

## **Abstract**

### **Back to the Future: Internationalization in Professional Schools Gilles Bousquet, University of Wisconsin-Madison**

The notion that professional school graduates must have cross-cultural knowledge and expertise has steadily gained support and become an important goal and marker of achievement of many professional schools in the United States today. This paper explores the motivations for, and progression of, internationalization in three different types of professional schools: business, engineering, and medicine. It discusses some of the tools that characterize professional school internationalization activities, and notes promising practices that have been developed. Finally, it considers the obstacles to internationalization, and some ways that we can move forward.

There is considerable variation in the way professional schools have approached internationalization, largely because of differences in the intensity of demands (external and internal) to produce globally competent graduates. American business education was the stepping stone for the internationalization of the professional schools. Business schools were among the earliest to incorporate international expertise into their curriculum, in response to pressure from employers, government, accreditation agencies, students and alumni. Internationalization of other professional schools has been less uniform.

It is useful to contrast the evolution of the internationalization of professional schools with the evolution of area and international studies. Area studies is a post World-War II interdisciplinary structure that draws primarily on the social science and humanities disciplines to produce knowledge about specific geographically defined regions of the world. However, the globalization of knowledge production means that conventional notions of regional boundaries are no longer adequate to examine the critical issues that characterize the age of globalization,

such as migration, capital flows, human rights, disease, and cultural flows. While area knowledge remains critically important, a new form of “area-based knowledge” is emerging in international studies that combines the global and the local, simultaneously examining trends that transcend place and the impact of these trends on specific places. Attempts to overcome these barriers and combine the goals of these two distinct schools of thought have been difficult in the past.

While area and international studies are developing new ways to examine global trends and local impacts, professional schools are becoming more international and focusing more attention on the global and cross-cultural aspects of knowledge production in their fields. Both professional schools and area and international studies seem to recognize that knowledge production is global, that key aspects of scholarship are increasingly coming from beyond the US, and that training students who can operate in a global intellectual community is a challenge they must all meet. These trends offer an unprecedented opportunity for new modes of collaboration between professional schools and area and international studies.

Internationalization is a major trend in higher education and many institutions are focusing on developing “global awareness” or “intercultural competencies” as part of their missions. Three different types of rationales typically drive internationalization goals: i) the pragmatic: developing knowledge and skills for employability. ii) the liberal: making students more aware of diverse perspectives and increasing their ability to act on this knowledge; and iii) the civic: the ability to act as global citizens in the pursuit of global democracy. These goals are not mutually exclusive and more than one may drive the activities of a campus or department.

Internationalization within professional schools has been driven primarily by pragmatic, market

driven goals. Within area and international studies the goal has traditionally been more focused on the liberal and civic rationales.

The substantial variation in the amount and depth of collaboration between professional schools and area and international studies is closely tied to the types of disciplinary questions within the professional school and the institutional barriers to cross-disciplinary work.

Collaboration between area studies and professional schools is more likely when professional schools recognize broader cultural issues or thematic globalization concerns as part of the curriculum. Deep collaborations occur when this overlap in interests leads to international studies requirements within the professional schools or even joint degrees.

The paper examines four key tools of internationalization in professional schools: a) language training, b) international overseas experiences, c) areas studies collaboration and d) technology. Given their institutional contexts and degree requirements, professional schools have employed the tools of internationalization in different ways. Some recent trends and model programs are examined based on an informal survey of selected institutions

This paper looks at the progression of internationalization in several professional schools, identifying the tools they have chosen and illustrating how they have utilized these tools to propel their successful internationalization. Three things seem to stand out as important factors for successful professional school internationalization. First, a mandate to internationalize from the discipline itself and/or accrediting agencies has clearly been a driving force, particularly for business schools. The second key area for successful internationalization is the availability of funding for expansion of internationalization. Funds from Title VI (BIE and CIBER) signaled the national importance tied to internationalization and allowed schools to take risks and develop pilot programs and models that could be disseminated once their efficacy was clearly established.

Similarly, support from corporations and foundations helped demonstrate the importance of the undertaking.

The third key element of success involves creating interdisciplinary mechanisms for collaboration with area studies experts and programs. As professional schools expand beyond the technical knowledge needed in their profession, they are moving towards what has been referred to as more “liberal” and “civic” rationales for global knowledge. At the same time Area Studies is shifting in a more pragmatic direction leading them to be more open to issues and themes that cross disciplinary and geographic boundaries. Thus professional schools and area studies are moving toward each other in unexpected ways. This increase is manifested in joint courses and degrees, joint research, and team-based field work, which all seem to be on the rise.

This convergence of area studies and professional school rationales for global knowledge may make this an opportune time to reinvigorate the professional school and area studies collaborative partnership on college campuses. However, several obstacles including limited synergistic interests, the primacy of disciplinary structures, campus culture and reward structures, and funding constraints are just some of the obstacles that must be overcome to realize this potential

The tools of internationalization discussed here are all valuable, but their effectiveness is enhanced when they are harnessed together with area and international studies. For example, languages across the curriculum, area studies preparation for overseas learning, interdisciplinary courses on campus or abroad, and utilizing distance learning technologies bring different perspectives to the discourse on global topics. All involve drawing on the area and international studies expertise that exists on campus, but may not be considered by professional schools undergoing internationalization.

Professional schools approaching area studies now may find that area studies has changed as well; they are likely to be more open to innovation growing out of an increased focus on applying area knowledge to global issues and problems and the need at the same time to demonstrate capacity to meet changing national needs in the area-based knowledge world. These changes have been driven by a combination of shifting conceptions of area scholarship and the pragmatic recognition of resource constraints. We need to go “back” to area studies to see the “future” of area studies and professional schools-- a partnership of both trends and genres working together in renewed form. Both have changed and both need each other in their new incarnations