

Exporting of Education throughout Academia

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There is a worldwide demand for higher education due to the increasing labor market needs for highly skilled workers, such as nurses. The United States (US), Britain, and Australia are the three leading exporters of higher education, but other developed countries also play a part (Bollag, 2006, Shepherd, 2007). In the US, education and training rank among the nation's top service exports (Lenn, 2002; Lewin, 2008). The most rapidly growing areas for transnational education are information technology, management and business administration, engineering, international law, medicine, and the nursing specialties (Didou, Aupetit, & Jokivirta, 2007; Lenn, 2002).

Exported educational services are delivered in various ways: (a) as students travel abroad to receive their education; (b) as education is delivered to them through distance learning; and (c) as educational institutions from one country provide onsite classes in another country, often through establishing branch campuses and/or franchises (King, 2006; Knight, 2006; Machado dos Santos, 2000).

Colleges and universities in developed countries engage in various partnerships. Some partnerships involve mutually beneficial exchanges of faculty and students. In other arrangements, faculty members from one university are contracted as instructors or consultants to establish new departments in an overseas institution.

More than ever before there is a tremendous variety of educational offerings--some quality, some not. Some education offerings are provided through the financial support of aid agencies or development funds. Others involve for-profit organizations engaged in education. These for-profit schools are funded by private developers, often with the specific goal of exporting students to meet the employment demand in other countries. The proliferation of for-profit schools has led to

concerns about curriculum quality and the need to standardize professional education (Larson & Vincent-Lancrin, 2002; Smith, 2002). More than ever before there is a tremendous variety of educational offerings--some quality, some not (McBurnie & Ziguas, 2007; Verbik, 2006; Vignoli, 2004).

The types of programs and partnerships that educational exporters set up abroad are often influenced by national policies and the degree of national development. In the Middle and Far East, countries, such as United Arab Emirates, authorize the establishment of foreign campuses locally, while China negotiates with foreign universities to establish joint degrees (Lenn, 2002). Educational centers in emerging economies are now ceasing to act as agents for foreign universities and are beginning instead to compete with them, offering their own programs and services abroad (Ham & Ham, 2006).

Conclusion

Organizations such as the ICN and WHO Collaborating Centers for Nursing, which work in partnership with existing strong accrediting bodies, are suitable, overarching global organizations to provide the thrust for creating these international educational standards. Globalization has created a world market that favors mobility. For workers to take advantage of new opportunities and for employers to attract workers, mechanisms are needed compare the education and qualifications of applicants against global standards. Because nations have specific requirements related to technology and disease prevalence, as well as cultural, social, and environmental differences, it is unlikely that education will ever be uniform. However, it should be possible to determine common competencies and skills upon which assessment could be based. There still remains the lack of a comprehensive framework to address the diversity and unevenness in the quality assurance processes of cross-border higher education. The challenge is to develop appropriate procedures and systems to cover foreign providers

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