of outgoing (from Finland) students this fall will be about 25% compared to F2019. Accordingly, the amount of incoming (to Finland) students is estimated to be about 35% compared to 2019. In addition, the overseas mobility has come down to a minimum. (EDUFI, 2020)

US projections for Fall 2020 undergraduate enrollment down 5% to 20% ("Declining Enrollment Revenue Risk More Acute for Private Colleges," 2020). In addition, student mobility is not occurring, and the new norm appears to be virtual or distant learning. Therefore, the impact of antiquate higher education internationalization models has changed forever due in part to COVID-19.

How can higher education survive

Higher education is in serious trouble in the global environment. With the estimated value to US schools of \$2.5 billion and an estimated value to job creation of \$41 billion, this is a very serious business ("Economic Impact of International Students," 2020). To capture this market, academic institutions have had various models to deal with the international aspect of higher education. These models can be similar or different depending on the country that is in question.

There are generally three variations:

1. A strategic alliance where two countries form an academic institution in one of the countries
2. Academic institutions that have US accreditation outside of the US
3. Academic institutions that allows study abroad programs in another country.

Each of these models has advantages as well as disadvantages, since the overall “student experience” will vary depending on the model. Thus, the school needs to understand their objective and tie it into their overall strategy. This requires an in-depth review of schools’ ability to market their programs, ability to adjust to the compliance and regulations of their host nation as well as satisfying regulations and academic compliance within their home country.

In short – the review must take into consideration the ARC model – Agility, Resilience and Creativity.

Due to the current state of COVID-19, academic institutions have moved toward a more “virtual” model which now created the need for a fourth model. This new model will allow the internationalization experience outside of the country teaching the courses. The lack of antidotal research on this is relevant since the overall impact to students and bottom line to universities is critical – less cultural knowledge gained by students and less revenue, both direct and indirect, for the academic institutions and surrounding towns.

According to ASEE (2020), even concerns about mental health – feelings of emotional strain and loneliness – have increased. Mutual collaboration and networking both in curricular and extra-curricular settings are of major importance concerning the students’ international competence development and professional growth. If we are not able to create novel ways to facilitate this, there is a risk for significant and long-term impacts.

Need for new approach

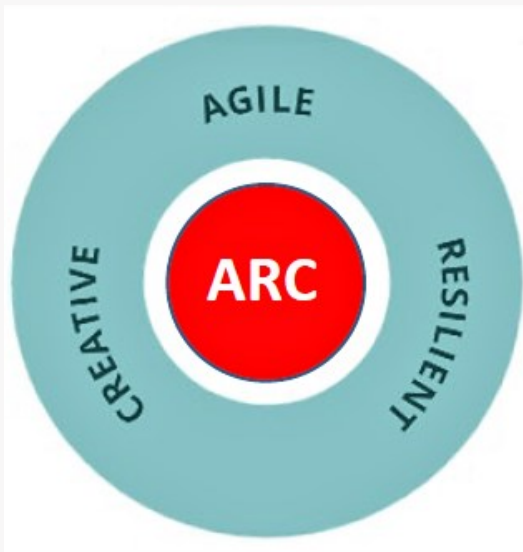
Research on the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic crisis continues to unfold but one thing is certain: the very fabric of higher education has changed forever. Therefore, new and innovative approaches, such as the ARC Model, are needed to fix the problem.

Across the globe, many institutions of higher learning have already closed due to the pandemic, dozens have announced furloughs and layoffs, while hundreds more stand on the precipice of financial ruin. Many schools have interrupted their international activities, at least for now.

Research has identified the duality of balancing short- and long-term business pressures in this chaotic environment, marked by seismic disruption as a strategic imperative for higher education faculty and administrators. Thus, both faculty and senior administrators should leverage both their own and their institution’s agility, resilience, and creativity (ARC) to remain relevant and achieve sustainability. The impact of virtual education to students and institutions can be severe to the student experience and institutions’ bottom line.

The ARC model was recently introduced during the [Turku University of Applied Sciences](#) keynote address *“Agile, Resilient and Creative – Readiness for jobs that do not yet*

exist". It was also highlighted on a recent Academic Minute (Donnellan, 2020). This model consists of four research-based core values.



The first core value of ARC requires faculty and administrators to engage in what researchers call “deep, sustained, and prolonged” reflection. Such reflection would then contribute to the second core value researchers have identified as the ability to leverage nuanced practices instead of best practices.

Nuanced practices are necessary as the third core value, because any strategy undertaken by the faculty to focus on curriculum internationalization and institution needs to focus on its mission.

Finally, researchers continue to emphasize since “few strategies have a real impact on the trajectory of the college or Academic institutions,” institutions should focus on implementing tactics critical to the institutions’ short-term success, also known as strategic imperatives. These strategies need to place the student experience at the forefront to ensure that the student experience is positive.

Although the impact of COVID-19 has yet to materialize, the latest research suggests higher education institutions need to rethink antiquated internationalization and management strategies, redesign the role of cooperative programs and launch a more agile financial model in this virtual environment.

There is hope

Internationalization of higher education is going through an evolution and its future existence depends on the outcome. Antiquated models are no longer feasible in today’s virtual environment and new models are in order.

There is still hope of a turnaround. Utilizing the ARC model, academic institutions must be agile enough to survive in today's environment, resilient enough to implement change and creative enough to think of new ways to encourage internationalization in today's new paradigm.

Continued partnerships between countries are essential to ensure that new models for virtual internationalization are implemented. These partnerships “take place at the faculty, unit, and/or institutional levels, and may originate ‘top down’ or ‘bottom up.’”(ACE, 2020) Thus, it is essential that countries continue to encourage cross collaboration of students, faculty and ideas in a distance learning mode.

Therefore, additional data is needed on the benefits and barriers of a fully implemented virtual model. Questions relating to student experience, cost benefits and academic regulatory compliance should be addressed.

References

ACE. (2020). Comprehensive Internationalization Framework. *ACE Model for Comprehensive Internationalization*

ASEE (2020). COVID-19 & Engineering Education – An Iterim Report on the Community Response to the Pandemic and Racial Justice. *The Engineering Education Community's Response*, Washington DC. <http://www.asee.org/>

Declining Enrollment Revenue Risk More Acute for Private Colleges. (2020). *Fitch Wire*. Retrieved from <https://www.fitchratings.com/research/us-public-finance/declining-enrollment-revenue-risk-more-acute-for-private-colleges-08-06-2020>

Donnellan, J. (2020). ARC Model for Higher Education. <http://academicminute.org/>. WAMC Northeast Public Radio: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Economic Impact of International Students. (2020). In N. I. S. E. V. Tool (Ed.). Institute of International Education NAFSA: Association of International Educators.

Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI) (2020). The Higher Education Institutes' Estimate: The student mobility nothing but normal this autumn. Press Release September 4, 2020 [in Finnish]. Retrieved from: <https://www.oph.fi/fi/uutiset/2020/korkeakoulujen-arvio-syyslukukauden-opiskelijavaihtojen-maara-jaa-kauas-normaalista>