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Book Review: The Twenty-First Century University: Developing Faculty Engagement in Internationalization

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Book Review

Childress, L. K. (2010). *The Twenty-First Century University: Developing Faculty Engagement in Internationalization*. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing Inc. 174 pages; ISBN978-1-4331-0659-0

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As someone who has participated in a variety of international activities, including teaching and conducting research in China and teaching in a study abroad program, I read with great interest Dr. Childress's new book on internationalization of universities.

This is a well-researched, well-analyzed, and well-presented book for institutes of higher education who strive to internationalize teaching and learning to prepare their students for the challenges of globalization. This book will no doubt benefit all levels of personnel at a university, from the president and other key leaders down to regular faculty members, staff and students. The abundance of relevant information, presented in a well-organized manner, will shed lights on the current status of endeavors of internalization of higher education in the United States.

A strong point of this book is the author's systematic approach to her investigation. Dr. Childress starts with a detailed review of the historical context of internationalization in American universities. She proceeds to show that her research is guided by a well-established theoretical framework by Knight (p.7), in which a cycle of six steps to internationalization is proposed: awareness, commitment, planning, operationalize, review, and reinforcement. Using this model, the author methodically analyzes and assesses the two chosen universities in their internationalization efforts.

The two cases in the book, Duke University and University of Richmond, represent two types of institutions: one a research university and the other, a small baccalaureate college. Both colleges have reached an impressive level of internationalization, setting good examples for other colleges and universities. For example, both are members of AIEA (the Association of International Education Administrators; and both have developed comprehensive

internationalization plans (Childress, 2010). Dr. Childress describes each school in great detail the historical background of internationalization, academic activities that have been undertaken to achieve and enhance internationalization, institutional practices and principles, and internationalization plans for the future. She highlights both similarities (both private, and in the south) and differences (one with over 12,000 students whereas the other, no more than 4,000) between the two schools, careful to explain situational contexts.

Dr. Childress identifies several important factors that have contributed to the success of both schools. Enthusiasm and commitment from administration is one such element. Although in many cases, faculty members may be the ones who start the initial effort, support from the institutions is vital in how that small initial effort will pay off in the long run. The support from administration can be manifested in many ways. For example, establishing a necessary infrastructure for internationalization on campus is a very important step, as both schools have done. It can be an international center that initiates and coordinates international endeavors on campus, providing necessary leadership and resources. The administration can also demonstrate its commitment by appointing a senior administrator to oversee international activities on campus. In both Duke and Richmond, provosts were the committee chairs that developed the internationalization plans in their respective institution.

As our social milieu becomes more global, the importance of engaging faculty and students in international teaching and learning is becoming more salient. Dr. Childress points out that it is not an easy task for a university to achieve the level of globalization that the 21st-Century students need to acquire in order to be productive and competitive global citizens. She addresses many challenges and barriers facing us. Many colleges do not have a necessary infrastructure to handle this task. Many US colleges do not typically have a tradition of emphasizing the importance of international perspectives. For example, most universities in this country do not have a foreign language fluency requirement for our graduates, as is the case in many other countries. Moreover, many faculty members and students here are not exactly enthusiastic about internationalization due to various reasons. The information presented in this book demonstrates that despite these perceived obstacles, US colleges can still achieve a level of impressive success in internationalization.

Faculty initiatives are valuable contributions, as compellingly illustrated in the book. Many times, a small step by faculty members can go a long way.

Personal relationships can lead to broader institutional collaboration later. For example, after the fall of Berlin Wall in 1989, a group of faculty members at Duke took the initiative to stress the importance of curriculum change to reflect internationalization (Childress, 2010). What seems to be a common factor in the successful outcomes of these faculty initiatives is the commitment from the administration in both cases. With institutional support, faculty members feel more encouraged to explore. One area of direct institutional support for the faculty is integration of international scholarly activities into faculty members' tenure and promotion consideration. Currently, neither Duke nor Richmond has such policy in their T & P handbooks. Dr. Childress reports though that many faculty, particularly junior faculty members at both colleges would like to see that happen on their campuses.

Students also play an important role, in both Duke and Richmond, in motivating faculty members to internationalize their courses. It's a very compelling motivation when students ask for the professors to integrate international perspectives into their courses. Usually, the faculty members will be motivated to explore international opportunities if the demand comes from their students, as demonstrated in both schools. For example, faculty members may decide to join an overseas educational trip or seminar, and in the process, make some connections with the hosting institutions in the foreign country. This may lead to further opportunities of international faculty exchange, study abroad, guest lectures, and others. The gains from these activities will allow the faculty members to integrate international dimension into their course content as well as into their research programs.

This is a much-needed and very timely scholarly book. As globalization is permeating into almost every aspect of our life, particularly in higher education, a scholarly book such as this one provides rich information on how to successfully transform a university into a globalized, well-integrated 21st-Century institute of higher education. Educators will find this piece of scholarly work very useful and practical in that they can learn from these two exemplary cases, Duke and Richmond, and gain insights on how they can develop and enhance internationalization on their own campuses.