

Copyright  
by  
Samba Dieng  
2024

**The Treatise Committee for Samba Dieng Certifies that this is the approved version  
of the following Treatise:**

**Internationalization at Striving Universities and the Role of Presidential  
Leadership**

**Committee:**

Joshua Childs, Supervisor

Richard Reddick

Zach Taylor

Martha Ellis

**Internationalization at Striving Universities and the Role of Presidential  
Leadership**

**by**

**Samba Dieng**

**Treatise**

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

**Doctor of Education**

**The University of Texas at Austin**

**May 2024**

### **Dedication**

To my son, Malick Dieng, I love you more than you will ever imagine. I hope this doctoral journey will serve as a life lesson to you, as you continue to navigate this very complex world we live in. I want you to remember that you should never cheat yourself. To live a life of purpose, you must stay focused, but you also must remain ambitious and optimistic about the future. I dedicate this doctorate to you, knowing that you will accomplish much more in life. Please know that Daddy will always be proud of you, regardless of where you end up or what you become.

To my mother and father, God knows that I would not be here today without your unconditional love and support. You've never given up on me, and you've always been there every step of the way to support me in all my endeavors. I am forever grateful to you both for your love, support, patience, and commitment to my success. I don't know what life would be without you, but I do know that I would not stand a chance without your support. I dedicate this doctorate to you as a token of appreciation for all your sacrifices. Being a parent is no easy task, but you've set an example that I pledge to follow for the remainder of my days.

## Acknowledgments

I am forever grateful to my faculty advisor, Dr. Pat Somers, who passed away during my program. I would not be here today without Pat's support and guidance. I also owe a debt of gratitude to my committee members, Drs Ellis, Reddick, Taylor, and Childs. Dr. Childs picked me up and worked with me when I lost my faculty advisor during the program. I will never forget the kindness and support that he availed to me during the most challenging days of the program.

To my classmates (TBC), thank you for your support and guidance throughout this long journey. I owe a special thanks to Rosalia Gomez for her unwavering support and kindness. I am not sure I would be finishing today without her support.

To Dr. Wilcox, Nava, and Martinez, thank you all for your amazing support since day one. You are truly the heart and soul of this program. Thank you for your words of encouragement and guidance.

To my LSU colleagues Shay, Jenn, Laura, and Emily, thank you for supporting me during this program. You've been extremely patient, supportive, and caring. I owe you a debt of gratitude.

To my former and current supervisors, Dr. Lee and Haggerty, thank you for allowing me to join this program while working full-time. You both know that working full-time and attending a doctoral program full-time is not easy, but you remained committed to my success. I am forever grateful to you both for your leadership and support.

## **Abstract**

### **Internationalization at Striving Universities and the Role of Presidential Leadership**

Samba Dieng, Ed.D.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2024

Supervisor: Joshua Childs

Over the past two decades, there has been heightened awareness and intensified discussions on the importance of internationalization in the academy. There are also strong calls for action from university leaders, faculty members, and industry CEOs. Equipping students with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to live and thrive in today's globally interconnected and interdependent world has never been an ambiguity. However, there seems to be little discussion and research on the limited role of presidential leadership in comprehensive internationalization efforts at U.S. universities (Hudzik, 2015). Motivated by the ACE model for comprehensive internationalization, this study explores actionable frameworks to support campus internationalization goals. This qualitative research project utilizes a multiple case study approach to better understand the role that presidential leadership plays in comprehensive internationalization at striving universities. I argue that the rise or fall of the internationalization agenda largely depends on Presidential leadership. Presidents must lead the charge for the work of internationalization to be effective and successful at higher education institutions.

## Table of Contents

List of Figures and Tables.....	13
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	14
Historical Background .....	14
Problem Statement.....	17
Purpose of Study.....	18
Research Questions.....	19
Overview of Methodology.....	19
Theoretical Paradigm.....	19
Research Design Rationale.....	20
Site Selection .....	20
Methodological Procedures .....	21
Data Sources .....	21
Participant Selection .....	21
Limitations and Delimitations.....	22
Study Significance .....	23
Definitions.....	23
Organization of Study.....	24
Summary.....	25
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	26
Methodology for Literature Review .....	27

Literature Review.....	28
Common Definitions in Internationalization .....	28
International Education.....	29
Globalization.....	30
Internationalization .....	31
Internationalization at Home.....	32
Comprehensive Internationalization.....	33
Theoretical Frameworks in Internationalization.....	35
Knowledge:.....	36
Skills: .....	36
Attitudes:.....	36
Institutional Commitment and Policy.....	38
Leadership and Structure .....	39
Curriculum and Co-curriculum.....	39
Faculty and Staff Support .....	40
Mobility.....	40
Partnerships.....	41
Leadership Roles and Infrastructure of Internationalization .....	41
Discussions and Limitations .....	44
Summary.....	48
Chapter 3: Methodology .....	50



Purpose.....	50
Research Questions.....	50
Conceptual Framework.....	51
Institutional Commitment and Policy: .....	51
Leadership and Structure: .....	52
Curriculum and Co-curriculum:.....	52
Faculty and Staff Support: .....	52
Mobility: .....	52
Partnerships:.....	53
Analytical Paradigm.....	53
Research Methodology .....	54
Research Design.....	54
Case Selection.....	54
Methodological Procedures .....	59
Participants.....	59
Sources of Data.....	60
Data Analysis .....	60
Limitations and Delimitations.....	61
Trustworthiness.....	62
Statement of Positionality.....	62
Summary.....	63

	10
Chapter 4: Research Findings .....	64
Presidential and Institutional Profile of Kali State University.....	65
Institution’s International Context .....	66
Presidential Leadership in Internationalization .....	68
Supporting International Students.....	68
Valuing Global Learning .....	70
Growing the International Presence.....	72
Presidential and Institutional Profile of Chip State University.....	73
Institution’s International Context .....	74
Presidential Leadership in Internationalization .....	76
An Integrated Approach to Internationalization .....	76
Internationalizing through Shared Governance .....	79
Creating Global Centers to Make an Impact.....	80
Presidential and Institutional Profile of Buffet State University .....	81
Institution’s International Context .....	83
Presidential Leadership in Internationalization .....	84
Valuing and Diversifying Study Abroad .....	84
Building a Supportive Culture .....	87
Investing in Brick-and-Mortar Campuses Abroad.....	90
Presidential and Institutional Profiles of Solou State University.....	92
Institution’s International Context .....	93
Presidential Leadership in Internationalization .....	95

	11
Building International Collaborations.....	95
Growing the International Student Population .....	96
Cross-Site Analysis.....	98
Presidential Leadership in Advancing and Sustaining Internationalization .....	99
Organizational Structure .....	99
Funding Internationalization Initiatives.....	100
Campus-Wide Strategic Planning for Internationalization.....	102
International Travel and Lived Experiences .....	103
Summary.....	104
Chapter 5: Discussion .....	106
Interpretation of the Findings.....	107
Institutional Commitment and Policy .....	108
Leadership and Structure .....	109
Curriculum and Co-curriculum.....	111
Faculty and Staff Support .....	112
Mobility.....	113
Partnerships.....	115
Limitations and Delimitations.....	117
Implications for Policy.....	118
Implications for Practice .....	121
Opportunities for Future Research.....	124

Conclusion .....	126
Appendices.....	129
Appendix A.....	129
Appendix B.....	130
Appendix C.....	131
Appendix D.....	132
Appendix E.....	133
Appendix F.....	134
Appendix G.....	135
References.....	137

**List of Figures and Tables**

Figure 1 .....	31
Table 1 .....	56

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Today's permeable borders, advances in technology and telecommunications, and a remaking of the global economy have created a world in which interdisciplinary, cross-border research and discovery have become norms and expectations for students and faculty members (NASULGC, n.d.). For the United States to have a truly world-class higher education system, colleges, and universities must be globally engaged and prepare students to be citizens of a multicultural community both at home and in a globalized world. Institutions accomplish this by having a multi-dimensional, comprehensive strategy that includes internationalization at home and engagement with global challenges and partners (ACE, n.d.). However, this effort will require substantive, transformative change at all levels of higher education institutions (NASULGC, n.d.). This drastic change in institutional culture will be possible only with the determined leadership of presidents and chancellors. Presidents must articulate a vision for internationalization – one that is right for each campus and one that fosters a globally competent community of students, faculty, and staff (NASULGC, n.d.). This qualitative research study explored the role of presidential leadership in campus internationalization at four striving universities in the United States.

### **Historical Background**

International education has been a part of the American Academy for more than two centuries. International students began enrolling at U.S. institutions less than a decade after the Declaration of Independence. Francisco de Miranda, who went on to lead a Venezuelan independence movement, studied at Yale University in 1784. Less than a century later, Yung Wing graduated with honors from Yale in 1854. When Yung returned to China, he persuaded the ruling Qing dynasty to send more students abroad to help modernize the country (Fischer &

Aslanian, 2021). Unlike China, many studies of America's engagement in international education take 1945 as a starting point (Campbell, 2005).

William Fulbright, a freshman senator from the State of Arkansas, was savvy enough to introduce legislation to allow the use of foreign credits accruing to the United States from the sale of surplus war property overseas, for the financing of educational exchange after World War II (Campbell, 2005). Fulbright was indeed the primary actor and a major intellectual contributor to the internationalization movement that swept America during and after World War II (Tsvetkova, 2008). As noted by Campbell, Fulbright began to express doubts about America's commitment to internationalization. The senator from Arkansas believed that the ability of the US to protect its democratic institutions and contribute to a stable world order depended largely on the nation's ability to learn about and appreciate other cultures (Campbell, 2005).

Fulbright's vision was timely and necessary. After World War II, international relations were shaped by confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union, as Tsvetkova noted. This author argued that the US-Soviet confrontation was viewed as an East-West competition framed by divergent models of their respective political, economic, and ideological systems. Indeed, this is precisely why former US Secretary of State, Dean Acheson framed the US-USSR Cold War as a "struggle for men's minds and men's allegiance" (Tsvetkova, 2005). To win "minds" and acquire "allegiance," international education suddenly became one of the powerful vehicles through which both superpowers (US and USSR) produced or reproduced the loyalty of foreign dominant groups (Tsvetkova, 2008). It is in this context that international education programs became a major part of the superpowers' strategy to win foreign allies and minds. The programs involved two interrelated initiatives, according to Tsvetkova:

First, they selected nationals to attend and receive instruction at American or Soviet educational institutions (mainly at postsecondary schools). Second, they exposed participants in such programs to ideas and practices in line with the dominant ideology of the American or Soviet system. Thus, Marxist thought was promoted in the USSR's international education programs, and capitalist or free-market ideas were emphasized in US international education programs (p. 199).

In such a historical framework about the role of international education in foreign affairs, one can argue that the Fulbright Program stood apart from the crassly utilitarian and nationalist politics that dominated the world order post-World War II (Lebovic, 2013). In citing historian Arnold Toynbee, Lebovic noted that the Fulbright Program is one of the most generous and imaginative things that have been done in the world since World War II.

It is against this historical backdrop that international education has become an existential need for higher education in the United States. As former Secretary of State, Michael Eagleburger noted, "America's place in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will stem not only from our military and economic strength but also the reach and resonance of our ideas" (Campbell, 2005, p.133). The Cold War was indeed a time of uncertainty, but the debates about America's leadership role post-Cold War led to a heightened focus on the global competence of American students, scholars, and academics. As Campbell noted, the large balance of learning deficit was widely deplored. This author contended that eight or nine learners came to the United States for every American student who went abroad.

The imbalance in American student and scholar mobility was viewed as an existential threat to America's standing as the leader of the free world. In citing Robert Lyman, former President of Stanford University, Campbell argued that "Americans are people who are



astonishingly ill-prepared for global competency, ill-equipped to understand it and too ill-informed to provide the context for intelligent policy making regarding international matters” (p. 134). This widely shared sentiment led to higher education’s drastic need to internationalize its institutions. But, what exactly is involved in the internationalization of higher education and why should universities and colleges emphasize its importance as an existential need in the aftermath of the Cold War?

Indeed, the Cold War between the United States and the USSR resulted in an inexorably globalized world that made it imperative for higher education to respond by internationalizing institutions for the good of students and the global community in general (Deardorff & Charles, 2016). More specifically, this means equipping students with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to live and thrive in a globally interconnected and interdependent world. It also means availing education abroad opportunities for all students. It means meeting the needs of international students by attracting the best and brightest minds from around the world. Additionally, it signifies the need to engage with partners abroad, develop and nurture stronger connections with overseas alumni, and engage in research collaborations with foreign partners (Deardorff & Charles, 2016). However, researchers also noted that facilitating this process will require consensus around the terms and definitions of internationalization (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Arum & Van de Water, 1992; Knight, 1999). Thus, a well-articulated conceptual framework for internationalization will shed more light on the topic (Diabate, 2019). The literature examined in this treatise provided a framework to support institutional internationalization processes and confirmed the argument that a truly internationalized campus requires an articulated institutional commitment mandated by a university president.

### **Problem Statement**

The collapse of the Soviet Union precipitated the rapid rise of transnational exchange networks of all types, including the growth in international enrollment at U.S. colleges and universities and the spike in American students' interest in education abroad (Merckx & Nolan, 2015). Global student mobility, research practices, institutional collaborations, and student learning, among others, are all touched by the increasingly interconnected and interdependent nature of today's society (Deardorff & Charles, 2016). As argued by several international education scholars, higher education is being rapidly transformed by the effects of globalization (Heyl & Hunter, 2019). And, it is precisely for this reason that higher education must ensure that it has appropriate and adequate leadership and infrastructure in place to align strategic outlook and practices with the demands of this new global arena (Deardorff & Charles, 2016).

Although university presidents and provosts understand that any innovation or institutional culture change requires a consensual participatory process (Merckx & Nolan, 2015), very little research was done on the role of presidential leadership in comprehensive internationalization efforts at U.S. colleges and universities, as argued by Hudzik (2015). This significant gap in the literature provided a poor understanding of the impact of a presidential commitment to internationalization and was bereft of a vision of possibilities that could be realized with a more robust presidential engagement in the internationalization agenda. For this study, striving universities, those that are in pursuit of prestige within the academic hierarchy (O'Meara, 2007) were examined closely to learn more about the role that presidential leadership plays in the internationalization of US campuses.

### **Purpose of Study**

This study examined the role of presidential leadership in comprehensive internationalization at striving institutions in the United States. "Striving" universities were

defined as institutions in pursuit of prestige within the academic hierarchy (O'Meara, 2007). The review of the internationalization literature suggested that there was limited research on the role of presidential leadership in internationalization efforts at U.S. universities, although most university leaders espouse the importance of internationalization in the academy (Hudzik, 2015).

### **Research Questions**

To internationalize the academy, striving universities in the United States should at minimum be clear-headed about the significance of presidential engagement in internationalization as well as define or articulate strategic priority areas for global engagement at the institutional level. Therefore, the following questions guided this study in understanding the significance of presidential engagement in internationalization:

1. What is the role of the president in advancing and sustaining comprehensive internationalization at a striving university?
2. What kind of presidential support does the Senior International Officer (SIO) believe is critical to high-level internationalization at their institution?
3. What are the presidents' priority activities for internationalization at a striving institution?

Answering these research questions required multiple sources of evidence, including semi-structured interviews with four campus leaders, analyzing available documents such as international student mobility reports, study abroad numbers, faculty global research activities, and finally, conducting a site visit at each of the institutions listed in this study.

### **Overview of Methodology**

#### **Theoretical Paradigm**

The American Council on Education's model for comprehensive internationalization is

the prism through which this study was conducted. For this reason, I adopted ACE's definition of campus internationalization as a strategic, coordinated process that seeks to align and integrate policies, programs, and initiatives to position colleges and universities as more globally oriented and internationally connected institutions (ACE, n.d.). As internationalization on US campuses is a social reality, an interpretive research lens was used to have a better understanding of the role of presidential leadership in campus internationalization initiatives at four striving universities in the United States. The interpretivist paradigm aligned perfectly with this study since interpretivism's core principle is that realities are multiple and socially constructed (Riyama, 2015).

### **Research Design Rationale**

I further adopted a qualitative research method for this study. As Creswell (1998) noted, qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. Although the pursuit of a qualitative study was a rigorous and time-consuming enterprise, I adopted it because the nature of the research questions demanded it (Creswell, 1998), and because the study of campus internationalization is an existential need requiring a comprehensive approach to this research topic. Finally, I presented multiple case studies to support this research.

### **Site Selection**

The four research sites in this study were purposefully sampled. First, each university selected met the striving criteria, which relied on Carnegie Classification's public access file to identify universities that moved from high research to very high research activity in the past ten years (Carnegie Classifications, n.d.). Second, a strong internationalization record was one of the tenets of the site selection process. Each institution profiled in this study received the Senator

Paul Simon Award for Comprehensive Internationalization, which is a strong indicator of global engagement activity on a U.S. campus (Association of International Education Administrators, n.d.). Furthermore, presidents' tenure was taken into consideration since this research study focused on the role of presidential leadership in campus internationalization efforts at striving universities in the United States.

## **Methodological Procedures**

### **Data Sources**

The primary sources of data in this research enterprise were semi-structured interviews with university leaders at the striving institutions identified in this study. However, other sources of data were presented to provide a more accurate case study (Yin, 2018). Those included publicly available documents such as strategic plans, international student mobility reports, study abroad participation rates, and universities' mission and vision statements. Furthermore, site visits created the opportunity for direct observations of internationalization activity at the institutions in the research study (Yin, 2018).

### **Participant Selection**

I referenced the ACE model for comprehensive internationalization as the guiding principle through which the study participants were selected. Based on the ACE model for campus internationalization, I conducted semi-structured interviews on four striving campuses with presidents, provosts, Senior International Officers (SIOs), and key faculty members. These campus leaders were selected primarily because of the important role they play in advancing and sustaining campus internationalization (Heyl and Hunter, 2019). As stated in the ACE model, institutional commitment requires presidential support, and internationalization needs the faculty's full commitment and buy-in (American Council on Education, n.d.). Finally, the

selection of institutional leaders in this study was facilitated by the Senior International Officers at each university represented. These SIOs are members of the Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA), a professional network of peer international education administrators in the United States and abroad (Association of International Education Administrators, n.d.).

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

Every research enterprise has limitations and this study was no exception to that reality. This research on the role of Presidents in internationalization indeed created a few limitations that should be addressed. First, the purposeful sampling of striving universities with a very strong record of campus-wide internationalization and Presidential tenure inherently narrowed the pool of participants to no more than four institutions in the United States. Therefore, the findings from these institutions should not be generalized to all higher education institutions in the United States. As the literature suggested, internationalization differs from one institution to the next.

Also, I found that the purposeful sampling of universities with a strong internationalization agenda motivated the participants to speak highly and proudly about their work in the international education arena. The intentional selection of institutions that share specific characteristics such as winning the Senator Paul Simon Award for Comprehensive Internationalization, allowed all participants to tout their respective achievements. Moreover, the Presidents' positions as the chief administrators at their institutions and the delicate management of their hectic schedules prevented me from spending significant time with each leader for more meaningful and intimate observations.

Finally, my position as a Senior International Officer (SIO) at a public institution may have been limiting to the Presidents and SIOs at the institutions in this study. The welcoming nature of the interview process suggested that participants were keen to preserve and showcase their reputations as leaders in the field of international education. Therefore, each participant willingly and deliberately attempted to paint a very positive “picture” of the internationalization agenda at their institutions. However, the semi-structured interviews added more flexibility to the process by allowing me to ask difficult, and at times, uncomfortable questions to the participants.

### **Study Significance**

This research agenda aimed to investigate the role of university presidents in the internationalization process since this work was limited and subjected to misconceptions (Hudzik, 2015). Moreover, today’s globalized and interconnected world makes it imperative for higher education leaders to emphasize and prioritize global learning and campus internationalization for students, faculty, staff, and community members. Internationalizing higher education should be a core tenet of universities’ academic aspirations. Universities ought to consider internationalization and global engagement in their institutional mission and strategy to create well-rounded graduates who will become global citizens. However, leading campus-wide internationalization efforts will only be successful if mandated by university leaders such as presidents, chancellors, provosts, and faculty members.

### **Definitions**

One of the most controversial aspects of international education is the astonishing lack of consensus on the terms and definitions of internationalization by scholars and practitioners. Defining the terms will shed more light on the urgency of campus internationalization and create buy-in from university leaders and faculty members.

International education is defined by Knight (1999) as the kind of educational experience and activities that often involve people of different cultures and nations. Margison (2021) defines globalization as a social and economic phenomenon of the 21<sup>st</sup> century involving cross-collaborations, technological advances, and permeable economies. Another key term worth defining is internationalization, which Knight (2004) assesses as the intentional process of integrating international, intercultural, or global dimensions in all facets of post-secondary education.

While there was less consensus around what defines “comprehensive internationalization,” the American Council on Education (ACE) argued that comprehensive internationalization is a strategic and coordinated process that should intentionally align and integrate policies, programs, and initiatives to position colleges and universities as more globally oriented and internationally connected institutions. ACE’s underlying assumption of this definition is that comprehensive internationalization requires leadership commitment because of the strategic mention in the language. Finally, for this study, striving universities were defined as institutions in pursuit of academic prestige and notoriety (O’Meara, 2007).

### **Organization of Study**

This study on the role of Presidential leadership in internationalization at striving universities was presented in 5 chapters. The introduction provided a historical context and addressed the research problem. Chapter 2 gave a comprehensive overview of the internationalization literature, including definitions, and theoretical and conceptual frameworks in international education, as well as leadership roles and infrastructures in the internationalization. The Methodology chapter articulated the methods used to engage in this comprehensive study of Presidential leadership in internationalization. The fourth chapter



addressed the findings from all four institutions in this study. Finally, in chapter five, I discussed the findings in detail and offered recommendations for policy, practical implications, and future research opportunities.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I provided a historical and geopolitical context of international education in the United States. I also briefly outlined the qualitative methods that were used to address the research questions. This research on the role of Presidential leadership in internationalization at striving universities aimed to develop actionable frameworks for comprehensive internationalization, after a detailed review of international activities at four striving universities in the United States. In the following chapter, you will find that I reviewed the literature on international education, including definitions and theoretical and conceptual frameworks, leadership roles, and infrastructure in internationalization.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

Comprehensive internationalization of higher education is one of the most critical tenets of strategic planning processes at colleges and universities across the United States (Altbach, 2013). Yet, many U.S. universities have not answered the call to cultivate learning environments that infuse the nuances of today's global realities. As Altbach (2013) noted, "Until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, most American colleges and universities either did not think about global engagement and internationalization or considered study abroad as the beginning and end of such involvement" (p.11). Today, there are few university presidents and rectors who do not espouse the importance of internationalization. Yet, many fail to bring the concept to reality and encourage the organizational change required to make it happen (Hudzik, 2015).

With the rise of nationalistic ideologies, political tensions between countries and across borders, and COVID-19's devastating impact around the world, universities, and colleges have a responsibility to prepare leaders for the world stage. As a prominent U.S. university President remarked, "At this fragile time in our world, it is more important than ever to give our students the skills, experience, and knowledge that will help them pursue global opportunity, understanding, and ultimately – peace" (Deardorff & Charles, 2018, p. xii). Although many institutional leaders understand the need to educate students to be globally competent and live lives of meaning and purpose in today's globalized arena, some universities have yet to articulate a process that would lead to a comprehensive internationalization of their campuses. In the following sections, I outline a methodology for reviewing and defining common terms in the field of international education, followed by a review of conceptual frameworks, leadership roles, and infrastructure in internationalization. I conclude with a comprehensive discussion addressing the future of this topic and the limitations I found in the review of the literature.

### **Methodology for Literature Review**

International education is a relatively new field of endeavor in the United States (Deardorff & Charles, 2016). For this reason, I encountered a dearth of research on internationalization at higher education institutions. Having said that, the following methods were used to strengthen the quality of the research. First, I searched in Academic Search Complete, Education Source, Educational Administration Abstracts, and ERIC databases to examine recent (10 years or less) peer-reviewed journal articles related to internationalization and higher education leadership. The search terms I used included the following terms in subject fields; *Universit\** OR “higher education” AND “internationaliz” OR “internationalis” AND barrier OR obstacle OR difficult\* OR resist\* OR confusion OR challenge OR attitudes OR planning OR leadership OR president OR administrat\* OR program OR international education OR study abroad OR foreign study. The search terms found 633 journal articles related to internationalization. A quick revision of abstracts and references from the most pertinent journal articles provided a solid foundation for this research enterprise.

Moreover, since the emergence of international education as a new profession stimulated the rise of new professional associations for international educators (Merx & Nolan, 2015), I consulted with the Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA) and several of the peer-reviewed journal articles and books I reviewed were provided by AIEA. Those include the following key studies and reviews: Merx & Nolan (2015), Deardorff and Charles (2016), and Heyl and Hunter (2019), among others.

Finally, I used a snowballing method to locate dissertations that are most relevant to this research study. I scanned the references from the most relevant dissertation papers and found 30

articles that I deemed extremely relevant to my work. Those foundational findings include works written by De Wit (2002), Knight (2004), Childress (2009), and Altbach (2013).

All sources were analyzed based on several criteria. First, I made sure each source aligned with my research questions. Second, as previously mentioned, I narrowed the search to include the most recent publications over the past 10 years, and most of the cited references were as recent as 2015 or later. Furthermore, I included a few cited references from decades ago to provide a historical context for internationalization.

### **Literature Review**

This literature review suggests that confusion about the terms and definitions of internationalization may have contributed to a lack of focus or uniform agenda for internationalization at U.S. colleges and universities (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Arum & Van de Water, 1992; De Wit, 2002; Deardorff, 2012; Hudzik, 2011; Knight, 1999, 2004, 2012; Seeber et al., 2006; Teichler, 2004). For instance, scholars have argued that “internationalization” is often confused with “globalization” and vice versa (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Moreover, the review confirms that the lack of a common understanding of internationalization has to do with institutions that have different rationales for global initiatives (Seeber et al., 2016). Scanning the literature also provided a better understanding of the role of leadership in internationalization at colleges and universities.

### **Common Definitions in Internationalization**

Student mobility has been a part of the American academy for more than two centuries. In the introduction, I noted that international students began enrolling at U.S. institutions less than a decade after the Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776 (Fischer & Aslanian, 2021). I also mentioned that Francisco de Miranda, who went on to lead a Venezuelan

independence movement, studied at Yale University in 1784. Although global student mobility has been an integral part of the American educational system since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, defining internationalization from a higher education perspective remains a challenge for scholars and university practitioners.

Arum and Van de Water (1992) argue that the term “international education” can be traced back to 1919, with the establishment of the Institute of International Education in New York City. They argue that the use of the term has been interchangeable and confusing for many decades. This confusion makes it challenging to come up with a common universal definition of international education. Arum and Van de Water remark that higher education professionals’ responsibilities include accurately defining the terms used to describe themselves and the work they do. The following terms: international education, globalization, internationalization, internationalization at home, and comprehensive internationalization, will be defined based on their frequency of usage in the practical world of international education.

### **International Education**

Arum and Van de Water’s (2013) definition of “international education” is “multiple activities, programs, and services that fall within international studies, international educational exchange, and technical cooperation” (p. 202). While they examined the term holistically, Knight (1999) used five interchangeable elements to define international education as “a kind of education where the purpose, outcomes, activities, content, or participants relate to or involve the people, culture, and systems of different nations” (p.12). Knight included these elements to acknowledge their fundamental role in defining a kind or type of education, namely international

education. Knight also recognized the significance and importance of defining international education from a global and transnational perspective.

### **Globalization**

As stated earlier, scholars have argued that globalization and internationalization have been interchangeable for decades. Knight (2004) asserts that internationalization is changing the world of higher education and globalization is changing the world of internationalization. Altbach (2013) provides a simple definition of globalization but warns that the term's implications are far greater than its subtle and succinct definition. From a higher education perspective, Altbach (2013) argues:

Globalization implies the broad social, economic, and technological forces that shape the realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The elements include advanced information technology, new ways of thinking about financing education and a concomitant acceptance of market forces and commercialization, unprecedented mobility for students and professors, the global spread of common ideas about science and scholarship, the role of English as the main language of science, and other developments. (p.7).

Although globalization has had a positive impact on nations and transnational companies, Altbach notes the dark side by arguing that poor countries remain in an increasingly difficult struggle to catch up and compete with those that have the greatest academic power. He argues that the imbalance in globalization's impact on higher education suggests in some ways that globalization works against the desire to create a worldwide academic community based on cooperation and a shared vision of academic development. This sentiment regarding the imbalance in the power structure vis à vis globalization is also shared by Marginson (2021) who defines globalization as "a full formative encounter with the diversity of human ideas,

knowledge, imagination, government, institutions, social habits, based on unity in diversity” (p. 5). Marginson places more emphasis on the impact of globalization than its abstract definition. He argues that globalization created systemic forms of domination that sanction particular modes of existence and foreclosure of others. Marginson further articulates that global knowledge is the hope of the world, but the world is mostly excluded from it, making it difficult to argue for an equitable global educational ecosystem.

### **Internationalization**

Internationalization is higher education’s response to globalization (Deardorff & Charles, 2018), recognizing that globalization transcends the higher education sector. While scholars have come to understand that internationalization is ancillary to globalization’s changing landscape, every university campus goes about internationalization in its unique way (Merckx & Nolan, 2015; Nolan & Hunter, 2012). This tendency to define internationalization based on universities’ priorities makes it a daunting task to come up with a universal definition of internationalization from a higher education perspective. However, as Knight (2004) pointed out, the changes in rationales regarding the purpose of internationalization of higher education, the providers of global education, and the delivery methods of global education make it important enough to revise the definition of internationalization to ensure the meaning reflects the current changes and challenges in the global arena.

For this reason, Knight (2004) updated her definition of internationalization as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education” (p. 11). Moreover, Knight’s emphasis on ‘process’ signifies that internationalization is an ongoing and continuing effort – it is not a means to an end. Although Knight’s (2004) definition is the most cited in the field of international

education, it is important to note that scholars and practitioners have yet to determine how to measure the infusion of an international, intercultural, or global dimension into a university system, as stated by Knight. Hill, a former university president and a consultant at the American Council on Education's Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement famously coined the following definition of internationalization: "Globalization is the movement of people, ideas, goods, capital, services, pollution, and diseases across borders, and internationalization is higher education's engagement with that reality" (Helm, 2020, para. 1). With COVID 19's impact around the world, Hill's definition of internationalization could not be more accurate.

De Wit (2002) researched various floating definitions from scholars and practitioners and came up with four different approaches to the internationalization of higher education: a) *activity approaches*, which describe internationalization in terms of categories of types of activities (including academic and extracurricular activities), b) *rationale approaches*, which define internationalization in terms of its purposes or intended outcomes, c) *competency approaches* which look at internationalization in terms of developing new skills, attitudes, and knowledge in students, faculty, and staff and d) *process approaches*, which frame internationalization as a process that integrates an international dimension or perspective into the major functions of the institution. De Wit recognized that a more focused definition of internationalization is necessary if it is to be understood and treated with the importance that it deserves.

### **Internationalization at Home**

Critics of international education have argued that internationalization, and study abroad in particular, only cater to students from very affluent backgrounds. In fact, only about 5% of the undergraduate population in the U.S. studies abroad during their academic tenure (Institute of International Education, 2020). For this reason, international education practitioners and scholars



have introduced internationalization at home as a “glocal” option for students. “Glocal” is defined by practitioners in terms of a global experience happening locally. De Wit and Hunter (2015) stated that internationalization is not a goal in itself, but a means to enhance quality and saw a need for international educators to focus more on curriculum and learning outcomes, which is more inclusive and less elitist by not focusing too much on mobility. They concur that the inclusion of internationalization at home as a third pillar in the internationalization strategy of the European Higher Education system is a good starting point but will require more concrete actions in terms of its local implementation at various colleges and universities.

Deardorff (2012) argues the need to double efforts on faculty and curriculum to fulfill the larger purpose of internationalization, which is to equip students with an understanding of the global nuances of higher education. Knight (2012) outlined six important pillars for internationalization at home to be effective: curriculum and programs, teaching and learning, research and scholarship activity, co-curricular activities, extracurricular activities, and liaison with local community-based ethnic groups. This elaboration was expanded, as Knight’s original definition of internationalization at home put more focus on the intercultural aspects of the teaching and learning process and the curriculum.

### **Comprehensive Internationalization**

As mentioned in the introduction, some universities have yet to articulate a process that would lead to a comprehensive internationalization of a campus. Although the term ‘comprehensive internationalization’ is relatively new, its definition tends to vary by country, region, and institution. Hudzik (2011) views comprehensive internationalization as the organizing paradigm for the institution. Hudzik defines comprehensive internationalization as:

A commitment, confirmed through action, to infuse international and comparative perspectives throughout the teaching, research, and service mission of higher education. It shapes institutional ethos and values and touches the entire higher education enterprise. It must be embraced by institutional leadership, governance, faculty, students, and all academic service and support units. It is an institutional imperative, not just a desirable possibility. Comprehensive internationalization not only impacts all of campus life but also the institution's external frames of reference, partnerships, and relations. The global reconfiguration of economies, systems of trade, research, and communication, and the impact of global forces on local life, dramatically expand the need for comprehensive internationalization and the motivations and purposes driving it (p. 10).

Hudzik's expansive definition of comprehensive internationalization presents a challenge to institutions as they grapple with their capacity to implement strategic components best suited to their institutional context (Diabate, 2017). However, a clear path toward comprehensive internationalization may persuade various institutions to advocate for a holistic review of international activity and engagement on their campuses. The Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement (CIGE) at the American Council on Education serves as an internationalization resource for many institutions across the United States and overseas. CIGE defined comprehensive internationalization as a "strategic, coordinated process that seeks to align and integrate policies, programs, and initiatives to position colleges and universities as more globally oriented and internationally connected institutions."

As Diabate (2017) notes, defining terms and describing patterns of activities is helpful and allows for the cultivation of consensus among scholars and international education practitioners but, conceptual frameworks for internationalization will shed light on this topic.

### **Theoretical Frameworks in Internationalization**

A theoretical framework provides context to internationalization from a higher education perspective. Childress (2009) argues the need for universities to implement an internationalization plan as a critical step to the operationalization of institutions' internationalization goals. Having a reliable plan serves as a) a roadmap for internationalization, b) a vehicle to develop buy-in, c) a mechanism for explaining the meaning and goals of internationalization, d) a medium for interdisciplinary collaboration, and e) a tool for fund-raising (Childress, 2009). The author articulates the need for further research that examines the relationship between the development of internationalization plans and the communication of these plans to key institutional stakeholders. Moving internationalization forward at the institutional level requires a commitment and a well-articulated process that involves all campus stakeholders, not just the international office.

Similarly, Deardorff (2012) cites a survey by the Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA) to explain what internationalization means to Senior International Officers (SIOs) at U.S. institutions. Deardorff's findings indicate that most SIOs' definitions of internationalization align with Knight's (2004) aforementioned definition. However, the participants focused on internationalization as a process. Deardorff argues that the process deserves further research to find out what internationalization entails, to what end should universities pursue internationalization, and how practitioners know that internationalization is integrated and well-infused into a campus operation, as previously noted by Knight (2004) and Childress (2009).

A critical component of a comprehensive internationalization plan is the existing diversity in students, faculty, and staff from all corners of the globe who make meaningful

contributions to research and teaching, as well as the cultural enrichment of higher education institutions. Deardorff (2016) notes that intercultural competence is at the core of comprehensive internationalization efforts, especially as it relates to intercultural learning outcomes at the university level. Although there are multiple definitions of intercultural competency, the consensus from Deardorff's research can be categorized into the basic dimensions of competency, which are commonly defined as knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Deardorff's study further synthesizes these basic dimensions into internal and external outcomes.

**Knowledge:**

This competency refers to cultural self-awareness, which means how one's culture has influenced one's identity and worldview. Moreover, cultural self-awareness also means culture-specific knowledge and deep cultural knowledge, which includes a strong understanding of other worldviews. Finally, the knowledge competency requirement also includes sociolinguistic awareness, which refers to how one adapts to language in a different setting.

**Skills:**

The skills competency addresses the processing of knowledge which includes observing, listening, evaluating, analyzing, interpreting, and relating. With these skills in mind, self-reflection is essential to the development and assessment of intercultural competence.

**Attitudes:**

Attitudes refer to respect, openness, curiosity, and the willingness to learn and discover. This includes respect for others, which demonstrates that they are valued, including showing interest in them and listening actively to them. Openness and curiosity both imply a willingness to risk and to move beyond one's comfort zone.

While creating an internationalization plan and infusing intercultural competency as a core tenet of this work is critically important, the consensus among scholars and practitioners is that implementing a comprehensive internationalization plan at a university is a difficult challenge. Rumbley and colleagues (2012) argue that the complex and shifting landscape of internationalization, along with the speed with which new developments present themselves in the current context, makes managing internationalization or carrying out plans extremely challenging. However, universities in the United States and abroad have adopted the American Council on Education's (ACE) model for comprehensive internationalization as a clear and well-articulated framework for advancing this work at the institutional level.

The aim of the ACE Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement (CIGE) is to provide individualized support and guidance to institutions of higher education seeking to establish a framework and strategic plans for campus internationalization (ACE, 2021). The ACE model identified six interconnected goals to achieve comprehensive internationalization and advance higher education's teaching, research, and service missions globally. Together, these comprise the ACE model for comprehensive internationalization. The six pillars include a) institutional commitment and policy, b) leadership and structure, c) curriculum, and co-curriculum, d) faculty and staff support, e) mobility, and f) partnerships (Figure 1).

**Figure 1***ACE Model for Comprehensive Internationalization*

*Note.* From Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement. Copyright 2021 by the American Council on Education. Retrieved from <https://www.acenet.edu/ResearchInsights/Pages/Internationalization/CIGE-Model-for-Comprehensive-Internationalization.aspx>.

The model assumes that all six pillars are interconnected and mutually affect one another. All six pillars require some level of involvement, although institutions approach the model from different entry points, and may prioritize different areas and different aspects of the model over time. As Diabate (2017) notes, the description of the six target areas clarifies how and why institutions can internationalize their campuses.

### **Institutional Commitment and Policy**

Internationalization requires priority in an institution's strategic plan. This explicit commitment by university leaders proves that institutions are gradually beginning to recognize

the importance of internationalization in the academic apparatus. ACE also asserts that a specific internationalization strategy includes provisions for iterative improvement, assessment, and implementation. Finally, a critical part of developing institutional commitment is organizational self-reflection. This includes an institutional community discerning essential questions about their commitment to global engagement. Such questions include what internationalization means to institutions, and why should universities internationalize. What role will universities play in the local, national, and global landscape? and who should be involved in the discernment and decision-making process. (American Council on Education, n.d.).

### **Leadership and Structure**

As noted by ACE, the involvement of senior leaders and appropriate administrative and reporting structures form an essential framework for internationalization and institutional transformation. These include the president and chief academic leaders such as the provost. This alignment of human resources should also include offices that are designated to coordinate campus-wide global engagement, international student services, and off-campus learning experiences. ACE further argues that units that are responsible for research, institutional research, faculty development, student support services, enrollment management, finance, alumni relations, and advancement also play a critical role in advancing internationalization on campus. Moreover, international leadership or an SIO role that reports directly to the chief academic officer or the president is critical to internationalization efforts at universities.

### **Curriculum and Co-curriculum**

As the core mission of higher education, student learning is a critical element of internationalization (ACE, n.d.). ACE believes that the curriculum is the central pathway to learning for all students regardless of their socioeconomic background, goals, abilities, or the

type of institution they attend. The organization further asserts that an internationalized curriculum ensures that all students are exposed to international perspectives and that they can build global and intercultural competence at home regardless of their field of study.

### **Faculty and Staff Support**

As the primary drivers of teaching and knowledge production, faculty play a pivotal role in learning, research, and service (ACE, n.d.). Whereas staff members provide significant support services to students, ACE argues that the faculty's commitment is imperative to the success of internationalization. The most internationalized universities are places where institutional policies and support mechanisms ensure that faculty have opportunities to develop intercultural competence themselves and can maximize the impact of these experiences on student learning, research, and service (ACE, n.d.). Professional development opportunities, including addressing challenges in teaching, learning across disciplines, and for diverse populations, can contribute to campus-wide internationalization initiatives. Finally, as ACE noted, rewarding faculty for their work in the internationalization space, and incentivizing them to do more is critical to the internationalization mission.

### **Mobility**

ACE's definition of mobility refers both to the outward and inward physical movement of people (students, faculty, and staff), programs, projects, and policies to off-campus communities and other countries to engage in learning, research, and collaboration (ACE, n.d.). With COVID-19's impact on society, technology has expanded the opportunity for mobility to include academic engagement of all learners beyond their domestic borders. ACE stated that this might be accomplished through collaborative online international learning (COIL) or virtual exchange (American Council on Education, n.d.)



## **Partnerships**

This target area which is internal and external can be local or international, primarily transactional, and can generate new ideas and programs that span all partners. ACE believes that these transactional relationships with institutional partners and organizations are essential to comprehensive internationalization, and bring different viewpoints, resources, activities, and agendas together to illuminate and act on global issues. ACE further argues that these partnerships provide global and intercultural experiences for faculty, staff, and students. Moreover, such linkages can also expand research capacity, enhance curriculum, and generate revenue. Most importantly, global linkages help diversify knowledge production and raise the visibility of institutions domestically and globally (American Council on Education, n.d.).

In addition, it is important to note that the core of the model (teaching, research, and service) illustrates that internationalization should not happen in siloes. It is a collaborative ethos that touches on every aspect of the institutional mission. The three critical strategic lenses in the outer ring (DEI, data-informed decision-making, and agility and transformation) are the avenues through which all six areas of the model should be examined.

## **Leadership Roles and Infrastructure of Internationalization**

International education is a relatively new field of endeavor in the United States. It is a broad and diverse field that encompasses many aspects of activities that occur on college and university campuses. The fact that it is not understood proves that international educators need to have titles that will accurately reflect their roles on campus. Such titles are critical to achieving the visibility and credibility necessary to advance the work of internationalization on the campus (Deardorff & Charles, 2018). Internationalization is the academy's response to globalization, the 21st-century phenomenon that is transforming every aspect of society. International educators

are the professionals who provide leadership and structure for internationalization on campuses and institutions are gradually beginning to recognize its importance. The Standards of Professional Practice developed by the Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA) articulate the importance of this leadership and the necessity for its visibility on campus and abroad (Deardorff & Charles, 2018).

The emergence of the role of the SIO at colleges and universities across the United States underscores the growing emphasis that institutions are placing on internationalization (Deardorff & Charles, 2018; Dessoff, 2010; Merck & Nolan, 2015). Moreover, as campuses have expanded their international activities, central administrators have begun to name a single person to oversee all the international activities on behalf of the institution (Merck & Nolan, 2015). The title of SIO confirmed the evolution and importance of internationalization at U.S. colleges and universities. The first title was that of a director at Oregon State University in 1976 (Heyl & Hunter, 2019; Merck & Nolan, 2015). In the decades that followed, SIOs increasingly acquired titles farther up the hierarchical ladder with many SIOs today holding titles such as vice provost, vice-rector, or deputy vice-chancellor for international initiatives (Heyl & Hunter, 2019).

Beyond the mere naming of an SIO, the chosen individual must understand the complexity of the roles and embrace them. In citing Bolman and Deal's four-frame model, Heyl, and Hunter (2019) identified four frames that SIOs need to understand to be successful in their respective roles: a) *structural frame*, which encompasses rationality, appropriate goals and objectives, efficiency, and coordination. *Human resources*, in which human needs are the guides to organizational structure, and participatory management and job enrichment, reflect the commitment to put employees first. *Political frame*, in which organizations are viewed as shifting coalitions of interests that come into conflict and require continuous renegotiations, and

the *symbolic frame* in which organizations are seen as cultures, propelled by rituals, ceremonies, stories, heroes, and myths rather than rules, policies, and managerial authority. Heyl and Hunter's frames attest to the difficulty of the SIO position at universities and colleges in the United States and overseas.

Whereas Heyl and Hunter measure the successes of the SIO from a bureaucratic point of view, Merkx and Nolan (2015) cite a Delphi study of more than thirty successful and senior SIOs at institutions across the United States. It became clear to Merkx and Nolan that knowledge, skills, and attitudes are critical for success. To be more specific, cross-cultural skills, skills in communication, budgeting, and planning, as well as a good understanding of academic institutions and how they function, all emerged from their study as important skills to have as an SIO at a university. Despite the well-articulated skills and frames needed to be successful as an SIO, it should be noted that the process by which SIOs are hired remains ambiguous (Merkx & Nolan, 2015). Merkx and Nolan (2015) argue, "There are no advanced degree programs which specifically prepare one for the job of chief international officer. There are no standards of certification and no outward measures of rank or quality. Candidates will likely come from across the academic spectrum or from the public, private, or nonprofit sectors" (p. 32). This lack of a standard hiring process makes SIOs vulnerable since institutions of higher learning are bureaucratic in nature and the complexity of the academic apparatus can be challenging to most university leaders. As a result, SIOs should be chosen carefully and strategically.

Merkx and Nolan (2015) agree that the SIO's role on campus is limited by the decentralization of authority and the lack of discretionary funds and personnel, which degrades the SIO's role to serve as advocates and emissaries rather than authority figures. Scholars have also characterized SIOs as change agents, middle managers, and institutional advocates

(Deardorff & Charles, 2018; Heyl & Hunter, 2019; Merkx & Nolan, 2015). In fact, one major challenge of SIOs is mediating the relationship between the deans and the central administration, which will create patterns of cooperation rather than conflict over international initiatives (Merkx & Nolan, 2015). Another challenge is the SIO's role as a catalyst for change. They are charged with providing support to faculty and students while articulating strategic advice to senior administrators and sharing a vision for comprehensive internationalization at their respective institutions (Merkx & Nolan, 2015). Although it is important for the SIO to have adequate skills, a sharp vision, and an ability to manage up and down, the complexity and delicate task of internationalizing an entire institution indeed requires outstanding support from a president or chancellor (Childress, 2009; Deardorff & Charles, 2018; Hudzik, 2011; McCormack, 2013; Merkx & Nolan, 2015; Olson et al., 2006).

SIOs have important roles and the profession of serving as a university's chief international officer is a noble career. However, as Merkx and Nolan stated, SIOs serve at the pleasure of the president or provost of the institution. Little can be achieved at a university without the full support of top leadership. As Olson et al. (2006) also noted, the work of the internationalization team will only have maximum impact if the senior administrative leaders lend their effort, visibility, tactical, and structural support. The scholars' attestation about the role of presidential leadership and the inclusion of an *articulated institutional commitment* as one of the pillars of comprehensive internationalization justifies the urgent need to further study the role of the president or chancellor in institution-wide comprehensive internationalization initiatives.

### **Discussions and Limitations**

The analysis of the literature illustrated several of the common guiding definitions, frameworks, and infrastructures of successful internationalization. Although the review of some

of the literature provided diversity in terms of the scholars' geographic locations (i.e. United States, Canada, and Europe), the general definition of internationalization was surprisingly similar. As observed in the review, scholars' broad definitions of internationalization included activities and processes that institutions of higher education deem necessary for a successful internationalization campaign (De Wit, 2002). Also, the internationalization of higher education is often defined based on priority outcomes. These include the number of international students on U.S. campuses, study abroad participation rates, faculty engagement in international activities and initiatives, and the establishment of global partnerships with universities and organizations overseas, among other transatlantic programming initiatives (Deardorff & Charles, 2018).

I want to stress that the definition of comprehensive internationalization as articulated by Hudzik (2015) and others was primarily rooted in administrative terms that focused on the organizational apparatus of an institution, global programming, and initiatives. Having said this, a key finding is that universities need to revisit internationalization as an imperative in higher education. Colleges and universities should emphasize student learning outcomes as a critical approach to measuring successful internationalization on campuses. The focus on the optics and organizational structures provides a good track record of internationalization activity on campus but one of higher education's main purposes of educating students and preparing them for successful careers should never be obscured.

Also, the definition of internationalization as a transactional necessity between countries and across borders reflected another gap in the literature. One of the most striking findings in the review is the lack of attention to historical geopolitical events that may impact the establishment of strategic partnerships with institutions and organizations abroad. Practically all of sub-Saharan Africa, for example, suffered for decades under colonial rule. The crimes of theft, subjugation,

and exploitation that occurred under colonialism left many of these nations with impoverished economies and narrowly conceived academic institutions intended to produce graduates to serve the needs of the colonial powers rather than the needs of national development (Gardner & Krabill, 2017). Therefore, the widespread deficiencies in Technological resources and cutting-edge innovation evident at institutions in this part of the world seriously compromise their ability to be equal partners with institutions in the global north. And to the extent that US institutions seek to engage with these institutions in the global south, might their deficiencies lead to the reproduction of uneven forms of collaboration in the realms of research practices and mobility (Sharpe, 2015; Smith, 2017)?

In his critiques of the ways that Anglo-American globalization fosters global hierarchy and inequality, Marginson (2021) argues that the deep Anglo-American certainty that ‘our’ culture is not only best, but sufficient, and no other insight is needed, causes much of the world to be excluded from global knowledge. Marginson’s point is that Anglo-American institutions tend to rely on a mapping of the world that, consciously or subconsciously, reinscribes one-sided and exploitative patterns of the flow of information, knowledge, and other benefits (Association of International Education Administrators, n.d.). Decolonizing internationalization will require higher education institutions to discard the machinery of structural exclusion, as mentioned by Marginson.

Another key finding is related to the ACE model for comprehensive internationalization as the only known framework through which internationalization can be successful. The model’s political salience can be problematic for many institutions in the United States. Its approach to DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion), and references to social justice and anti-colonial racism can certainly cause some institutions and leaders in higher education to reject it altogether. I

believe that ACE is doing right by institutions, but this approach can create a serious conundrum for universities seeking to internationalize their campuses.

This is especially concerning in today's political environment in the United States. Also, I have taken the liberty to critique the ACE model for comprehensive internationalization for not being learner or human-centered, meaning that the model's unit of measure is the institution – it is designed from a strategic lens, not that of the individual learner. This critique may be less a normative critique and more a matter of inquiring about purpose. In ACE's case, the model's purpose seems to be about helping institutions be comprehensive and strategic global universities, which signals a focus on organizational change, not individuals. Although the model was intentionally institution-centered because it was developed for institutional transformation, its reorientation toward learning outcomes for individuals (students, faculty, and staff) could be valuable to higher education institutions.

Lastly, the model narrative could benefit from more ties to sustainable development goals and grand challenges. The reference to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) opens up doors to viable critiques of SDGs since many scholars and internationalization practitioners have argued that SDGs do not always respect local context and they often ignore systemic inequalities (Masuda et al., 2021). ACE should reconsider using “grand challenges” to refer to the enormous interdisciplinary, global problems of our world that are aided by international education, instead of SDGs. Finally, and most importantly, the ACE model does not seem to make the case for internationalization and why it is critical to the future of higher education, or why the comprehensive approach to internationalization is essential. Having analyzed all the literature around the ACE model for comprehensive internationalization, I wonder if it is too US-centric. ACE should consider updating the narrative to make it more interculturally salient.

On the other hand, the literature review has been limited in several different ways. First, the dearth of peer-reviewed journal articles on internationalization in the higher education sector was notably narrow. Much of the literature found during my research stems from blog posts and magazines such as *The International Educator*, a product of the Association of International Education (NAFSA). The reason for the scarcity of peer-reviewed journal articles is tied to the fact that most senior-level administrators in the field of international education do not hold faculty ranks. These are highly qualified professionals who are mandated to lead internationalization initiatives at public and private institutions across the United States. However, their status as administrators leaves the field bereft of the abundance of scholarly publications that could be realized.

Another limitation was the absence of peer-reviewed journals from international scholars. Except for De Wit (2002) and Marginson (2021), most of the internationalization literature was U.S.-centric, making it difficult to advocate for internationalization as a global necessity. This lack of representation of views from many corners of the globe seems to corroborate Marginson's Anglo-American claim that internationalization is one-sided.

### **Summary**

The prevalence of globalization forces institutions of higher education around the world to have an unequivocal role in ensuring that students are equipped with the skills and attitudes needed to live and thrive in today's global arena. Universities across the world understand that they have a critical role to play and a unique responsibility to internationalize the academy for the good of the students and the world in general. However, a unanimous consensus on a path toward campus internationalization remains a daunting challenge. It has become clear over the past few decades that universities go about internationalization in whatever way they see fit. For



example, some institutions define their engagement with internationalization almost exclusively in terms of student mobility, while others do so in terms of institutional partnerships, research, and foreign-born faculty members. Senior Internationalization Officers at institutions of higher education may be more clear-headed about the comprehensive nature of internationalization, but in practice, this is still not universally practiced by the academy in the United States. This approach is counter-intuitive and unproductive. The survey of the internationalization literature seems to suggest that confusion around the terms and definitions of internationalization may have contributed to a lack of focus or uniform agenda for internationalization at universities.

This literature review also suggests that the lack of a common understanding of internationalization has to do with the fact that institutions are driven by differing rationales for internationalization. The work that is involved in internationalizing institutions of higher learning is a noble profession. It allows universities and colleges to prepare global citizens who will live lives of meaning while understanding and navigating the global nuances of higher education. Thus, scholars and international education practitioners need to come together as one voice on internationalization, to articulate its importance and definition, and why it matters to universities and the world. Scholars have questioned against using internationalization as a catchall phrase for everything and anything international (De Wit, 2002; Knight, 2012). The process of internationalizing the academy will be less daunting once a uniform definition of international education is embraced and a common denominator is reached on the rationales for internationalization. Until then, advocating for comprehensive internationalization and seeking funding for it locally and nationally will be challenging for scholars and practitioners.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

In this chapter, I presented the methodology for the research study. I addressed the study's analytical paradigm, conceptual framework, methodology, study participants, data collection, and analysis methods. Discussions also involved trustworthiness and positionality challenges anticipated in this research enterprise.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to better understand the role of presidential leadership in comprehensive internationalization at striving institutions in the United States. Striving universities are institutions in pursuit of prestige within the academic hierarchy (O'Meara, 2007). The review of the internationalization literature suggested that there is limited research on the role of presidential leadership in comprehensive internationalization efforts at U.S. universities, although most university leaders espouse the importance of internationalization in the academy (Hudzik, 2015). Because this study used the American Council on Education's (ACE) model for campus internationalization as its framework, I adopted the organization's definition of comprehensive internationalization as a strategic, coordinated process that seeks to align and integrate policies, programs, and initiatives to position colleges and universities as more globally oriented and internationally connected institutions (ACE, n.d.).

#### **Research Questions**

As noted in the literature review, scholars argued that presidential leadership plays a critical role in the internationalization of higher education. Scholars also underscored the importance of the SIO role and its relationship with a president. Thus, this research study looked to address the following questions:

1. What is the role of the president in advancing and sustaining comprehensive internationalization at a striving university?
2. What kind of presidential support does the Senior International Officer (SIO) believe is critical to high-level internationalization at their institution?
3. What are the Presidents' priority activities for internationalization at a striving institution?

### **Conceptual Framework**

Maxwell (2013) argued that “the primary function of a conceptual framework is to inform a research design – to help researchers to assess and refine goals, develop realistic and relevant research questions, select appropriate methods, and identify potential validity threats to researchers’ conclusions” (p. 39). Therefore, I used the ACE model for Comprehensive Internationalization as the study’s framework. This model was developed by the Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement (CIGE), which aims to provide individualized support and guidance to institutions of higher education seeking to establish a framework and strategic plans for internationalization (ACE, n.d.). The model has identified six interconnected target areas that require strategic attention and resources to achieve comprehensive internationalization and advance higher education’s teaching, research, and service missions globally. The comprehensive internationalization target areas are explained in full detail in the literature review chapter and summarized below.

**Institutional Commitment and Policy:** Internationalization must be a named priority in an institution’s strategic plan. Specific internationalization strategies should include provisions for iterative improvement, assessment, and implementation (Mapping Internationalization, 2022).

**Leadership and Structure:** Senior leaders' involvement in internationalization strategy and appropriate administrative and reporting structures forms an essential framework for internationalization and institutional transformation. These leaders and departments include the president and chief academic leaders; offices that coordinate campus-wide global engagement, international student and scholar services, and off-campus learning experiences; and units that are responsible for research, institutional research, faculty development, student support services such as academic advising, counseling, career centers, and, enrollment management, finance, community, alumni relations, and advancement (Mapping Internationalization, 2022).

**Curriculum and Co-curriculum:** The curriculum is the core mission of higher education and the central pathway to learning for all students regardless of their background, goals, abilities, or the type of institution they attend. An internationalized curriculum exposes all students to international perspectives and global and intercultural competencies, regardless of their academic focus (Mapping Internationalization, 2022)

**Faculty and Staff Support:** As the primary drivers of teaching and knowledge production, faculty play a pivotal role in learning, research, and service. Institutional policies and support mechanisms ensure that faculty have opportunities to develop intercultural competence themselves and bring these experiences to student learning, research, and service (Mapping Internationalization, 2022).

**Mobility:** This area of the ACE model refers both to the outward and inward physical movement of people (students, faculty, and staff), programs, projects, and policies to and from campus communities and other countries to engage in learning, research, and collaboration (Mapping Internationalization, 2022).

**Partnerships:** ACE believes that partnerships and networks that generate new ideas and programs can be local or international and transactional or transformational. These relationships bring different viewpoints, resources, activities, and agendas together to illuminate and act on global issues (Mapping Internationalization, 2022).

In a recent “Mapping Internationalization” survey of institutions in the United States, publishers acknowledged that institutions’ approaches to global engagement should be distinct based on their unique circumstances and goals. However, the ACE model for comprehensive internationalization, which provides a broad examination across the six target areas, provides a useful picture of collective progress toward best practices for comprehensive internationalization (Mapping Internationalization, 2022).

### **Analytical Paradigm**

Since this study aimed to understand social reality, I used an interpretive research design to better understand the role of presidential leadership in campus internationalization efforts at striving universities. This analytical paradigm was fitting to this research since interpretivism is primarily rooted in the assumption that realities are multiple and socially constructed (Riyama, 2015).

Moreover, I used a qualitative research method for this study. Creswell (1998) defined qualitative research as an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. It involves the construction of a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting (p.15). Given this rigorous definition of a qualitative study, one may wonder why I engaged in such a daunting process. Indeed, I pursued a qualitative approach for several reasons, particularly because of the nature of the research questions as argued by

Creswell (1998), and because I saw an urgent need to present a detailed view of my research topic (Creswell, 1998). Furthermore, since the interpretivism paradigm is the prism through which this study was conducted, and because comprehensive internationalization means different things to different institutions, this qualitative research endeavor used a multiple case study approach to further explore internationalization activities at striving institutions (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Creswell, 2013; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003).

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This research study utilized a multiple case study approach to better understand the role that presidential leadership plays in comprehensive internationalization efforts at striving universities (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2003). Creswell (1998) defined a case study as an exploration of a “bounded system” or case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context (p.61). Creswell also argued that a multiple case study is one in which one issue or topic of study is selected with multiple case studies to illustrate the phenomenon or area of study (Creswell, 2007). Yin (2003) noted that when a researcher decides to pursue a multiple case study, he can analyze the data within each situation and across different scenarios. He later added that the evidence a researcher can gather from a multiple case study is often considered more compelling, making the overall research experience more robust (Yin, 2017). Baxter and Jack (2008) argued that a multiple case study allows the researcher to study multiple cases to understand the similarities and differences between each situation.

### **Case Selection**

Yin (2009) argued that the irrelevance of statistical analysis in qualitative studies allows researchers to be more creative in dealing with sampling matters. My sampling consisted of four case studies, conducted at four public, R1 universities across the United States. As a qualitative study, the focus of this research was not to depict representativeness or to create techniques for drawing a probability sample (Newman, 2010). Instead, the study aimed to address how a small sample of four institutions can illuminate comprehensive internationalization as the phenomenon being studied (Ishak & Bakar, 2014). Moreover, I employed a purposive sampling strategy for this study. Creswell and Guetterman (2019) defined purposeful sampling as the intentional selection of participants and sites for collecting data. Ishak and Bakar (2014) asserted that purposive or judgmental sampling is the more acceptable sampling procedure for qualitative research, particularly when it involves selecting participants for special situations. Therefore, the rationale used to gain in-depth knowledge and understanding of the role of presidential leadership in internationalization at striving institutions is summarized below.

First, I used the Carnegie Classification's public access file to identify universities that moved from high research activity to very high research activity in the last decade. The findings indicated that 37 institutions have risen in research rankings since 2010. All four institutions in Table 1 followed the trend of moving from high research activity to very high research activity. O'Meara (2007) argued that striving institutions often emphasize strong research activities. Second, this study aimed to identify universities with strong internationalization records. Completion of the ACE Internationalization Laboratory or receiving prestigious awards such as the Senator Paul Simon Award for Campus Internationalization or the IIE (Institute of International Education) Award for Innovation in International Education served as eligible criteria for this study. Criterion sampling works well when all individuals studied represent

people who have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 1998). Finally, presidents' tenure was considered, given their roles and contributions to this research study. Of the 37 universities on Carnegie's list, only 4 institutions met the criteria above.

Moreover, since this data was not gathered anonymously, I collected, analyzed, and reported it without compromising the identities of the participants and their institutions (Kaiser, 2009). Also, I removed all identifiers to create a "clean" data set, which encompasses the intentional removal of information that identifies participants or their institutions (Kaiser, 2009). Furthermore, specific quotations and examples that could have revealed participants' identities were modified for confidentiality purposes (Kaiser, 2009). Finally, to safeguard all participants' identities, I assigned pseudonyms to institutions represented in this study and replaced the names of the presidents with alternate identifiers that have no relationship with participants, their institutions, or historical backgrounds. The names of the universities in this study and their respective presidents are listed in Table 1 below. All other participants in this research study were identified only by title.

**Table 1**

*Striving Universities with Strong Internationalization Records*

Institution	Leadership	Tenure Dates	Internationalization Award	Student Enrollment	U.S. Region	Carnegie Classification
Buffet State U.	Henry Parker	2019-Present	Simon Award	20,000-30,000	Midwest	VHRA
Chip State U.	Winston Mueller	2012-Present	Simon Award	15,000-20,000	East Coast	VHRA
Solou State U.	Joseph Cottard	2014-Present	Simon Award	20,000-25,000	East Coast	VHRA
Kali State U.	Michael Rainey	2016-Present	Simon Award	30,000-40,000	South	VHRA

*Note.* VHRA = Very High Research Activity



All four institutions in Table 1 have a strong record of comprehensive internationalization at their respective campuses. I have summarized below some of the institutions' internationalization efforts.

Buffett State University's mission statement is to "change lives and communities through the power of discovery, learning, and creative expression in a welcoming environment". The university was one of two institutions in the United States to receive the Senator Paul Simon Award for comprehensive internationalization a few years ago. The Paul Simon Award recognizes colleges and universities that are making significant, well-planned, well-executed, and well-documented progress toward comprehensive internationalization (NAFSA, n.d.). Buffett State's strategic planning priorities include global competitiveness, which aims to advance the university's impact and reach as a leading international university. Also, as stated on the university's strategic planning website, Buffett State's efforts to enhance the university's global competitiveness focus on continuing a trajectory of increasing the enrollment of international students and providing a high-quality global education for all students. Buffett also participated in the ACE Internationalization Lab a few years ago. This signals a strong commitment to comprehensive internationalization.

Although Chip State University received NAFSA's Senator Paul Simon Award for Comprehensive Internationalization almost two decades ago, its commitment to internationalization remains strong. The university's six strategic priorities include internationalization, which aims to support, promote, and enhance strategic internationalization efforts through high-impact learning, teaching, research, and engagement. Specifically, the university hopes to sustain the following: a) actively promote the integration of international students on campus, b) promote meaningful cross-cultural, extra, and co-curricular interactions

between domestic and international students, c) prepare international students for successful career pathways, d) ensure students, faculty, staff, and alumni have a positive impact on the global community, e) ensure all students, faculty, and staff have opportunities to develop a broader understanding of the world and e) making Chip State University the premier choice for international students from around the globe.

Solou State University was one of five institutions in the United States to receive the Senator Paul Simon Award for Comprehensive Internationalization. The university's president, Joseph Cottard, is widely known as a staunch supporter and a champion of internationalization in the academy. The university's mission statement states that faculty, staff, and students commit to creating a "diverse and inclusive culture that advances education and prosperity for all." This will be done by advancing high-impact research and by leading transformation at Solou State and the world through local, state, and global engagement. Solou State's 2020 strategic plan expressed a vision for global engagement and the plan's five strategic goals include advancing international activity and global engagement. The university hopes to achieve this goal through the following objectives: a) promoting international partnerships in education, research, outreach, and economic development that benefit the university's constituents and the state, b) integrating global themes broadly into the curriculum, and c) creating an integrated administrative infrastructure to promote global engagement and awareness.

Kali State University articulates a vision dedicated to student success by preparing learners to be ethical leaders for a diverse and globally competitive workforce. The university's mission statement includes a commitment to enhancing the cultural and economic development of the state, nation, and the world. The university was one of five institutions of higher education to receive the Senator Paul Simon Award for Comprehensive Internationalization from NAFSA

several years ago. Kali's strategic plan for 2025 encompasses three strategic priorities tied to student success and scholarship. The first priority (educate and empower a diverse student body) touches on various internationalization initiatives, among other things. This priority clearly articulated Kali State University's need to recruit globally and grow enrollment, increase international education and collaborative program opportunities, broaden students' global perspectives, and prepare them for global leadership.

### **Methodological Procedures**

#### **Participants**

To fully understand the role of presidential leadership in internationalization at striving universities, I referenced the ACE model for comprehensive internationalization. For ACE, campus internationalization requires deep, pervasive, intentional, long-term change that alters the culture of the institution by changing underlying assumptions and overt institutional behaviors, processes, and structures (Heyl & Hunter, 2019). The model is the guiding principle that I used to conduct semi-structured interviews on campus with presidents, chief academic officers or provosts, Senior International Officers, and faculty members at each of the four institutions represented in Table 1.

These individuals were selected because of the critical role they play in campus internationalization. In referencing Flick (2009), Ishak and Bakar (2014) suggested that individuals or cases are selected as participants for a qualitative study not because they represent their population but owing of their relevance to the research topic. Moreover, the semi-structured interviews added the flexibility to ask additional or follow-up questions to interview participants. As Kallio and colleagues (2016) noted, one main advantage of semi-structured interviews is that it enables reciprocity between the interviewer and participants, which allows the researcher to

improvise follow-up questions based on participants' responses. A sample list of questions is listed in Appendix B.

### **Sources of Data**

Although the semi-structured interviews with campus leaders such as the presidents, provosts, Senior International Officers, and faculty members served as the primary sources of data, as Yin (2018) stated, no single source of data had a complete advantage over other methods of collecting data. Yin argued that a good case study needs to rely on multiple sources of evidence. Therefore, I analyzed publicly available documents from each of the institutions listed in my research study. The document analysis included strategic plans, university websites, vision, and mission statements, student mobility reports including international students, scholars, and study abroad participants, and presidential statements related to internationalization. Also, the variety and diversity of data in this study provided reliable triangulation (Patton, 2002; Ravitch & Carl, 2015).

Site visits were conducted at each of the four institutions listed in this study. According to Yin (2018), a case study taking place in a real-world setting creates the opportunity for direct observation because of social and environmental conditions. This includes campus tours, observations of meetings, and space dedicated to programming such as an international cultural center, where meaningful interactions occur between international and domestic students. As Yin mentioned, the condition of the immediate environment or workplaces may indeed suggest something about the culture of an organization.

### **Data Analysis**

The first step in the analysis of the data was to follow the ACE model for Comprehensive Internationalization as the conceptual framework that led to the case study of internationalization

at striving universities and the role that presidential leadership plays (Yin, 2018). Indeed, this approach helped organize the entire analysis, while pointing to relevant contextual conditions that needed to be described as well as explanations that needed examination. I read through all the collected information to obtain a sense of the overall data (Creswell, 1998). Then, I used Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) to establish initial codes and identify relevant themes (Creswell, 2013; Ravitch & Carl, 2015). Moreover, the vertical analysis of each institution in this research was juxtaposed alongside the ACE model for comprehensive internationalization to better understand the role of presidential leadership in campus internationalization. Finally, a horizontal analysis was done to get a sense of the intersectionality across all the different sites of study. A sample list of initial codes is listed in Appendix C.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

A few limitations were found in this study. First, the intentional sampling of striving institutions with an internationalization record created the perception of campus-wide internationalization as a one-size-fits-all initiative. However, as previously noted by scholars, the approach to internationalization differs from one institution to the next. Second, the purposeful sampling of the institutions in this research study likely motivated participants to speak highly about the universities they represent (McCormack, 2013). Moreover, my active role as a Senior International Officer at a large flagship university likely influenced this research since I stood on the belief that internationalization should be an existential priority for the higher education community. Furthermore, the different geographic locations of the study sites presented an authenticity and reliability challenge for this research. Finally, each site was relatively distant from my residence, making it less feasible to invest adequate time at each location for

meaningful observations. The Presidents' hectic schedules also made it nearly impossible to invest significant time at the sites for more intimate conversations and further observations.

### **Trustworthiness**

Since the interpretive paradigm that I used solicited the understanding of meaning construction in social contexts, the quality standard in this research paradigm is trustworthiness (Al Riyama, 2015). Trustworthiness consists of credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, as cited in Al Riyama, 2015). To achieve this, I employed several strategies, including diversifying the data source to create triangulation, as previously mentioned (Patton, 2002). I utilized the member-checking tool to ensure credibility. Birt and colleagues (2016) defined member checking as a Technique for exploring the credibility of results. This involves returning data or results to participants to check for accuracy and resonance with their experiences. Also, visiting each research site made it possible to draft field notes, reflexive journals, and photos. This practice aimed to strengthen the reliability of my observations as the researcher. The outlined protocol facilitated confirmability in this study. Lincoln and Guba (1989) define confirmability as the process of assuring data, interpretation, and outcomes are rooted in the contexts and persons concerned.

### **Statement of Positionality**

As the Senior International Officer (SIO) and Executive Director of International Programs at a large flagship institution, I was interested in this research enterprise. However, I was also acutely aware that my interest in this topic created positionality challenges that needed to be addressed in this section. First, I have a long-standing commitment to ensuring that students have diverse opportunities to learn about the world and transform themselves. It is my strong belief that these learning opportunities should compel students to reflect upon how their

personal lives and careers are intimately tied to a diverse global community. Second, as a former international student in the United States, I tend to cast international education as a value add for the academy. I believe that global education is paramount to student learning, as it impacts student success outcomes. Finally, I understand that my position as a former international student and an international educator at a large institution may have created research bias.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I briefly outlined the purpose of this study. I also provided a detailed roadmap for the study, which included the methodology, conceptual framework, participants, trustworthiness, and positionality challenges. Moreover, I noted that a multiple case study approach that used the interpretivism paradigm was the prism through which this study was explored. Finally, additional information regarding interview questions and initial codes is listed in the appendices below.

## Chapter 4: Research Findings

In the sections below, I reviewed the profiles of presidents and their respective institutions, followed by a brief overview of each university's international context and a themed summary of their priority areas in internationalization. I concluded this chapter with a cross-site analysis of presidential leadership in advancing and sustaining internationalization. This research study aimed to explore Internationalization at Striving Universities and the Role of Presidential Leadership. As noted previously, striving was defined as institutions in pursuit of prestige within the academic hierarchy (O'Meara, 2007). The following research questions guided this study:

1. What is the role of the President in advancing and sustaining comprehensive internationalization at a striving university?
2. What kind of presidential support does the Senior International Officer (SIO) believe is critical to high-level internationalization at their institution?
3. What are the Presidents' priority activities for internationalization at a striving institution?

During the data-collection phase that lasted two months, I visited all four institutions in my research study and interviewed a total of 16 university administrators and faculty. This included Presidents, Provosts, Senior International Officers, and tenured faculty members. Also, I addressed possible limitations to this study in Chapter 3, which included the purposeful sampling of institutions with strong internationalization records. I noted that purposeful sampling can create limitations to the generalizability of campus internationalization as a one-size-fits-all (Maxwell, 2013). Moreover, I clarified earlier that internationalization differs from one institution to the next (De Wit, 2002), although all four universities in my study have similarities as public, R1 campuses. Having said that, it makes logical sense to arrange the themed summary



of Presidents' priority areas by site. The data collection process and analysis also resulted in a clear identification of internationalization themes that are unique to each institution.

### **Presidential and Institutional Profile of Kali State University**

As Kali State University's 17<sup>th</sup> President, Michael Rainey is the first chief administrator at this institution to serve as department chair, dean, and provost, before becoming president. A mathematician by training, President Rainey emphasized student success and scholarship support. Since he was appointed President, the university has been recognized as a top 10 institution in the nation for study abroad participation by the Institute of International Education (IIE). During his nine years as the chief administrator, the US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) also recognized Kali State as a Fulbright HSI Leader in 2021 and 2022. President Rainey currently serves on the board of Directors of International Educational Consortiums. One of President Rainey's greatest attributes is his ability to lead with conviction. In his opening statement about the importance of internationalization, he eloquently noted that:

Students today will work and live in a very globally connected world. They need to have the skills that enable them to interact with different cultures and appreciate the benefits and viewpoints that come from a broad perspective. When we speak of internationalization, that refers to our priority to make sure our students come out of this university with the qualities and the state of mind that will enable them to succeed in a very global world. Most likely, they will find themselves working for companies and in places where people come from all corners of the globe, and they need to have the skills and the quality of mind to succeed in that environment.

A few years ago, Kali State University earned Carnegie R1 status, which recognized the university as a tier-one institution with “very high research activity”. This recent classification qualified Kali State as a striving university in my study. Today, this public institution enrolls between 30,000 and 40,000 students, hailing from almost all US states and over 100 countries. As of fall 2023, more than 3,000 international students were enrolled at the university. In 2019, the university officially became a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), which further solidified its rich diversity of cultures and backgrounds. In its most recent enrollment census, the students were 52% White, 26% Hispanic, and 5% Black or African American. Other races such as American Indians, and native Hawaiians represented about 17% of the total enrollment population. While the university’s student body is quite diverse, it is important to note that over 80% of the institution’s total enrollment population came from within the State, with 19.7% of students hailing from within 100 miles of the university community. Another important fact is that the four-year graduation rate was at 50% while the six-year graduation rate stood at 64%. Moreover, about one-third of the university’s first-year class of 2023 identified as first-generation. The total number of faculty members as of 2023 was about 1900, and this included both full-time teaching faculty members and adjuncts.

### **Institution’s International Context**

Although the President at Kali State University was widely known in his community as a staunch advocate for campus-wide internationalization, the university’s commitment to international education preceded the current leadership by at least 100 years. The President, Michael Rainey referred to the university's first leader when he noted the following:

The school was established over a century ago. At the very first convocation, our then-president said that everything that we do should be done on a large scale. This is a nation

that lends itself to greatness. Let our thoughts be immense thoughts and large thoughts.

Let our thinking be in global terms.

That leadership vision dating back to a century ago has now resulted in a campus and community-wide embrace and appreciation for international education at this institution. As President Rainey noted, “Prioritizing internationalization is not one person’s decision. People at Kali State have seen the value of internationalization and the cultural enrichment it brings to this community.” The president quickly acknowledged the importance of internationalization and its impact on the academic mission of US universities. As he humbly pointed out, “the majority of the great research institutions in the United States rely heavily on international students and the intellectual capital that they contribute to the academic apparatus.” In the case of Kali State University’s Mechanical Engineering department, the President said that 70% of the student body is international.

Indeed, the university’s strategic plan has three priorities, according to the President. The first is to educate and empower the diverse student body, and as he pointed out, the university has done well in its ability to recruit a diverse student body, having gone from 30,000 to 40,000 students between 2010 and 2020, with most of the growth being Hispanic students. President Rainey noted that “diversity has many dimensions and internationalization is one element of that diverse experience.” He further argued that many students who cannot go to another country to study or travel will have an international experience by virtue of their interactions with international students on campus. Kali State University understands that international students add to the diversity of the campus in a very significant way, and as the President mentioned, that benefits all the students with whom they encounter. It is against this backdrop that support for internationalization initiatives has become a gold standard at this institution.

## **Presidential Leadership in Internationalization**

### **Supporting International Students**

In articulating strong support for international students, President Rainey referenced Politicians whom he said need to understand that foreign students are a great economic benefit to this country. He noted that these students come to Kali State to become members of the community, and while enrolled at the university, they invest their dollars into the institution, the city, and the State. A recent Open Doors Report from the Institute of International Education (IIE) corroborates the President's statement on the economic benefit of international students in the United States. According to IIE, foreign students contributed over 40 billion dollars to the US economy and over \$2 billion in his State during the 2022-2023 academic year (Institute of International Education, 2023). While President Rainey values the economic impact of international students at Kali State University, he believes that focusing on optics and revenue is not an honorable reason to recruit. Leaders at Kali State are intrinsically motivated by the presence of international students because they enrich the university's academic and cultural reputation. Indeed, the Office of Global Affairs, which is housed in the International Center, hosts several programs that focus on creating a sense of community for international students at the institution. President Rainey acknowledges that:

When you recruit international students, you must recognize that they will bring special needs to this campus. Our Community of Scholars Program (CSP) provides resources for international students across all disciplines. Building a supportive, inclusive community is very important to promoting internationalization. The recruitment of international students is a very competitive market and international students have an abundance of

choices in terms of where they want to study. So, your reputation is important. Our experience has been that students who come here love it for the sense of family.

That sense of community was recently exemplified by three former international students who attended Kali State and are now respectively serving as deans, doctors, and entrepreneurs in the US. Their experiences and sense of belonging at the university inspired them enough to establish an endowment to support international students, according to the President. The Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs who has direct oversight of the Office of Global Affairs proudly noted that the institution is investing heavily at the undergraduate and graduate level to provide more support and resources for international students to help foster success.

For instance, at the undergraduate level, the university is taking a very integrated approach to serving students, learning about them and their needs, and having more staff and people in their sphere, according to the Provost. At the graduate level, the university is making similar investments. Recently, they agreed to put 3 million dollars into their health insurance program to help in the recruitment and retention of graduate students. Both the President and Provost acknowledged that the issue of health insurance disproportionately impacts international students who typically do not have access to quality healthcare while in the United States, especially when they bring dependent family members such as a spouse and children.

In addition, the Provost touted further investments that the university is currently making to ensure international students have full access to critical resources 365 days a year. He referenced the lack of transportation in the city, which impacts their ability to purchase food, especially during the holidays when the university is closed. Thus, the Provost noted that thinking about access when working with international students and supporting them in a holistic 360-degree sense is an investment that the university was willing to make. Moreover, the

university's Senior International Officer (SIO) stated that too often, higher education institutions think of internationalization only from an outbound perspective. She argued that internationalization begins at home.

However, to effectively internationalize a campus, one must understand the international student population in terms of who they are, what their needs and strengths might be, and how universities can help them solidify their strengths, said the SIO. Kali State's approach to holistically serving international students exemplifies the importance of having a global presence on campus, as noted by a faculty member in Engineering. The university's ability to provide a very welcoming environment for international students was a particular point of pride for the entire leadership, as noted by the Provost. While the institution understood that internationalization at home was a good first step in the right direction, the leaders at Kali State University placed equal value and importance on global learning and its impact on domestic students.

### **Valuing Global Learning**

While there has been a long history at Kali State of welcoming and training international scientists and visitors, the Provost contended that the push to internationalize the curriculum and to have more study abroad programs stemmed directly from the President. To address global learning as an existential need in society, the university put a high priority on education abroad and internationalizing the curriculum to equip students with the skills and knowledge necessary to live in today's interconnected and interdependent society. The President proudly alluded to the College of Engineering which required every undergraduate student to have a study abroad experience before graduation. Although that program was currently under review because of the financial hardships it often imposed on students and how it conflicted with domestic internships

and Co-ops, the consensus on campus was that studying abroad is an important part of the academic process. President Rainey noted that “across the institution, study abroad is one way to bring one element of global competency in internationalization to the students.”

While the university’s study abroad participation rate was consistent with the national average of 3% (Institute of International Education, 2023), the institution made a substantial effort to encourage participation and invested in education abroad infrastructures. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the university sent over 1400 undergraduate students to several destinations around the world, with more than half the students studying in five countries (four of those located in Europe). The lack of diversity in study-abroad destinations was partly due to the institution’s investment in brick-and-mortar sites overseas, particularly in Europe and Central America. The center in Europe was launched two decades as an integral part of Kali State University’s global vision. Today, the center hosts an average of 400 students annually, as noted by the university’s Senior International Officer (SIO). Likewise, given the institution’s proximity to Central America, the other I alluded to earlier has also become a preferred destination for study abroad. During the 2022-2023 academic year, that center hosted more than 100 undergraduate students from Kali State University.

Moreover, the university’s commitment to global learning is not an isolated investment. As recently as seven years ago, the university’s accrediting body, SACSCOC (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges) required a broad university-wide program as part of the accreditation process. To fulfill this SACS requirement, Kali emphasized international communications as an element of the university’s Quality Enhancement Program (QEP). President Rainey noted that the institutional brand for the QEP was called “communicating in the global society.” Furthermore, to holistically cultivate the students’

multimodal skills and to develop global citizens, the university created the Center for International Communication, which the President touted as a place where faculty can receive special training in curriculum internationalization and students can learn about negotiating global challenges. While the university leadership has done an outstanding job in catalyzing innovative programs to support global learning, the Provost argues that Kali State needed to focus much more on building its global footprint.

### **Growing the International Presence**

As mentioned in the previous section, Kali State University has shown true leadership in establishing global centers in Europe and Central America. While the European campus primarily served as a hub for study abroad, Kali's campus in Central America was a strategic, multipurpose hub that served the university's study abroad students but also conferred degrees to residents in Central America. This was a salient display of presidential leadership that resulted in a 2+2 public-private partnership between the university and entities in that country, according to Kali's Senior International Officer (SIO). Today, the institution is looking to grow this brick-and-mortar campus into a sustainable state in terms of enrollment, according to the Provost. In addition, the university leadership was looking to establish a broader footprint in other parts of the globe. As the Provost and others have mentioned, elevating the institution's global footprint is a top priority that will require leadership and a clear strategy. Although the institution recognized that faculty have played a pivotal role in international research and collaborations, the leadership believed that its scope and scale were beneath expectations, given the institution's size and aspirations as a R1 university. The Provost noted that doing more international work around capacity building and community engagement was an opportunity for Kali, but it had to be done in a strategic and coordinated manner.



The university's aspirations in growing its global footprint in capacity building aligned perfectly with the missions and goals of most public, R1 institutions. Kali strived to promote academic excellence, but the leaders understood that excellence in academic research and teaching came with a social responsibility to make an impact on society and people. However, as the Provost suggested, the primary challenge was identifying a signature geographic area that strategically aligned with the academic strengths of the institution. Most universities with a large international presence and activity have a signature area. The Provost referred to his previous employer, Michigan State University, where he served as dean. MSU is widely known in Academia as a center of excellence in African Studies, having invested time and effort on the continent of Africa for nearly 60 years. Given Kali's geographic location, the President and Provost are mutually in agreement with investing more resources and time in Central and Latin America. However, that investment in a location such as Central America must align with institutional expertise in areas related to food, Agriculture, environment, and rural prosperity. These are widely known as areas of strength at Kali State University. Thus, as the Provost and President stated, identifying a geographic area and partners that can solidify the university's strengths was a priority that cannot be overstated.

### **Presidential and Institutional Profile of Chip State University**

President Winston Mueller assumed his duties in 2012. Before coming to Chip, he served as Provost and Dean at public and private universities on the East Coast. As a Chemical Engineer by training, his focus has been on expanding graduate programs and enrollment, adding academic programs, and elevating the university's global footprint in research and academic partnerships. President Mueller is widely known at his institution as a transparent leader who launched the Road Map, the university's strategic plan that involved more than 400 students,

faculty, staff, alumni, community members, and business leaders. One of his greatest achievements as the chief administrator at Chip State University was the establishment of the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, which recently graduated its first class and received accreditation. In addressing the importance of international education as an existential need in society, President Mueller noted that “understanding the world and teaching it to our domestic students, some of whom have never left the country, is a big priority for us. This makes Chip State University an inviting place for all students. The ability to debate the difficulties of the world is critical to higher education.”

Like other institutions in this study, Chip became a striving university that earned R1 status a few years ago, following its Carnegie classification and label as a university with “very high research activity”. According to its 2023 census data, the university enrolled between 15,000 and 20,000 students, with more than 2500 international students hailing from over 100 different countries. In the institution’s fall 2023 diversity data, students were 53% white, 15% Asian, 12% Hispanic, and 5% Black or African American. Other races such as American Indians or Alaskan natives represented 15% of the total enrollment population. Given the university’s location, it is worth noting that the institution’s black or African-American population is extremely low. Having said that, it is equally important to note that the university’s first-year retention rate which stands at 92% is an impressive record. The national average of retention rates among public universities is only 62%. Students who come to Chip have quickly grown to appreciate the university’s commitment to student success, thanks in part to its world-class faculty members who are committed to providing high-quality teaching experiences at all levels. As of fall 2023, Chip State had 1171 full-time and part-time faculty members on campus.

### **Institution’s International Context**

Chip State University's recently launched strategic plan includes internationalization as its sixth strategic priority. President Mueller underscored several goals and metrics of the global strategy plan. The first goal touts the university as a diverse and inclusive community that actively promotes the integration of international students on campus. The President highlighted success metrics such as the percentage of international students participating in an inclusive, long-standing activity or event coordinated by the university. The second internationalization goal promotes meaningful cross-cultural, extracurricular interactions between domestic and international students, to create opportunities for them to engage. The university also seeks to focus its efforts on preparing international students for successful career pathways. As the President noted, "The institution wants to make sure that international students who choose to study at Chip State have a sense of belonging and the infrastructure that helps them thrive on campus and after graduation".

Moreover, President Mueller underscored the university faculty, staff, and alumni's importance in terms of their impact on the global community. Many alums of the university are now serving in prominent global positions, making it especially important for the institution to maintain ties and relationships with that population, according to Dr. Mueller. Another internationalization goal puts a strong emphasis on making sure all university students, faculty, and staff have opportunities to develop a broader understanding of the world. This includes study abroad, international internships, experiential learning opportunities, and curricular activities. The last goal is about attracting the best and brightest international students and making sure Chip State is a premier choice for them. Indeed, President Mueller touted the significance of this goal in terms of its placement as the last strategic objective on the list. As he humbly noted, at most universities, attracting international students is a top priority. However, at Chip State, the

President makes it very clear that the university is not looking for enrollment only. He acknowledges that the institution will not be successful in attracting international students unless it focuses on creating an inclusive environment that integrates international and domestic students in a meaningful way. As Dr. Mueller modestly noted, this approach is the pathway to making Chip State University a premier choice for international students.

Although the university has always been somewhat committed to internationalization, the Provost noted that the wild card was the pandemic, as it turned a student crisis into a bigger priority. The institution's Roadmap, which is the branded name for the strategic plan is now in its 11<sup>th</sup> year and for seven of those years, internationalization was not a standalone tenet as it is today, according to President Mueller. It was at first merged with community engagement, which most people thought of as local community, and the university was essentially articulating that internationalization was part of community engagement. Like the Provost, Dr. Mueller also perceived the COVID-19 pandemic as the wild card that moved the internationalization needle to the surface as an existential priority for the university. As the President eloquently noted:

Politics in Washington, and the rhetoric against international students, especially Chinese students and scholars, made it important for us to reemphasize the vital component that internationalization plays in the university. The 2016 election and the 2020 pandemic were the wake-up call that we needed.

It is against this historical context that internationalization became the sixth priority of the university's strategic plan. The following sections will address the specific findings at Chip State University.

### **Presidential Leadership in Internationalization**

#### **An Integrated Approach to Internationalization**

A salient finding at Chip State University is the extent to which the leadership seeks to move beyond the optics of attracting international students and scholars to campus and sending students abroad. The university is focused on finding ways to fully integrate internationalization into the institutional apparatus, and they do this in a multifaceted way. First, they argue that it is critical to focus on curriculum internationalization. President Mueller clarified that international needs to permeate all areas of study, not just global history. It should be reflected in political science, economics, business, engineering, human rights, etc. Second, they effectively collaborate with their campus partners and community organizations to create a diverse student and scholar success infrastructure to better integrate and prepare the international community for campus life and career advancement.

In addition to creating spaces where meaningful interactions between domestic and international students can occur, the university's Senior International Officer (SIO) is interested in the opportunities available to international students. His measure of success is primarily based on international students' ability to secure internships, co-ops, campus jobs, and post-graduate employment. Fourth, the university also has its sights set on successful ways to measure the education abroad experience. The SIO stresses the need to focus on institutional barriers preventing undergraduate students from studying abroad. Both he and the Provost referenced credit transfers as they relate to graduation, financial reasons, and other academic roadblocks that prevent students from participating in transformative, experiential learning opportunities abroad.

Moreover, as part of its integrated approach to internationalization, the university appointed a campus liaison for the faculty Fulbright Program. With this new appointment, faculty now have a resource on campus that will guide them through the very complicated nuances of the Fulbright application process. As the Provost proudly noted, having a faculty

liaison for this prestigious program is another aspect of the university's integrated international mobility. Furthermore, the SIO noted that the institution also leans on faculty groups such as the Africa Focus Group to better understand ways to support faculty leaders in internationalization, while utilizing these expert groups to make well-informed decisions on where the university should invest globally. This is precisely the reason why the institution created the campus global directory, which is a platform that allows faculty and staff to share their knowledge and experiences of specific countries of the world. The directory is now serving as an effective tool and guide for faculty who want to engage globally but may not have the knowledge or experience to do so.

The Provost summed up the university's integrated approach to internationalization quite well when he warned against the hollow Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) that many universities count on too often as a measure of success in the internationalization arena. The Provost noted the following:

What I want to see are people. I want to see an impact on people. I want to see students coming here who graduate, who are successful, happy, and integrate themselves into the broader university community. I am very interested in the inbound international students. In terms of the outbound students, we want them to have life-changing experiences abroad. We have a lot of international faculty and we recruit internationally across the university. So, to make their transition here as seamless as possible, we want them to come here, thrive, get tenure, become full professors, and contribute to the research and teaching enterprise.

Indeed, the university's most recent climate survey found that students and faculty feel supported. As the Provost humbly put it "We are here as facilitators of services and support so that our community members' global aspirations are as seamless as possible."

### **Internationalizing through Shared Governance**

A novel finding at Chip State University was the leadership's commitment to shared governance during the strategic planning process for internationalization. The consensus among the leaders is that the structure of the university roadmap is one of the key elements that has made the internationalization efforts on campus successful and sustainable. The university has groups of 12 faculty and staff members that sit on steering committees for each of the priorities of the strategic plan, and the institution also has co-chairs for each one of the six priorities. The Provost and the Senior International Officer are charged with co-chairing the internationalization priority, which is a high-level commitment that signals that campus-wide internationalization is not an afterthought at Chip State. Moreover, the SIO noted that the President meets with co-chairs regularly, and steering committee meetings take place every other month. He further argued that reports from committees are transparent and published; initiatives are brainstormed collectively, and funding proposals can be submitted by any member of a committee. In addition, the Senior International Officer argued that the voices of interested stakeholders such as administrators, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community members can be heard.

Furthermore, the SIO and Provost pointed directly to the President's active engagement with the internationalization plan. While this may be a daunting task for most university leaders, at Chip State, the President meets with co-chairs of the roadmap initiatives every two months to evaluate progress, offer input, and get critical feedback from members. Also, as part of the university's commitment and interest in shared governance, the President noted that the

institution has 6 steering committee meetings a year where at each one, one of the strategic parties such as the internationalization committee, gives a 45-minute presentation on progress and work that was done in the previous year. The success of the internationalization plan depended largely on the President's core belief that university-wide strategic planning should be a collaborative effort. In his own words, "It has to be that the campus wants it and it should be a bottom-up approach."

Finally, Dr. Mueller touted the acquisition of a million-dollar fund from the university's foundation, which is entirely designed to support the internationalization priority listed on the roadmap. The President also alluded to the accountability that comes with shared governance and funding appropriations. He referred to the strategic planning website which has metrics, numbers, objectives, and other activities. In his own words, "not meeting the goals lets people down", especially when the entire process has been fair, transparent, and fully funded by the university. The university's SIO added that the President's vision is very collaborative in that he sets the high-level target of the internationalization agenda and the steering committee executes while leaving open clear lines of communication with him. Indeed, the inclusive manner in which the President has led the internationalization charge created strong enthusiasm and allowed participation of the campus and a community that has benefitted tremendously from this process.

### **Creating Global Centers to Make an Impact**

When the dean of the College of Engineering at Chip State University realized that the demand for post-graduate education in STEM fields in the United States is on the rise and isn't likely to dwindle anytime soon, he requested seed funding in the amount of \$300,000 annually from the President to forge relationships with 10 institutions in Southeast Asia. This forward-



thinking proposal has now resulted in the creation of strategic partnerships and centers in India, according to President Mueller who fully supported this innovative and novel idea. The vision behind the launch of centers is to avail opportunities to leverage the university's strengths and expertise in some academic areas with equal partners who are committed to making an impact on society and people. Today, the Center of Excellence in Data Science that Chip State established at a university in India is serving that purpose. The SIO mentioned that a faculty member at Chip State and his peer at the institution in India are co-chairing that center.

This creative approach to global partnerships has facilitated and streamlined travel to and from India, webinars, conferences, exchanges, and knowledge sharing between the respective institutions. Another center that Chip State recently launched at another institution in Southeast Asia, is primarily focused on design thinking. Like the India campus, this center has created meaningful partnerships and collaborations between faculty and staff, the SIO noted. President Mueller stated that the novel approach to partnerships and centers in India has had a positive impact on the university after three years of heavy investments in the project. The Provost who came into his role one year after the initiative was launched noted that the program has paid off in an enormous growth in the number of Indian and South Asian students who come to Chip State to study at all levels, especially at the masters and PhD categories. Indeed, the program's success recently led to a modest increase in the annual seed funding of \$300,000. The SIO who is one of the key players in the project, emphasized the importance of internationalization as a noble profession that allows the institution to make an impact globally, do good work in the world, and be known as a university that matters to society.

### **Presidential and Institutional Profile of Buffet State University**

Henry Parker was named the 13<sup>th</sup> President of Buffett State University in 2019. He is the only other president in this study to serve as Provost at the same institution before becoming the chief administrator. He is known at this university as an advocate for student success, and his commitment to college affordability and access has resulted in nationally recognized initiatives to boost student retention, graduation rates, and academic achievements. As Provost and President, he has been at the forefront of expanding Buffett State's global presence and the recruitment and promotion of more diverse faculty. He is also credited for helping the university attract world-renowned leaders in critical academic fields such as aviation, engineering, brain health, and peace and conflict studies. As a historian by training, President Parker believes that internationalization is a powerful learning opportunity. In his opening statement, he noted the following:

I was born and raised in a farming community in Kansas but because of various things happening, I was exposed to international and it really shaped my life, and I can attest personally to the power of international education to shape one's life. I think in a place like this one, we will run a study abroad program and it will be the first time some of these students have been on a plane. I think that's a real learning experience that you are not going to get in any other setting.

Having recently earned R1 status, Buffett State University was the latest institution in my study to qualify as a striving university with "very high research activity", according to the Carnegie Classifications, which moved the institution into a very prestigious group of the top 146 research universities in the United States. The institution's designation as a top research university may have contributed to its enrollment boost, which resulted in modest growth since the fall of 2022. As of today, the university's enrollment on the main Buffett State campus stands between 20,000

and 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students. The total number of enrolled students does not include data from other campuses across the State. According to the university's institutional research office, 77% of the enrolled students are state residents, and a little over 2,000 students identify as foreign nationals or international students. The same data source reported a 79% retention rate as of fall 2023. Moreover, data from the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) suggests that 68% of students identify as White, 8% as Black or African American, 4% as Hispanic, and 2.5% as Asian. Furthermore, about 25% of the student population also identifies as first-generation students.

### **Institution's International Context**

Buffett State University is perhaps the boldest and most aspirational of all the institutions in my study. This is not because the university has an advantage or resources that others don't have. Instead, the institution's recent history may have influenced the leadership's decision-making process regarding internationalization initiatives. Between 2012 and 2014, 11% of the university's enrollment was international. This was when the Saudi scholarship was a magnet and a lucrative attraction for most US universities. According to President Parker, Buffett State enrolled more Saudis during those years than any other institution in the country. Saudi enrollment contributed significantly to the university's financial health and stability. When the King Abdulaziz scholarship ended in 2016, Buffett State went from 800 enrolled Saudis on campus to 80 in two years.

As expected, that drastic decline in enrollment from a reliable source such as the Saudi Government, was an enormous financial hit for the institution, especially when most international students (90%) at Buffett State were Saudi nationals. President Parker's biggest takeaway from this very challenging time at the institution was not to give up entirely on the

unpredictable and unstable international arena, but rather, to think critically about internationalizing the campus in a fiscally sustainable way. Despite its challenging past, the university remained committed to campus internationalization as a core tenet of the institution. Indeed, the university included an “international presence” as one of the six priorities outlined in the strategic plan.

As articulated by the Provost, the internationalization priority has three main objectives. First, to promote further internationalization of Buffett State University. Second, to develop and support an overall university structure for domestic study-away experiences, and third, to increase the number of students, faculty, and administrators who engage in education abroad and study away, and who pursue prestigious scholarships and fellowships in that realm. The state of internationalization at Buffett State is stronger today than ever before, thanks in part to the university’s efforts in balancing international enrollment by diversifying countries of origin. In the following sections, I discussed the core findings at Buffett State University.

### **Presidential Leadership in Internationalization**

#### **Valuing and Diversifying Study Abroad**

The COVID-19 pandemic was undeniably a once-in-a-lifetime crisis for higher education, especially in the international education sphere. When most US universities rushed to close or cancel study abroad programs overseas, Buffett State University remained unencumbered by the crisis. The institution was one of very few universities that did not discontinue education abroad programs during COVID, according to the university’s Senior International Officer (SIO) and Vice President for Global Affairs. Although this was done on a much smaller scale, the institution remained committed to sending students to overseas destinations that had the infrastructure and capacity to ensure students’ safety. Those campuses

included Europe and Latin America, all of which are brick-and-mortar places that Buffett State established several years ago to boost its global aspirations.

For Buffett State, the pandemic was also an opportunity to rebuild and re-imagine education abroad with new strategies, said the Senior International Officer. The institution sends on average about 1500 undergraduate students a year to several destinations around the world. While that number is on par with most institutions of the same size, it is important to note that 50% of students who study abroad, choose the Europe campus as a destination. Second, about 70% of all the students who study overseas are from two out of 10 colleges – Arts and Architecture, according to the SIO. This discrepancy in numbers (too many eggs in the same basket) is all too familiar for Buffett State, the institution that once had 90% of its international students coming from one country (Saudi Arabia). To avoid history from repeating itself, the university is trying to rectify its study abroad discrepancy by offering more international destinations for students. The SIO is focused on finding study-abroad destinations that align with the students' academic trajectories. However, engaging more students and diversifying the destinations will require more effort on the part of the administration in terms of creating an infrastructure that incentivizes the students to participate.

The university Provost who argued that nothing is more important to her than creating global citizens, was looking for ways to make education abroad a requirement for all programs at Buffett State, although there are currently two programs that require study abroad before graduation. The Provost was also searching for ways to offer more scholarship opportunities for education abroad, especially when 35% of the undergraduate population are high-need students. Indeed, as part of its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of running a study abroad program in Italy, the Office of International Education is partnering with the Foundation Office to create a fundraising

campaign to establish an endowment for study abroad, according to the SIO and the Provost. The SIO also noted that the university's goal is to raise \$20 million in the next five years, which would avail a million dollars a year for scholarship funding. As of fall 2023, the university had raised \$4.5 million and is set to meet its goal by 2027. This strategic partnership with the Foundation unit exemplifies Buffett State's commitment to education abroad. As President Parker noted, the university has not done a good job in internationalizing the curriculum but has had tremendous success at attracting students to study abroad, and the administration has worked diligently to build scholarships so that income was not the determinant of who goes and who doesn't.

The institution's commitment to global education was grounded in the administration's belief that the world should be an inclusive space where knowledge and ideas can be shared in a way that creates understanding and peace. As the Provost put it:

We can have a meaningful life, but when we raise our heads, when we look at other people, when we look them in the eyes, we have conversations, we have relationships, we understand more of the culture and the history. It will change the world. The world that I want my son to inherit must be people coming together and it must be us working together, believing in each other, creating a world that has meaning for everyone. It is the thing that matters the most.

While creating a space and programs that challenge students' global competency skills is important to the Provost, its significance to Buffett State cannot be overstated, given the university's location – a very rural county that lacks diversity. President Parker who is a strong advocate for education abroad and internationalization underscored the importance of studying

abroad when he drew from his own experience as a young student who grew up in a very rural county. The President stated that:

A really powerful part of the learning process is to be around people who have different practices, different ways of thinking, and different beliefs. When I lived abroad, I experienced that growth and even if you don't study abroad at our university, you are going to end up being in a small study group or sitting next to an international student. And, I think there's a lot of learning that takes place.

The university's success in internationalizing the campus stems partly from the administration's poise and leadership in building a strong infrastructure and an inclusive community.

### **Building a Supportive Culture**

Creating a supportive and nurturing culture on campus is unequivocally one of the most important pillars of the overall success and well-being of university students. From an internationalization perspective, the SIO warned that too often, universities rely on the optics of enrolled international students on campus and the number of students going abroad as a measure of success. He argued that having many international students does not make a university an international campus. To begin to understand why culture matters, you must first recognize and understand your surroundings, according to the university's Senior International Officer who adamantly pointed out that institutional culture cannot be changed with a strategic plan – it must start from the base, especially if you are not in a cosmopolitan environment.

Moreover, the SIO argued that Buffett State University has come a long way in terms of embracing and supporting internationalization and he sees this incremental change as a fundamental indicator of success. As the Senior International Officer at his institution, his definition of culture cannot be generalized to the rest of the population, but it can be measured.

Ten years ago, a Chinese student who wasn't fluent in the English language would upset a faculty member, according to the SIO. Today, the colleges have set up tutoring support for international students and faculty have contributed to turning the presence of non-English speaking international students from disruptive to positive, the SIO added. In referencing the importance of support for the international community, the Provost touted the Division of Student Affairs, which has a staff member who works with students to make sure they remain connected with student life opportunities such as clubs, events, mental health concerns, etc. Also, while reflecting on his first few years as President, Henry Parker noted that the Office of International Education had worked out an agreement with the local driver's license bureau, which came to campus during international orientation to offer training and support on how to get a driver's license or state ID.

Buffett State's SIO also highlighted that for many years, the community questioned the scholarship funding for international students. They believed that a public university such as Buffett State should use taxpayer funding to support state students exclusively. Today, the university leadership and board approved international student scholarships that are comparable to in-state tuition, and this decision has had a tremendous impact on Buffett State's ability to attract, diversify, and retain international students. While the university was never hostile to foreign students, the SIO stated that there is a big difference between neutral and welcoming. However, being a welcoming institution requires buy-in from everyone, not just the international office. Indeed, the Provost noted that all colleges at Buffett State University have a point of contact for internationalization. In her opinion as the institution's chief academic officer, it is impossible to internationalize a university if everything is in one space. She added that internationalization must be in every space and must be a priority for each unit for it to happen.



From an education abroad point of view, the university had 3 faculty members leading courses overseas 10 years ago. Today, the institution has 100 faculty members leading programs abroad, and in places such as Europe, Latin America, and Asia, according to the Provost and the SIO who noted that the internationalization of the faculty is fundamental to the institution because faculty are the linchpins of international education. Although the process of building a supportive culture for internationalization was not a top-down approach, it is important to note that the university's leadership played a critical role in creating an inclusive environment at Buffett State. The Senior Vice President and Provost noted:

We have created a space in a place where students know that they belong and that they are holistically supported. With our international students, we need to make sure they have that support pre-arrival and when they get here. That's important to me. For domestic students, we must build relationships with our partners to know that our students are getting the same. The entire process of supporting students must be infused into the fabric of the institution.

Buffett State's supportive international infrastructure, which led to its nomination as the best university in the United States for global education by the Association of International Educators (NAFSA), is not a unique accomplishment. President Parker humbly noted that:

It's just as much or more reflective of who we are as an institution and who I am as a leader. I have always said that we can't have smoke and mirrors. If we're going to do something, we must legitimately be able to do it, and the X, Y, and Z to get to that must be transparent and easy to navigate. If we say we offer something, we better truly offer it. And, if we say you can do this, then we must make it as easy as possible for students to

do it. That's not just international. That's financial aid. That's choosing a residence hall, etc.

Indeed, the President's position on creating supportive and transparent processes on campus may have given the administration the confidence and desire to elevate the university's footprint on the global stage.

### **Investing in Brick-and-Mortar Campuses Abroad**

One of the boldest and most innovative internationalization initiatives that Buffett State ever spearheaded was the Academy they launched in Latin America. The President, who is a historian of Latin America, wanted the university to export its liberal education overseas, and Latin America was a familiar territory for him, given his ties to the region. Buffett State defines the Academy as a dual-enrollment program offered jointly by Buffett State and a University in Latin America, the same place that the President attended as a researcher for one year. This innovative program that the institution launched five years ago (2018), allows students to complete their first two years of undergraduate study in Latin America while taking Buffett State classes taught in English by Buffett State faculty members. The university leaders stated that the program allows students to earn academic credit from both universities concurrently. At the end of the two years, students earn a Buffet State associate degree and can then choose whether to finish their bachelor's degree at the campus in the US or Latin America, according to the SIO.

The Provost calls the Academy, one of the most humbling accomplishments she's ever been a part of. She noted that being able to take a liberal education to the world is a noble task, and this was the President's brainchild. The program in Latin America was indeed a noble accomplishment because it aimed to provide a smoother pathway to a US education for students in that region. Buffett State argued that the Academy students in Latin America find that their

transition to the U.S. campus is easier for them than for other international students because they are assigned to a Buffett State advisor who works with them during their entire two years in Latin America, which makes them much more familiar with the US style of learning and teaching. While brick-and-mortar US campuses overseas have an unfavorable record of success, Buffett State University's Academy is a gold standard in the field of international education. The university leadership needed to have support and strong familiarity with the landscape in Latin America to make it a success story. In his own words, the President noted:

I knew enough about this region and the institution to know that they would be an amazing partner. I didn't have to be educated on how good these Latin American students would be. I didn't have to be convinced that the partner university would be an appropriate institution to collaborate with.

Indeed, ensuring institutional capacity and sustainability in the international arena requires serious partners and a reliable infrastructure. Buffett State is planning to extend its Latin American model to other parts of the world. The SIO and Provost underscored two strategic goals that the university currently has. The first is to create more campuses abroad, including in places such as Rwanda, where Buffett State is already breaking ground, India, South Korea, Jordan, and more places in South America. The Provost noted that the critical nature of liberal education and its potential impact on the international stage incentivizes the university to seek out opportunities to invest in global campuses. The second priority is to utilize brick-and-mortar campuses overseas as leverage to offer more study-abroad opportunities to students, including those enrolled at Buffett State's regional campuses in the State. The SIO referenced a partnership with the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, which is set to boost education abroad participation for underrepresented students.

### **Presidential and Institutional Profiles of Solou State University**

Known as one of the most prominent university Presidents in the United States, Joseph Cottard is currently serving his second term as Solou State's chief administrator. He is the longest-serving higher education leader in my study, with more than three decades of senior-level presidential leadership and administration at some of the most renowned institutions in the United States. His impressive track record as chief administrator at elite institutions earned him a spot in a popular Magazine's top 10 university presidents in the United States. While his reputation as an effective higher education leader recently became a national debate because of 'some' controversial decisions he made at Solou State University, his colleagues at the institution gave him humble credit for creating the Office of International Affairs, a one-stop shop for international initiatives and programming. President Cottard is a strong "believer in the fact that the world is very small and that we need to participate in a very small world by being part of those international conversations."

A few years ago, Solou State University received a new classification as a R1 research institution. While other universities in my study acknowledge and appreciate the benefits of receiving R1 status, this designation may be more significant to Solou State University because of its standing as the only flagship institution in this study and the State where it is located. Most flagship universities have been labeled as R1 for several decades. Thus, the reputational impact of Solou State's new designation as a campus with "very high research activity" legitimizes and solidifies its status as a flagship university. Although acquiring R1 status typically results in enrollment growth, especially at the graduate level, Solou State University's enrollment downturns have recently become national news.

As of this fall, between 20,000 and 25,000 students were enrolled on campus, which is about 711 less than last year. The university's first-year class this fall was about 4,385, which also dwindled by 270 students compared to fall 2022. Moreover, the most recent data from the Office of International Affairs suggested that the university enrolled 1,212 international students in the fall of 2022, which is a 9% drop from the fall of 2021. In terms of the student demographics, the university is the least diverse institution in my study with a whopping 88% of the student population identifying as White, 3% equally identifying as Black or African American, Hispanic, and Asian. The lack of diversity suggests an overreliance on enrollment from the State where it is located.

### **Institution's International Context**

When Joseph Cottard returned to Solou State University to serve his second term as President, he quickly made it known that the university needed to centralize its international work, according to the institution's Associate Vice President and Executive Director for International Affairs. The SIO and a faculty member in the College of Business stated that the university's international work was siloed and decentralized. The Office of International Programs and Study Abroad was under Academic Affairs, International Recruitment was under Student Life, and employment-based visa processing for faculty, staff, and postdocs, was under the Office of Human Resources. Moreover, to further illustrate the level of decentralization of international work at Solou State, the SIO noted that international research and partnerships were buried within academic departments. There was no coordination and no way for anyone to get help from a single unit on campus, said the SIO.

Therefore, two years after his return, the President created the Office of International Affairs, which is now responsible for the university's global engagement efforts. Both the faculty

member and SIO agreed that the President's decision to bring coordination into global initiatives moved the institution faster towards internationalization because it created synergy and transparency in the process. They argued that the President's first goal as it related to international was to get the entire university on board and to realize that internationalization is a whole university concept that is interrelated and should be woven seamlessly into the fabric of the campus community. President Joseph Cottard thought that centralizing the international work and getting buy-in from all stakeholders was the prerequisite that the institution needed to establish first before promoting Solou State's brand overseas. The SIO and the faculty member concurred with the President's internationalization vision and agreed that it has been impactful for the university.

The President's well-articulated vision for internationalization paved the way for the opening of what became known to community members as global portals. The leadership at the time made a strong argument for the strategic launch of brick-and-mortar campuses overseas. The institution operated one campus in Shanghai and another in Bahrain, thanks to the university's close ties with the Middle East. However, the SIO and the Provost noted that global portals were a fad that died quickly for several reasons, including cost, infrastructure, time commitment, political situations, and the pandemic. While the concept of brick-and-mortar campuses abroad did not last very long, the university leaders noted that it showed Solou State's interest in playing on the global market. This is particularly significant, given the university's location and its standing as the flagship campus of the state. The SIO asserted that the state has a very conservative legislature. They find that they are constantly having to educate them (legislators) about the importance of international education and Solou State's ability and readiness to do work on the global stage.

## **Presidential Leadership in Internationalization**

### **Building International Collaborations**

In referencing Abraham Lincoln who established the Land Grant University, President Cottard articulated that the mission of flagship institutions such as Solou State is to build communities and to make certain that the American dream is available to everyone. Cottard noted that in the international context, the Land Grant universities play a particularly important role in giving the message about American resiliency, and what universities can do to help institutions, especially those in “far-flung” places of the world. He underscored the critical importance of making sure those global institutions also attain their own solidity and opportunities. Indeed, Cottard argues that the notion of a Land Grant university coincides very clearly with the notion of international education, and this is precisely why he’s committed to building international collaborations with institutions and organizations overseas.

The institution’s unfavorable record of success in building campuses abroad quickly shifted the President’s approach to global engagement, although they’ve been asked recently to once again consider brick-and-mortar campuses, according to the Provost. Based on his experience, the President warned against the pursuit of global campuses to internationalize the institution but emphasized the need to build collaborations. During his time as President, he’s been a very strong proponent of partnerships with international universities that include 2+2 arrangements, 3+1s, etc., according to the Executive Vice President and Provost. His track record in building partnerships and collaborations with foreign institutions also includes an agreement with Tianjin University of Finance and Economics in China, which is a 3+1 program that allows Chinese students to study at their home university for three years before matriculating to Solou State, according to the faculty member.

Moreover, given its ties and connection to the Middle East, the university is working to create stronger partnerships with the Royal University for Women in Bahrain, which the President touted as Solou State's umbrella institution. Leaders at Solou State emphasized the need to thoroughly assess potential partnerships and how they can further enhance the university's academic profile. As the President put it, "Any institution such as ours needs to look at what their land grant strengths are, and where are the institutions in which those strengths can be solidified." Furthermore, Cottard noted that it is equally important to identify areas where an institution can be unique, have relationships that are unique, and in which you're not involved in a gaggle of competition. He warned that:

Too often, what happens is that institutions go to the same suspects around the country or the world. I think that those institutions that are going to be most successful are the ones that can identify universities that would have value added to what they're doing, but also in which you're not stumbling over each other with a lot of other institutions.

For Solou State University, areas of interest include the Middle East and South America, according to President Cottard. Also, like some of the institutions in this study, the university believed that strong academic areas such as Agriculture, Forestry, Medicine, Astrophysics, Engineering, and Cyber Security, are areas that the university could leverage to develop a very forward-thinking collaboration with international institutions, according to the President. It is also important to note that strong partnerships with the right institutions can have a significant impact on international enrollment – an area that Solou State desperately needs to grow.

### **Growing the International Student Population**

Like many institutions across the United States, Solou State University experienced a significant drop in international enrollment during the pandemic. The university went from



enrolling over 1800 international students in the fall semester before COVID-19 to barely 1200 in just two years. As a result, the Provost stressed that the institution's recent focus has been largely on international enrollment and outlining a clear strategy to determine the most feasible markets to invest in, and how to improve the recruitment of international students from a tactical standpoint. While a drop in international student enrollment during the pandemic was inevitable because of border closures and visa backlogs, a -33% decrease in foreign students in two years was extremely high. This drastic decline in numbers at Solou State was partly due to the heavy concentration of international students from the Middle East, especially in the College of Engineering which has Petroleum and Civil Engineering – two strong programs that have attracted Middle Eastern students to the university for many years.

Indeed, the SIO acknowledges that the end of funding opportunities such as the King Abdul Aziz scholarship from Saudi Arabia, had a huge impact on the university's ability to retain foreign students. The Provost also added that the previous administration's very strict policies around immigration and the hostile language coming from Washington had an undeniable impact on the decline in international enrollment. According to the Institute of International Education (IIE), new international students in the United States had declined for three straight years following Trump's nomination in 2016. While COVID-19 and the Hostile rhetoric from the Trump administration may have severed the international enrollment outlook, the SIO, and the Provost commended President Cottard's efforts to rebuild and perhaps re-imagine international enrollment management at Solou State. For instance, in the last two years, President Cottard has been much more aggressive in getting the university's board to understand that the future of Solou State depends heavily on international enrollment, according to the SIO.

Recently, the board approved a 10% reduction in tuition rates for international students hailing directly from an articulated partnership agreement such as the 2+2s that I referenced in the previous section. In addition, international students coming from partner institutions also qualify for the same transfer scholarships that in-state students receive. The university's Senior International Officer argues that the reduction in tuition rates for international students is an accomplishment that cannot be overstated, given the very conservative nature of the university board. Moreover, from a recruitment standpoint, the university leaders noted that having an attractive scholarship for international students is a tremendous selling point that allows recruiters to articulate the financial benefits of attending a flagship, R1 research university at a very low cost. As President Cottard noted, focusing on what it is that is distinctive and different about Solou State will be critical as the university revamps and reimagines its international enrollment strategy.

Furthermore, from an operational, political, and fiscal point of view, scholarships built around 2+2 partnership agreements allow international students to go directly into their respective degree programs. The SIO noted that in the past, there was confusion in the colleges because the university's budget structure is based on the students' majors, not necessarily headcount. Thus, international engineering students from 2+2 partner institutions can help alleviate potential friction between the College of Arts and Sciences and Engineering by going directed into their college and bypassing Math and English, which are both taught by CAS.

### **Cross-Site Analysis**

In this section, I will engage in a cross-site analysis of findings related to presidents' approaches to advancing and sustaining comprehensive internationalization at their respective institutions. The review of the internationalization data at each site indicated three very clear

common denominators for internationalization: attracting international students, sending domestic students abroad, and building a global footprint by creating brick-and-mortar campuses overseas or through international collaborations and partnerships. However, the way Presidents exert leadership to influence and execute internationalization initiatives differs from one institution to the next. This is because the priorities are not always the same. Some Presidents placed a strong focus on international student recruitment and retention, while others were much more interested in establishing a global footprint or availing global learning opportunities for students. That said, leaders at all four institutions recognized the importance of creating the right infrastructure and resources for internationalization to succeed. The main backdrops against which Presidents advanced and sustained comprehensive internationalization were the following: organizational structure, funding internationalization initiatives, campus-wide strategic planning, and international travel and lived experiences. I will address each of them in detail in the section below.

### **Presidential Leadership in Advancing and Sustaining Internationalization**

#### **Organizational Structure**

All universities in this study had appointed international education administrators with Vice Provost, Vice President, or Associate Vice Provost titles, which indicated the importance of internationalization in the organizational apparatus. At least three of the four Presidents in this study have explicitly stated that having the right infrastructure is essential to successful internationalization. At Solou State University, the President was the brainchild behind the creation of the Office of International Affairs, which now oversees all global engagement efforts on behalf of the university. The President wanted to create synergy and transparency in the internationalization process, which is why the centralization of all international work was touted

by faculty, staff, and students as a successful decision. The international office that he created now includes global affairs administration, advancement, education abroad, international student and scholar services, and sponsored services. With five critical units under its umbrella, the office is now comprised of 25 staff members with various backgrounds and expertise.

Likewise, at Kali State University, the President also saw the benefit that internationalization brings to campus, the state, and the nation but he realized that it is more than just talking about its importance. He argued that it must be reflected in the resources you provide. The President noted that having a separate physical facility (the International Center) sends a very strong message. The Office of Global Affairs at Kali which is housed in the state-of-the-art International Center included ten comprehensive units and a total of 44 staff and faculty members whose work ranged from study abroad to international grants and partnerships. The SIO at Kali noted that one of the things that makes their job enjoyable is having the full support of the President and Provost.

At other institutions such as Buffett State University, leaders made a strategic decision to upgrade the title of the SIO from Executive Director to Vice President for International Education. This title change brings more visibility and relevance to the work of internationalization on campus. Moreover, the Provost stressed the urgent need to create an AVP position to bring administrative support to the current SIO by way of succession planning. While the Provost praised the staff in the Office of International Education, she argued that they are focused on their respective areas, which makes it essential to create an AVP FTE that can support the day-to-day operation and the planning for future initiatives.

### **Funding Internationalization Initiatives**

All Presidents in this study concurred with the need to create adequate funding to support internationalization programs and initiatives. As Joseph Cottard mentioned, you cannot run international programs on the “cheap.” Indeed, this is precisely why Chip State University’s President spent more money on internationalization than any other initiative or program on campus. As noted in the previous sections, the President invested \$1,000,000 to fund the university's internationalization strategic plan. Dr. Mueller also touted available funding for international enrollment, including a 300,000-dollar annual investment in global centers, which the dean of Engineering spearheaded as a strategic initiative that aimed to create partnerships to boost international graduate enrollment at the university. A striking finding at Chip State was the President’s approach to supporting funding requests. In his own words, “I have used the practice of giving them more money than they asked for to make them feel obligated.”

Buffett State University also exerted strong leadership in funding internationalization initiatives. The Office of International Education recently launched a partnership with the Foundation Office to create a 20-million-dollar endowment for study abroad scholarships. This five-year plan is set to expire in 2027 but the university has already raised \$4.5 million, which is an impressive start for a program that was launched in the fall semester of 2023. In addition, the leadership worked diligently to create scholarship opportunities for international undergraduate students. Moreover, the SIO recently requested a whopping 6-million-dollar investment in global initiatives, and the university signed off on the request. The SIO noted that the President has always supported internationalization initiatives by funding them appropriately, but also provides the tools and resources they need to succeed. He argued that his support is all that a President needs to do.

Furthermore, Michael Rainey, Kali's President, shared his \$3 million commitment to the enhancement of the graduate health insurance program. Both he and the Provost recognized that inadequate health insurance impacts international students disproportionately and creates student retention challenges. The Provost also noted that the rhetorical support for internationalization aligned quite well with the resources available. He referenced the funding opportunities for faculty engagement in building an international curriculum into their instruction, research, or outreach activities, and awards. The Provost further articulated the university's commitment to international experiences for students through scholarships and other activities. In his own words, "The resources, the time, and the effort are pretty well aligned with our stated commitment to internationalization."

### **Campus-Wide Strategic Planning for Internationalization**

Committing to campus-wide internationalization initiatives begins with the unveiling of a strategic plan that aligns directly with a university's mission, priorities, and core values. All four institutions in this study have launched university-wide internationalization strategic plans over the past five years. As previously noted, the structure of Chip State University's road map is widely perceived by campus stakeholders as one of the key elements that made internationalization efforts on campus successful and sustainable. The shared governance approach that the President promoted infused trust and enthusiasm in the internationalization process and created buy-in. Similarly, Kali State University's strategic plan begins with a few words of wisdom from its inaugural President who challenged the university 100 years ago to think in worldwide terms. The university's strategic plan states that Kali State will produce highly literate graduates prepared for an era characterized by global connections, able to address global challenges, thereby benefiting society.

In the case of Solou State University, the vision statement outlined in its strategic plan states that the university will seek national prominence, diversity, and global engagement. Advancing international activity and engaging globally is one of the five goals that the universities outlined in the plan. While the university is currently in the process of transformation due to enrollment and fiscal challenges, the President noted that the international conversations are a part of that transformational process because international has a certain patina of uniqueness to it, and uniqueness is the bellwether of what the university is trying to achieve in today's big Land Grant institutions. The Provost at Buffett State proudly noted that the internationalization priority was at the highest level of the university apparatus. It was a core tenet of the institution's strategic plan, but it is also reflected in each college and department's strategic plans. In her own words, "If anyone doesn't get that internationalization is a priority at Buffett State, they are not paying attention."

### **International Travel and Lived Experiences**

Several of the Presidents in this study have come to embrace and appreciate the importance of internationalization because of their own travel and lived experiences. The Provost at Buffett State touted that international was in the President's DNA. This is because he was a Historian of Latin America and has had the opportunity to live in that region of the world for one year as a researcher. The President confirmed that his own travel and lived experiences in South America made him experience a growth in mindset and as a human being. As he kindly put it, "I believe in the power of international education because it led to my professional career as a historian of Latin America. It would have made no sense to grow up in a farming community in the Midwest of the United States only to become a Historian of Latin America."

Although he's never lived abroad, President Mueller at Chip State underscored the importance of international travel as it relates to establishing global initiatives. He's been to India twice to provide support to the dean of Engineering who spearheaded the launch of global centers in Southeast Asia. The President noted that traveling to India was extremely challenging, but the partners appreciated his presence as it solidified the importance of their partnership. The university's Senior International Officer also underscored the impact of presidential travel to international destinations. He noted that President Mueller sees the personal benefits of visiting international partners and had become a stronger advocate of programs and initiatives because of his own lived experiences with partners overseas.

In referencing how he advocated for international education at Solou, President Joseph Cottard highlighted that he travels internationally and makes sure that he uses his time wisely to signal the importance of international efforts at his institution by being present in a number of those conversations. He served on the board of a university in the Middle East. Cottard also traveled extensively to international markets with the SIO who argued that "it takes him out of pocket." She noted that several administrators, including deans, have also traveled extensively with the President to forge relationships and build collaborations with foreign governments and institutions.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I provided a summary of the study participants and highlighted the profiles of the Presidents and institutions' international context. I also addressed the research questions by articulating the institutions' themed priority areas in internationalization and engaged in a cross-site analysis of institutions in terms of the Presidents' approaches to advancing and sustaining campus internationalization at their respective universities. In the



following chapter, I offered a detailed overview of the study's findings and its policy and practical implications. I concluded Chapter 5 with a few recommendations for future research related to internationalization in higher education.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

In this chapter, I present a detailed interpretation of the research findings. I also discuss the policy and practical implications of the results and the study limitations and delimitations. I end this section with a set of recommendations for future research related to the internationalization of higher education.

As observed in the literature review, several predictions of our global society, including the expansion of globally interconnected urban centers, a shift in economic activity toward emerging economies, a redistribution of the world's middle classes, job polarization, migration, pandemics, and technology, all fuel a move toward a very different and rapidly changing world environment in which university graduates will eventually work and live (Coelen, 2015). Scholars have argued that higher education institutions must ensure that future graduates are well-equipped to deal with the challenges that such a world will present to them (Coelen, 2015; Deardorf & Charles, 2016; NASULGC, n.d). Indeed, it is against this rapidly changing societal reality that I argue for the unequivocal embrace and appreciation of internationalization as an existential need in today's world. However, as suggested in the literature, Presidents must lead the charge for comprehensive internationalization to be effective at U.S. universities (NASULGC, n.d., Hudzik, 2015).

The purpose of this qualitative study is to better understand the role of Presidential leadership in comprehensive internationalization at striving institutions in the United States. I define striving as universities that are in pursuit of prestige within the academic apparatus (O'Meara, 2007). Reviewing the internationalization literature suggests that there is a concerning dearth of research on the role of Presidential leadership in internationalization efforts at universities in the U.S., although the same research suggests that most university leaders espouse

campus-wide internationalization (Hudzik, 2015). If this research topic is ignored, the higher education sector could be bereft of the possibilities and impact that internationalization could have on society and people. The questions listed below have guide this study:

**(R1):** What is the role of the President in advancing and sustaining comprehensive internationalization at a striving university?

**(R2):** What kind of Presidential support does the Senior International Officer (SIO) believe is critical to high-level internationalization at their institution?

**(R3):** What are the Presidents' priority activities for internationalization at a striving institution?

To help answer the research questions, I lean on the interpretivism paradigm, which is primarily rooted in the fact that realities are multiple and socially constructed (Riyama, 2015). I also utilize a multiple case study approach to better understand the role of Presidential leadership in internationalization and I use a purposeful sampling method which resulted in the selection of four striving universities in the United States with comprehensive internationalization records, according to the Association of International Educators (NAFSA). Moreover, I conducted semi-structured interviews with Presidents, Chief Academic Officers, Senior International Officers (SIOs), and faculty members. As noted in Chapter 3, I selected these individuals because of the unique and essential role each of them plays in the internationalization process. Also, since this study referenced the American Council on Education's (ACE) model for campus internationalization as its framework, I rely on that foundation to interpret the findings in this study.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

While the participants in this study have similar backgrounds as public institutions that acquired R1 status over the past ten years, their approach to campus-wide internationalization

varied from one institution to the next, with some similarities in between (De Wit, 2002).

However, each university's internationalization record and activity directly or indirectly leverage the ACE model for comprehensive internationalization as a framework that leads to a highly successful process of international activity at the respective institutions. As noted in previous chapters, the ACE model is comprised of six interconnected goals that the American Council on Education touts as fundamental to achieving comprehensive internationalization in a university setting (American Council on Education, n.d.).

### **Institutional Commitment and Policy**

As suggested in the literature review, scholars have argued the need for universities to implement an internationalization plan as a critical step to the operationalization of international programs and initiatives (Childress, 2009). Moreover, they contend that having a strategic plan outlines a clear roadmap for internationalization while serving as a vehicle to develop buy-in and offering a medium for interdisciplinary collaboration and fund-raising (Childress, 2009). The findings in this study suggest that all participants prioritize internationalization enough to ensure its inclusion in the university-wide strategic plans. All four institutions in this study articulate internationalization as one of their core institutional priorities and all of them link it to their mission and vision statements. Moreover, the participants in the study did not stop short of producing a strategic plan. As many scholars in international education have underscored in previous studies, implementing a plan and effectively communicating it to stakeholders are part and parcel (Childress, 2009). Universities must ensure internationalization plans are disseminated to the right audiences, including donors and community members. One of the participants in this study follows a shared governance process in which they involve all members of their campus and the community. As a result, several members of that campus community

have confirmed that the transparent internationalization process is one of the key elements that made internationalization successful on campus.

Furthermore, the literature suggested that there is a direct correlation between having an internationalization plan and effectively collaborating with departments or seeking fund-raising for internationalization (Childress, 2009). One participant mentions a collaboration between the Office of International Education and the Foundation unit, which is set to raise 20 million dollars in the next five years. Such impactful efforts would not be likely without the infusion of internationalization at the highest levels, as previously noted by the Provost at Buffett State University. Finally, the generous internationalization funding appropriations that I found in this study exemplify the institutional commitment that is required for internationalization to be effective, although the ACE model does not explicitly mention the need for funding as a tenet of the “institutional commitment”. As President Cottard noted, “You cannot run internationalization on the “cheap.” In sum, the findings align well with previous literature that suggests that having an internationalization plan is the foundation that universities need to establish should they aspire to become truly internationalized campuses (Childress, 2009). However, unveiling a strategic plan for internationalization and ensuring campus support and buy-in requires the highest levels of leadership involvement, including the President and boards (Merkx and Nolan, 2015).

### **Leadership and Structure**

The American Council on Education argues that the involvement of senior leadership and appropriate administrative reporting structures form an essential framework for internationalization and institutional transformation (American Council on Education, n.d.). These include a committee or task force, international leadership that reports directly to a Provost, and adequate human resources. The study found that all four participants appointed

international administrators with Vice Provost, Associate Vice Provost, or Vice President titles, which is consistent with the literature that indicates that such titles are critical to achieving the visibility and credibility necessary to advance the work of internationalization on campus (Deardorff & Charles, 2018). This level of profile is particularly significant because Senior International Officers must execute the strategies that university leaders articulate to campus communities. And, as noted in previous literature, they are charged with providing support to faculty and students while articulating strategic advice to senior administrators and sharing a vision for comprehensive internationalization at their respective institutions (Merckx & Nolan, 2015). Although it is important to name a single person to oversee all the international activities on behalf of the institutions as suggested by scholars (Merckx & Nolan, 2015), all Participants in my study stress the urgent need to look beyond the mere naming of an SIO by availing the resources and adequate infrastructure that internationalization needs to be successful.

Moreover, during most interviews, Presidents tout how they spearhead the availability of infrastructures, a task force, and resource allocations such as creating an office or buildings dedicated to internationalization, availing staffing, funding initiatives, etc. Their level of involvement also aligns with previous literature which states that the complexity and delicate task of internationalizing an entire institution requires outstanding support from a President or Chancellor (Olson et al., 2006; Childress, 2009; Hudzik, 2011; McCormack, 2013; Merckx & Nolan, 2015; Deardorff & Charles, 2018). Thus, having the right leadership and organizational structure is an essential element that university leaders need to consider as they advance and sustain campus-wide internationalization. Another point of consideration is how Presidents and SIOs drive the resource allocation for internationalization. One participant revealed that

international is the most funded unit on his campus. Therefore, establishing key performance indicators beyond the optics of sending or receiving students, should be considered.

### **Curriculum and Co-curriculum**

Curriculum internationalization is one of the most important parts of the process of internationalizing higher education. Scholars argue that the curriculum is indeed the central pathway to learning for all students regardless of their background, goals, abilities, or the type of institution they attend (American Council on Education, n.d.). Most participants in this study directly cite work that is done to help advance curriculum internationalization at their respective institutions. Some participants underscore the importance of infusing internationalization into all undergraduate majors on campus, not just global history or international studies. They also tout the creation of an Office of International Communications, which supports faculty in internationalizing their curriculums. While most participants are engaged in curriculum internationalization efforts, some were candid in noting that this work is harder to accomplish because of faculty push-back. The challenge that institutions face in internationalizing the curriculum also confirms previous research that articulates the need to double efforts on faculty and curriculum to fulfill the larger purpose of internationalization, which is to equip students with an understanding of the global nuances of higher education (Deardorff, 2012). This is important to note because many academic departments and faculty want to prioritize their own areas of study. Thus, a consensus on how to infuse internationalization into the broader academic curriculum should be articulated clearly by university leaders.

Finally, the disparity in institutions' approaches to curriculum internationalization is also noticeable. Some participants perceive it as the main foundation for campus-wide internationalization and are willing to fully invest in it, while others are content with the optics of

sending students abroad or having meaningful interactions on campus with international students. There are some examples in the interviews where participants note the building of scholarships for study abroad as an indirect supplement for curriculum internationalization. While that effort is commendable, the argument that scholarships can make study abroad available to everyone is not entirely realistic. As the literature suggested, international educators need to focus more on curriculum and learning outcomes, which are more inclusive and less elitist by not focusing too much on mobility (De Wit and Hunter, 2015).

### **Faculty and Staff Support**

As the linchpins of internationalization, faculty play an essential role in the creation of international programs and initiatives at institutions of higher learning (American Council on Education, n.d.). As ACE previously noted, faculty commitment is imperative to the success of internationalization (American Council on Education, n.d.). Fortunately, all participants in this study acknowledge and appreciate the role that faculty play in campus-wide internationalization efforts. Some participants allude to the importance of incentivizing faculty members through awards or funding opportunities for global engagement, while others mention their involvement in programs and initiatives such as faculty-led study abroad programming, curriculum internationalization, partnerships, etc.

A few participants also reference faculty roles in changing the culture of internationalization on campus. One participant notes having gone from three faculty members involved in teaching courses abroad ten years ago to 100 faculty members actively involved in global programming today. While participants understand that faculty are the drivers of internationalization, most of them emphasize the need to create opportunities for faculty and staff to also develop their understanding of the world. If faculty are the drivers of the academic



curriculum, they must have a strong understanding of the nuances of global education. The literature suggests that institutional policies and support mechanisms should ensure that faculty have opportunities to develop intercultural competence themselves and can maximize the impact of these experiences on student learning, research, and service (American Council on Education, n.d.). Indeed, this element of campus internationalization is reflected in the review of some participants' strategic plans and during the interview process.

### **Mobility**

Although mobility refers to both the inbound and outbound physical movement of people (students, faculty, and staff), it emphasizes four critical pillars, according to ACE: inclusive accessibility, funding and financial aid, ongoing support for international students, and orientation and re-entry programs (American Council on Education, n.d.). While the scholarly literature does not specifically address ways to integrate international or study-abroad students, the latest definition of internationalization encompasses the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions, or delivery of postsecondary education" (knight, 2004).

Having said that, all participants in my study emphasize the important and ongoing process of putting infrastructures in place to actively recruit international students and to ensure their sense of belonging. Some participants highlight student success structures and programs as the prerequisites needed before the recruitment of international students. Several participants tout cutting-edge programming that facilitates the integration of foreign students into their campuses, and those programs include pre-arrival orientation, adequate health insurance, scholarships, intercultural programming, local transportation, job support, etc. Participants also emphasize the importance of creating transparent policies and procedures for international students, especially

at a time when US immigration policy is hostile to this population – a concern that participants raise as a political issue but did not offer solutions to the problem. Presidents have a responsibility to protect and preserve the integrity of their institutions. Therefore, articulating a plan that allows them to shield their universities from political pressures should be a high priority for them, especially since political winds can negatively impact global programming, initiatives, and resources.

Moreover, some universities stress the urgent need to diversify the international recruitment pipeline and to ensure a broader representation of countries. Some participants note going from 800 Saudi students to 80 in two years, while others regret putting all their recruitment efforts in one region of the world (Middle East), which resulted in a considerable decline of international students on campus. From a justice and inclusion standpoint, it is important to note that universities can diversify broadly beyond the needed ethnic and social diversity that is often a topic of concern in the United States. If universities are intrinsically motivated by diversity and inclusion in the academic community, then Presidents need to be held accountable for how this effort can be extended beyond their premises, the state, and the nation.

Furthermore, participants also underscore the importance of engaging more domestic and underrepresented students in diversified study-abroad destinations. Therefore, most institutions in my study note the importance of creating access and scholarships for education abroad. Many of the participants have worked diligently over the years to minimize barriers to studying abroad. This includes availing more financial aid opportunities, streamlining credit transfers, and facilitating policies and practices. While the findings illustrate a strong interest in outbound mobility programs, none of the participants discuss how they assess students' global competency skills pre-departure or upon returning from study abroad or whether studying abroad has any

impact on the students. As Deardorff (2016) notes in previous literature, intercultural competence is at the core of comprehensive internationalization efforts, especially as it relates to intercultural learning outcomes at the university level.

Therefore, participants should put more emphasis on intercultural learning assessments to measure global programs in the communities they serve. Furthermore, universities should consider embracing inclusive international education programming by assessing the impact of programs on host communities. Indeed, Marginson (2021) once argued that the deep Anglo-American certainty that ‘our’ culture is not only best, but sufficient, and no other insight is needed, causes much of the world to be excluded from global knowledge. If international education is about bringing understanding to the world and creating spaces where knowledge and ideas can permeate societies and cultures, then university Presidents must lead the charge of ensuring broader inclusion and equity in the process. As argued in the literature, the internationalization of higher education is often defined based on priority outcomes such as the number of international students on U.S. campuses and study abroad participation rates (Deardorff & Charles, 2018). University leaders must move beyond the numbers and implement key performance indicators that address the impact on all communities involved in the internationalization process.

### **Partnerships**

The review of the literature suggests that partnerships are essential to comprehensive internationalization. ACE argued that they provide global and intercultural experiences for faculty, staff, and students; expand research capacity; enhance the curriculum; generate revenue; diversify knowledge production; and raise the visibility of institutions domestically and abroad (American Council on Education, n.d.). All participants in my study invest time and resources in

the establishment of a global footprint to broaden their international reputations. While one participant is primarily focused on building collaborations with institutions overseas, all the other institutions in my study invest in brick-and-mortar campuses in Central and Latin America and Southeast Asia. This is often done in a public-private partnership with entities overseas.

Moreover, the reasons behind the establishment of global footprints varied from one institution to the next. A few participants are seeking to boost international enrollment at their campuses, others are looking for ways to create more education abroad opportunities and destinations for their domestic students, and one is particularly interested in building collaborations and academic partnerships with overseas institutions. However, one concern that should be noted is the Presidents' lack of attention to historical geopolitical events that could impact the sustainability of global partnerships (Gardner & Krabill, 2017). This is a significant concern that should be raised because most participants are engaging in relatively difficult terrains where politics and economic instability could put a lot of strain on partnerships. Those regions of engagement include the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Central and Latin America. Also, developing and nurturing mutually beneficial global partnerships typically requires even forms of collaboration. Thus, as noted by scholars, the deficiencies in technology that are often prevalent in the Global South could seriously compromise overseas institutions' abilities to be equal partners with the participants in this study (Sharpe, 2015; Smith, 2017). Furthermore, only two out of four participants explicitly allude to the establishment of global partnerships as a noble cause to make an impact on society and people. The President of Solou State referred to the mission of the Land Grant institution, which is to make certain that the American dream is available to everyone, including those in the Global South, and Chip State emphasizes the creation of global centers to make an impact on society. While some of the participants are not

affiliated with the Land Grant mission, they focus a lot of their attention on revenue-building for their institutions, not the impact on partners.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

As noted in previous chapters, every study has limitations. This research on the role of Presidents in internationalization indeed creates a few limitations that should be addressed. First, the purposeful sampling of striving universities with a very strong record of campus-wide internationalization and Presidential tenure inherently narrows the pool of participants to no more than four institutions in the United States. Therefore, the findings from these institutions should not be generalized to all higher education institutions in the United States. As the literature suggests, internationalization differs from one institution to the next.

Also, I found that the purposeful sampling of universities with a strong internationalization agenda motivates the participants to speak highly and proudly about their work in the international education arena. The intentional selection of institutions that share specific characteristics such as winning the Senator Paul Simon Award for Comprehensive Internationalization, allows all participants to tout their respective achievements. Moreover, the Presidents' positions as the chief administrators at their institutions and the delicate management of their hectic schedules prevented me from spending significant time with each leader for more meaningful and intimate observations.

Finally, my position as a Senior International Officer (SIO) at a similar public institution may have been limiting to the Presidents and SIOs at the institutions in this study. The welcoming nature of the interview process suggests that participants are unanimously interested in preserving and elevating their reputations as leaders in the field of international education.

However, the semi-structured interviews added more flexibility to the process by allowing me to ask difficult questions to the participants.

### **Implications for Policy**

A recurring discovery throughout the interviews was the leaders' apparent dissatisfaction with U.S. immigration regulations and policies toward international students. All four institutions attribute their most recent enrollment declines to COVID-19 and the United States' strict immigration rules. In searching for the underlying cause and effect concerning U.S. immigration policy toward international students, the President at Kali State University points to the shift in foreign student mobility to countries such as Canada, the UK, and Australia. He argues that this drastic shift in destination is due to the difficulty in dealing with the Department of State visa challenges. Chip State University notes that the policies in Washington and the hostile rhetoric against international students makes it very important for them to reemphasize the vital component that internationalization plays in the university setting. In referencing the Trump Administration's unfriendly tone toward foreign nationals, the President at Buffett State University presents a grim reality in international education when he said "If you are looking for stability, sometimes international is not the world to be in."

Indeed, recent U.S. immigration regulations and policies present a legitimate threat to the very survival of international education and quite frankly, to the United States' academic enterprise. Studies show that migration policy contributes to the growth of international student enrollment (Jacobs, 2020). International students often choose to attend university in countries where immigration policies are friendly to foreign nationals. This is the case in Canada, a country that met its six-year international student enrollment goal in just four years, according to data from Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

In the case of the United States, a recent report from the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, suggests that international student visa denials to the United States have grown significantly between 2015 and 2022, a period that also reflects a pre- and post-pandemic scenario (Presidents' Alliance, n.d.). Moreover, the same data suggests that denial rates for students from Africa are the highest during the eight years, with a whopping 54% of applications being rejected by the U.S. Department of State. The Presidents' Alliance warns that this severe rate of visa denials for students from Africa and other parts of the world has serious implications for U.S. higher education institutions' ability to attract international students. The organization notes that a 54% visa denial rate equates to about 92,000 potentially qualified undergraduate and graduate African students who should be enrolled at U.S. campuses. Given the dwindling birth rates in the United States and the decline in domestic enrollment across higher education institutions in the nation, the current international student visa denials rates could undoubtedly undermine the United States' position as the beacon of excellence in higher education in the world. Indeed, the ingenuity in top level research and scholarship that became evident in the United States stems in part from the academic contributions of international students.

Another underlying implication of the United States' hostile immigration policy is related to STEM fields. According to the US Department of Education, international students earned 40% of STEM master's degrees and 43% of STEM PhDs during the academic year 2021-2022. This overreliance on international student enrollment in STEM degrees puts a lot of pressure on higher education institutions whose bottom line may be in jeopardy due to unfriendly government policies. In Chapter 4, I referenced Michael Rainey, the President of Kali State University, who noted that 70% of graduate students in their College of Engineering are

international. Recent studies also suggest that student and work visas influence international students' decisions about where to study, what to study, and how much education to pursue (Jacobs, 2020). If the United States hopes to maintain its position as the beacon of the world, at least in offering cutting-edge science and education, the government needs to relax its unfriendly immigration policies toward international students. Anything less will result in a dearth of knowledge and skills that will directly or indirectly have a depressing effect on job creation, and in turn, on native labor markets (Chassamboulli & Peri, 2020).

Jacobs (2020) argues that in a world of globally interlinked universities, immigration policy is education policy since educational institutions operate within the constraints of immigration policy. Therefore, I believe that university Presidents must lead the charge in making sure U.S. policymakers understand the impact of internationalization on students, the U.S. economy, and the higher education sector (Presidents' Alliance n.d.). However, I argue that a top-down approach, where universities and organizations such as the Presidents' Alliance directly target U.S. lawmakers in Washington, is not the most effective approach to solving the immigration challenge. University Presidents should consider building partnerships and alliances with their locally elected officials such as governors and state lawmakers who can then serve as middle-managers and advocates for international education at the highest levels of the political hierarchy.

These officials are on the frontlines of daily economic challenges faced by many U.S. states and they are often best positioned to understand the direct impact of international education in their communities. Therefore, the argument about the effects of internationalization on local economies should be made directly to them, not only Washington. College Presidents need to be actively involved at the grassroots level because unfriendly immigration policies



strike at the heart of the mission of higher education institutions (Oxtoby & Canter, 2018). While we've made progress in the past 5 years in terms of creating immigration advocacy groups and organizations such as the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration (2018) and the U.S. for Success Coalition (2023), we have not made significant progress in terms of facilitating and simplifying U.S. immigration policies. In reality, universities have seen more visa denials in the five years since the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration was founded. Thus, university Presidents must revisit their approach to immigration advocacy to strike a balance between higher education's bottom line and politicians' core values.

If there is a silver lining in the Presidents' perceptions of U.S. immigration policy toward international students, it is that many higher education leaders think of international students and scholars as quintessential to the success and survival of higher education and perhaps, even U.S. democracy. The COVID-19 pandemic was indeed the wildcard incident that shed light of American higher education's overreliance on the international student community. If the United States ought to remain relevant in the global stage, the federal and local governments will need to work with university Presidents to establish a well-coordinated national strategy for international education. The future of our country depends on it more today than ever before.

### **Implications for Practice**

All four university Presidents in my study come out of the faculty or legal pathways. They are respectively Mathematicians by training, Engineers, Historians, and lawyers. Therefore, in this section, I discuss the hypothetical implications and outlook of Presidential leadership on highly effective scholar-practitioners who come out of the SIO and international education pathways. I argue that a President who serves as a Senior International Officer before becoming a university's chief administrator would do things differently, at least in terms of their approach

to campus internationalization. I also argue that their response to contemporary challenges in higher education and the world would not be the same as the Presidents with faculty status or legal backgrounds.

The review of the literature and the themed findings from this study suggest that a lack of common understanding of comprehensive internationalization stems from higher education institutions' differing rationales for global initiatives (Seeber et al., 2016). As many scholars have previously stated, international education is often defined in narrow terms and often conflated with international student enrollment or study abroad (Charles & Ogden, 2021). During the interviews, several of the Presidents allude to comprehensive internationalization primarily from a mobility standpoint. By contrast, the American Council on Education (ACE) defines comprehensive internationalization as a strategic, coordinated process that seeks to align and integrate policies, programs, and initiatives, to position colleges and universities as more globally oriented and internationally connected (American Council on Education, n.d.).

Thus, the study participants' narrow understanding of the definition of internationalization often signifies that institutions lose momentum in fostering global commitments and building out the intellectual and pedagogical infrastructure required to innovatively respond to the pressing global challenges of the 21st century (Charles & Ogden, 2021). Indeed, a President who comes out of the SIO or international education pathway would have a clear understanding of the meaning of internationalization as it relates to the higher education sector. However, understanding what international education stands for in the context of the academy without the knowledge, background, and skills required, would certainly not make a good President. Senior International Officers would be very successful as chief university administrators because of their in-depth knowledge and high-demand skills and experiences in

strategic planning, budgeting, fund-raising for global initiatives, working with deans to internationalize campuses and support faculty development, and understanding organizations and organizational change (Heyl & Hunter, 2019).

SIOs also have a deep understanding of higher education administration in general because of their capacity and unique positions as standalone chief global officers whose internationalization responsibilities touch on all aspects of the university apparatus. This includes but is not limited to academic departments, student affairs, divisions of equity and inclusion, admissions, financial aid, university foundations, and senior-level administrators such as board members, Presidents, Provosts, and Deans. As scholars have frequently pointed out, Senior International Officers do more than just help to recruit the best and brightest international students to our campuses. They have a deep understanding of how to effectively work with all campus stakeholders to leverage high-impact educational practices to support the international and intercultural learning of all students (Heyl & Hunter, 2019).

Moreover, Charles and Ogden (2021) eloquently note that Senior International Officers often have impeccable intercultural competency skills that put them in a position to effectively steward strategic international partnerships and align institutional strengths with international opportunities. Such profiles are needed in higher education because our society faces more globally interconnected challenges today than ever before. International challenges such as Pandemics, migration, and climate change, all remind us of the interconnected and interdependent nature of the 21<sup>st</sup> century world. The Council of Foreign Relations recently reported that fifty independent countries existed about a century ago (1920).

Today, the organization states that there are nearly 200 countries in the world. Indeed, international higher education has not escaped the impact of these societal trends (Heyl &

Hunter, 2019). The global flow of tertiary-level students is more prevalent today than ever before, according to the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Also, the collapse of the Soviet Union that I mentioned in the introduction, precipitated the rapid rise of transnational exchange networks of all types, including the growth in international enrollment at U.S. colleges and universities and the spike in American students' interest in education abroad (Merkx & Nolan, 2015).

These ongoing global challenges should compel higher education institutions to care deeply about institutional transformation concerning international education (Charles & Ogden, 2021). If internationalization is truly higher education's response to globalization, as scholars have noted (Deardorff & Charles, 2018), then universities should actively seek professional international educators who have the skills, knowledge, attributes, and experience to provide outstanding leadership as chief administrators who can help navigate this uncertain future (Charles & Ogden, 2021). I expect that they will do so with a holistic application of comprehensive internationalization, which must begin with the fundamental revision of the undergraduate curriculum in the United States.

### **Opportunities for Future Research**

This study on the role of Presidential leadership in internationalization at striving universities in the United States revealed a few gaps that should be given much attention, as they could have a major impact on the future of international education:

First, future research should explore the effect of internationalization on institutions that are seeking R1 status or have already earned this Carnegie Classification. It would be compelling to learn to what extent the presence of international students, scholars, researchers, and postdocs, has contributed to the advancement of a university into the R1 classification. The President at

Kali State University noted that 70% of their Mechanical Engineering program is international. Therefore, one would assume that not having a strong international presence on campus would likely undermine a university's ability to compete for the R1 classification. Many universities in the United States aspire to become comprehensive research institutions because of its positive implications on the academy. However, the extent to which they can do so without a strong global presence would be an interesting discovery.

Second, several universities in my study referenced having “too many eggs in one basket” in terms of the number of international students from a single country. Solou State University mentioned its strong Middle Eastern population. Buffett State once had more Saudi students than any other university in the country, and the Saudi population represented 90% of its international enrollment. While these institutions are now trying to diversify their international populations, it would be worthwhile to research the impact of a critical mass of international students from one country on domestic and other international students' learning outcomes. Several Presidents alluded to the need to internationalize the campuses, to make sure students are interacting with people who are different from themselves. However, to what extent can those interactions be transformational if 90% of the international students they are interacting with originate from one country?

Third, universities have stressed the impact of politics on international enrollment. Some referred to internationalization as an unstable arena, while others called out the Trump Administration's hostile rhetoric toward international students. Also, there are more international students in certain graduate STEM fields than domestic, and that should be concerning to higher education officials, especially if international is truly unstable. Therefore, more research on how international partnerships with institutions can solidify and ensure sustainability in the STEM

sectors of higher education deserves urgent attention. The shift in student mobility to Canada, the UK, and Australia could present a lasting impact on higher education in the United States. Thus, inquiring about the role of global partnerships in STEM enrollment is an existential need in higher education.

Finally, I argue that the time is ripe for research to be done on the impact of internationalization on host communities. Many of the institutions in my study have expressed strong interests and desires to expand beyond the United States and to create a global presence for their respective universities. However, as institutions seek to expand study abroad programs overseas, build brick-and-mortar campuses, and establish partnerships and collaborations with foreign entities, we should also emphasize the need to ensure equity and inclusion in the process. Internationalization should never be one-sided. Everyone deserves the right to benefit from its positive effects on society and people.

### **Conclusion**

International Education has been a part of the American Academy for over 300 years, starting with the enrollment of international students into U.S. universities. However, recent geopolitical events around the world have amplified critical discussions on the need to internationalize higher education institutions, to ensure students are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to live and thrive in today's global society. Although university leaders understand and support campus internationalization, research on the role of Presidential leadership in the internationalization process was limited (Hudzik, 2015). This is partly because the confusion about the terms and definitions of internationalization may have contributed to a lack of focus or uniform agenda on how to internationalize a university (Altbach & Knight, 2007)

Therefore, this study aimed to develop a framework by investigating the extent to which Presidential leadership impacts the internationalization process at four striving universities in the United States. For this research study, I defined striving as institutions in pursuit of prestige within the academic hierarchy (O'Meara, 2007). The findings indicated that the success of internationalization largely depends on Presidents who must lead the charge in articulating its importance to the academy and providing the resources and infrastructure needed for success. Although the Presidents' rationales for campus internationalization may be unique and varied from one institution to the next, their approaches to advancing and sustaining the internationalization process were about the same. The findings suggested that successful internationalization requires outstanding vision and leadership, adequate funding, an inclusive strategic priority, and an organizational culture that is conducive to institutional transformation concerning internationalization.

The international dimension of colleges and universities is becoming increasingly important and increasingly conspicuous. As such, the Senior International Officers whose charge is to execute and advise Presidents on international matters that impact the well-being of the institution should be given the tools, staffing, and resources needed to adequately carry out the SIO duties. The efficacy of an Office of Global Affairs rises or falls on the matter of the budget. Committed Presidents will indeed ensure that an adequate budget and structure is provided to the office. While internationalization is not a one-size-fits-all for universities to adopt within their respective institutional contexts, the findings related to Presidents' approaches to campus-wide internationalization will likely need to be considered if universities seek to become truly globalized institutions.

Without genuine support from the highest levels of leadership, institutions will likely pay lip service to the internationalization agenda and continue with business as usual, which will be detrimental to students' learning outcomes and the critical need to prepare them for today's interdependent society. However, preparing students for today's interconnected world cannot depend only on the optics of sending students abroad or recruiting international students to diversify U.S. campuses. University Presidents ought to think critically about curriculum internationalization as the great equalizer in global education. As Presidents seek out efforts to create globally-minded communities on their campuses, they must keep in mind that access to global learning opportunities is not available to all students and raising scholarship funds will not create a sustainable global learning model that covers study abroad participation for all students. The curriculum is the bedrock of any university apparatus. Therefore, Presidents need to emphasize the importance of curriculum internationalization as the foundation of global learning to avoid exacerbating inequality and access to global education.



## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Interview Protocol Form

Research Study: Internationalization at Striving Universities and the Role of Presidential Leadership

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

Interview location \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee \_\_\_\_\_

Release form signed? \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Note to participants:**

You are being asked to participate in a treatise study related to internationalization at striving universities and the role that presidential leadership plays. Participating in this study is voluntary. In other words, you can choose to decline if you so desire. Keep in mind that this interview will be recorded. Keeping a record of the interview allows me to return to the session to better analyze any statement that you make. Also, note that the interview will not last any longer than 45 to 60 minutes. Finally, you will remain anonymous unless you state otherwise. Any statement that you make will also remain confidential.

## Appendix B

### Sample questions for interviews with the presidents, provosts, and other campus leaders such as the SIO.

To the presidents:

1. What are your internationalization priorities as the chief administrator for this institution?
2. What do you consider key elements and/or characteristics of a successful approach to internationalization at this institution?
3. As president, what specific steps have you taken to support and advance internationalization priorities at your institution?
4. What explains your decision to make internationalization a priority at this institution?
5. To what extent is your commitment to internationalization reflected in your budgetary allocations?
6. What are some of the ways in which your engagement with internationalization has driven institutional transformation?
7. What leadership approaches have you leveraged in your role as president to advocate for and advance internationalization on the campus?

To the Provost, SIO, and Faculty:

1. What have been your internationalization priorities during the president's tenure?
2. Is the internationalization priority a reflection of the president's core commitments or does it arise from other parts of the campus?
3. Is the president's vision for internationalization consistent with your own?
4. What has been done by the president from a leadership perspective to advance and sustain internationalization?
  - a. What strategic internationalization initiatives have been embraced during this president's terms?
  - b. How has the longevity of the presidency impacted the university's internationalization agenda?
5. What do you consider key elements and/or characteristics of successful internationalization at this institution?
6. What more can the president do to drive internationalization on the campus?
7. How aligned is the rhetorical support for internationalization with the resources made available to support this work?
8. To what extent do faculty perceive internationalization to be part of the academic mission of the institution?

## Appendix C

### List of start codes with a brief definition

**Globalization:** Movement of people, ideas, goods, services, pollution, diseases, across borders.

**Strategic plan:** Public document leading a charge.

**International students:** Foreign students studying in the United States on a non-immigrant visa.

**Study abroad:** The pursuit of an educational opportunity overseas while enrolling at a U.S. institution.

**Global learning:** Higher education's response to globalization, requiring students to develop skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will prepare them for life after graduation.

**Internationalization:** The process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions, or delivery of postsecondary education.

**Mission statement:** A summary of a university's aspirations and values.

**Vision statement:** A university's desires and idealistic standing in the academic sphere.

**Curriculum internationalization:** Incorporating international, intercultural dimensions into the content of an institution's curriculum.

**Striving university:** The pursuit of academic rigor and high research activity.

### Appendix D

**The table below highlights the research questions for this study and the type of data that will be used to explore each research question.**

Research Question	Type of Data
1. What is the role of the president in advancing or sustaining comprehensive internationalization at a striving university?	Semi-structured interviews, Strategic planning documents, websites, peer-to-peer reviews (SIOs)
2. What kind of presidential support does the SIO believe is critical to high-level internationalization at their institution?	Semi-structured interviews, peer-to-peer reviews (SIOs), strategic planning documents, websites, published internationalization resources
3. What are the priority activities for internationalization at a striving institution?	Semi-structured interviews, peer reviews, published documents such as strategic plans and presidential statements, websites

## Appendix E

### Subjectivity concerns for this specific study

<b>Subjectivity</b>	<b>Response</b>
Personal value systems	As a product of international education, I wholeheartedly support internationalizing the academy, so this research study interfaces with my personal values.
Role conflict	All sites will be chosen based on a sampling test of striving and internationalized campuses. So, these sites will essentially be impartial to the researcher.
New or surprising data	Since internationalization means different things to different institutions, I expect new data or information that I did not know before.
Does the research literature support your findings or your cultural/professional bias?	Yes. The research literature articulates the challenges of internationalization in a succinct way. The main challenge is the fact that internationalization is a catch-all phrase. Many institutional leaders don't seem to understand the true meaning of the term internationalization. Some university presidents define internationalization in terms of student mobility, while others think of internationalization in terms of faculty research abroad. This confusion around the term makes it very difficult for SIOs to advance a campus-wide internationalization agenda.

**Appendix F**  
**Recruitment Email**

Recruitment Information

Dear SIO Colleagues:

This email is to officially notify you of the opportunity to participate in a research study titled, *Internationalization at Striving Universities and the Role of Presidential Leadership*. As previously discussed via Zoom, you are receiving this email because your institution meets the study's criteria outlined below:

- Strong Internationalization record as confirmed by the Senator Paul Simon Award
- A striving university, having moved from high research to very high research activity over the past decade
- Your president's tenure meets the minimum of 4 years in the role

With your assistance, I would like the opportunity to interview you, your president, provost, and a faculty member at your campus. Each interview will be recorded and will last about 45 minutes.

The objective of this research study will be to better understand the role of presidential leadership in comprehensive internationalization at striving institutions in the United States. Striving universities are defined as institutions in pursuit of prestige within the academic hierarchy (O'Meara, 2007).

Please find attached the informed consent form. Each individual position outlined in this email will need to sign and return the consent form to Samba [Dieng77@gmail.com](mailto:Dieng77@gmail.com). The consent form will not be a part of the data collection.

If you have any questions or concerns, please email Samba Dieng at [sambadieng77@gmail.com](mailto:sambadieng77@gmail.com). If you are unsure about your institution's participation in this study, please reach out to me directly. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



Samba Dieng

## **Appendix G**

### **Interview Protocol 1: presidents**

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research study regarding Internationalization at Striving Universities and the Role of Presidential Leadership. Today's interconnected and globalized society demands that higher education respond by internationalizing institutions for the good of students and the global community. Your institution has done a magnificent job in leading campus internationalization efforts and making sure that it is embedded in the fabric of the university community. Over the next 45 minutes, we will discuss in detail the role that you've played in supporting internationalization at your institution and I have a few questions that I would like to ask and discuss with you:

8. What are your internationalization priorities as the chief administrator for this institution?
9. What do you consider key elements and/or characteristics of a successful approach to internationalization at this institution?
10. As president, what specific steps have you taken to support and advance internationalization priorities at your institution?
11. What explains your decision to make internationalization a priority at this institution?
12. To what extent is your commitment to internationalization reflected in your budgetary allocations?
13. What are some of the ways in which your engagement with internationalization has driven institutional transformation?
14. What leadership approaches have you leveraged in your role as president to advocate for and advance internationalization on the campus?

Thank you so much for your time. I look forward to continuing this discussion.

### **Interview Protocol 2: Provosts, SIOs, and faculty member**

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research study regarding Internationalization at Striving Universities and the Role of Presidential Leadership. Today's interconnected and globalized society demands that higher education respond by internationalizing institutions for the good of students and the global community. Your institution has done a magnificent job in leading campus internationalization efforts and making sure that it is embedded in the fabric of the university community. Over the next 45 minutes, we will discuss in detail the role that your president has played in supporting internationalization at your institution and I have a few questions that I would like to ask and discuss with you:

9. What have been your internationalization priorities during the president's tenure?
10. Is the internationalization priority a reflection of the president's core commitments or does it arise from other parts of the campus?
11. Is the president's vision for internationalization consistent with your own?
12. What has been done by the president from a leadership perspective to advance and sustain internationalization?

- c. What strategic internationalization initiatives have been embraced during this president's terms?
  - d. How has the longevity of the presidency impacted the university's internationalization agenda?
13. What do you consider key elements and/or characteristics of successful internationalization at this institution?
  14. What more can the president do to drive internationalization on the campus?
  15. How aligned is the rhetorical support for internationalization with the resources made available to support this work?
  16. To what extent do faculty perceive internationalization to be part of the academic mission of the institution?



## References

- Altbach, P. G. (2013). The international imperative in higher education. *Center for International Higher Education*, 1-196. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6209-338-6>
- Altbach, P. G., & Knight, J. (2007). The internationalization of higher education: Motivations and realities. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 11(3-4), 290-305. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315307303542>
- Al Riyami, T. (2015). *Main approaches to educational research*. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Thuraya-Al-Riyami/publication/283071843\\_Main\\_Approaches\\_to\\_Educational\\_Research/links/5628a82d08ae518e347c5ee3/Main-Approaches-to-Educational-Research.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Thuraya-Al-Riyami/publication/283071843_Main_Approaches_to_Educational_Research/links/5628a82d08ae518e347c5ee3/Main-Approaches-to-Educational-Research.pdf)
- American Council on Education. (2021). Comprehensive internationalization framework. Retrieved from <https://www.acenet.edu/Research-Insights/Pages/Internationalization/CIGE-Model-for-Comprehensive-Internationalization.aspx>
- American Council on Education. (n.d.). *Ace Internationalization Laboratory*. Retrieved from <https://www.acenet.edu/Programs-Services/Pages/Professional-Learning/ACE-Internationalization-Laboratory.aspx>
- Arum, S., & Van de Water, J. (1992). The need for a definition of international education in U.S. universities. In C. Klasek (Ed.), *Bridges to the future: Strategies for internationalizing higher education*. (pp. 191-202). Carbondale, IL: Association of International Education Administrators.

- Association of International Education. (n.d.). Senator Paul Simon Award for Campus Internationalization. NAFSA. Retrieved from <https://www.nafsa.org/about/about-nafsa/senator-paul-simon-award-campus-internationalization>
- Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). *Qualitative case study methodology: Study Design and implementation for novice researchers*. NSUWorks. Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol13/iss4/2/>
- Birt, L., Scott, S., Cavers, D., Campbell, C., & Walter, F. (2016). Member checking. *Qualitative Health Research, 26*(13), 1802-1811. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732316654870>
- Chassamboulli, A., & Peri, G. (2020). The economic effect of immigration policies: Analyzing and simulating the U.S. case. *Journal of Economic Dynamics and Control, 114*, 103898. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jedc.2020.103898>
- Childress, L. K. (2009). Internationalization plans for higher education institutions. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 13*(3), 289-309. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315308329804>
- College presidents must be loud and clear in support of immigration. (n.d.). <https://www.chronicle.com/article/college-presidents-must-be-loud-and-clear-in-support-of-immigration/>
- Council on Foreign Relations. (n.d.). *How self-determination shaped the modern world*. Council on Foreign Relations. <https://world101.cfr.org/understanding-international-system/building-blocks/how-self-determination-shaped-modern-world>
- Creswell, J. W., & Guetterman, T. C. (2019). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Pearson.

- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. SAGE Publications.
- De Wit, H. D. (2002). *Internationalization of higher education in the United States of America and Europe: A historical, comparative, and conceptual analysis*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group.
- De Wit, H., & Hunter, F. (2015). The future of internationalization of higher education in Europe. *International Higher Education*, 83, 2-3. <https://doi.org/10.6017/ihe.2015.83.9073>
- Deardorff, D. K. (2012). Looking to the future: Leadership perspectives on internationalization – A synthesis. AUDEM: *The International Journal of Higher Education and Democracy*, 3, 71-80. Retrieved from <http://muse.jhu.edu/article/500244>
- Deardorff, D. K., & Charles, H. (2018). *Leading internationalization: A handbook for international education leaders*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.
- Deardorff, D. K. (2016). Key theoretical frameworks guiding the scholar-practitioner in international education. In Streitwieser, B., & Ogden, A., *International higher education's scholar-practitioners: Bridging research and practice* (pp. 241-261). Oxford, UK. Symposium Books Publishing.
- Dessoff, A. (2010). The rise of senior international officers. *Association of International Educators*. Retrieved from

[https://www.nafsa.org/sites/default/files/ektron/files/underscore/janfeb10\\_sios.pdf](https://www.nafsa.org/sites/default/files/ektron/files/underscore/janfeb10_sios.pdf)

Diabate, D. (2017). *Internationalization on HBCU campuses and the role of presidential leadership* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global. (UMI No. ED578485)

Fischer, K., & Aslanian, S. (2021). Fading beacon. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Retrieved from

[https://www.chronicle.com/article/fadingbeacon?cid2=gen\\_login\\_refresh&cid=gen\\_sign\\_in](https://www.chronicle.com/article/fadingbeacon?cid2=gen_login_refresh&cid=gen_sign_in)

Gardner, B., Krabill, R., Paul. (2017). *Against the romance of study abroad*. Africa Is a Country.

Retrieved July 8, 2022, from <https://africasacountry.com/2017/07/against-the-romance-of-study-abroad/>

*Global flow of tertiary-level students*. UNESCO UIS. (n.d.). <https://uis.unesco.org/en/uis-student-flow>

Helms, R. (2021). Can internationalization survive coronavirus? *American Council on Education*.

Retrieved from <https://www.higheredtoday.org/2020/03/04/can-internationalization-survive-coronavirus-need-see-data/>

Heyl, J., & Hunter, F. (2019). *The senior international officer as change agent*. Sterling, VA:

Stylus Publishing, LLC.

Hudzik, J. K. (2011). *Comprehensive internationalization: From concept to action*. NAFSA:

Association of International Educators. Washington, DC. Retrieved from

[http://ecahe.eu/w/images/1/1f/Comprehensive\\_Internationalization\\_-\\_NAFSA.pdf](http://ecahe.eu/w/images/1/1f/Comprehensive_Internationalization_-_NAFSA.pdf)

Hudzik, J. K. (2015). *Comprehensive internationalization: Institutional pathways to success*.

Internationalization in Higher Education. New York, NY: Routledge.

- Institute of International Education. (n.d.). *Heiskell Award Winners*. The Power of International Education. Retrieved from <https://www.iie.org/Work-With-Us/Become-an-IIENetwork-Member/IIE-Heiskell-Awards/Award-Winners>
- Jacobs, E. (2020). The homogenizing and diversifying effects of migration policy in the internationalization of Higher Education. *Higher Education*, 83(2), 339–355. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-020-00658-4>
- Kaiser, K. (2009). Protecting respondent confidentiality in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 19(11), 1632–1641. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732309350879>
- Kallio, H., Pietilä, A.-M., Johnson, M., & Kangasniemi, M. (2016). Systematic methodological review: Developing a framework for a qualitative semi-structured interview guide. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 72(12), 2954–2965. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.13031>
- Knight, J. (1999). A time of turbulence and transformation for internationalization (Research Monograph No. 14). Ottawa, Canada: Canadian Bureau for International Education.
- Knight, J. (2004). Internationalization remodeled: Definition, approaches, and rationales. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 8(1), 5-31. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315303260832>
- Knight, J. (2012). Concepts, rationales, and interpretive frameworks in the internationalization of higher education. *The SAGE Handbook of International Higher Education*, 27-42. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452218397.n2>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. SAGE.
- Masuda, H., Okitasari, M., Morita, K., Katramiz, T., Shimizu, H., Kawakubo, S., & Kataoka, Y. (2021). SDGs mainstreaming at the local level: Case studies from Japan. *Sustainability Science*, 16(5), 1539–1562. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-021-00977-0>

- Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach: An interactive approach*. SAGE.
- McCormack, A. (2013) *Internationalization on small college campuses and the role of presidential leadership* (doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global. (UMI No. 3592337)
- Marginson, S. (2021). Globalisation: The good, the bad and the ugly. *Center for Global Higher Education*. Retrieved from <https://www.researchcghe.org/publications/working-paper/globalisation-the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly/>
- Merkx, G. W., & Nolan, R. W. (2015). *Internationalizing the academy: Lessons of leadership in higher education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Mohd Ishak, N., & Abu Bakar, A. Y. (2014). Developing sampling frame for case study: Challenges and conditions. *World Journal of Education*, 4(3).  
<https://doi.org/10.5430/wje.v4n3p29>
- Neuman, W. L. (2010). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Pearson.
- Nolan, R., & Hunter, F. (2012). Institutional strategies and international programs: Learning from experiences of change. *The SAGE Handbook of International Higher Education*, 131-146. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452218397.n8>
- Olson, C., Green, M., & Hill, B. (2006). *A handbook for advancing comprehensive internationalization: what institutions can do and what students should learn*. American Council on Education. Retrieved from [https://www.umt.edu/ilab/documents/Handbook\\_Advancing%20Comprehensive%20Internationalization.pdf](https://www.umt.edu/ilab/documents/Handbook_Advancing%20Comprehensive%20Internationalization.pdf)

- Only experienced international educators need apply*. University World News. (n.d.).  
<https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20210322135152178>
- O'Meara, K.A. (2007). Striving for what? Exploring the pursuit of prestige. In J.C. Smart (Ed.)  
*Higher education: Handbook of theory and research* (pp. 121-179). New York, NY:  
 Springer
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods*. SAGE Publications.
- Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, N. M. (2015). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological*. SAGE Publications.
- Rumbley, L. E., Altbach, P. G., & Reisberg, L. (2012). Internationalization within the higher education context. *The SAGE Handbook of International Higher Education*, 3-26. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452218397.n1>
- Science, Technology, engineering, and math, including Computer Science*. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math, including Computer Science | U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.). <https://www.ed.gov/stem>
- Sharpe, E.K. (2015). Colonialist tendencies in education abroad. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 27(2), 227-234.  
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1082881.pdf>
- Seeber, M., Cattaneo, M., Huisman, J., & Paleari, S. (2016). Why do higher education institutions internationalize? An investigation of the multilevel determinants of internationalization rationales. *Higher Education*, 72(5), 685-702. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-015-9971-x>
- Smith, D.S. (2017). Reconciliation and the academy: experience at a small institution in northern Manitoba. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 183, 61-81.

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1151606.pdf>

Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. SAGE Publications.

Teichler, U. (2004). The changing debate on internationalisation of higher education. *Higher Education*, 48(1), 5-26. <https://doi.org/10.1023/b:high.0000033771.69078.41>

The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. (n.d.). Carnegie Classifications. Retrieved from <https://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/downloads.php>

*The Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and immigration*. Presidents' Alliance. (2023, December 1). <https://www.presidentsalliance.org/>

Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods*. SAGE Publications.

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). SAGE Publications.

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). SAGE Publications.