

Crossing Cultures:
Liberal Learning for a World in Flux


Insung Jung
Ka Ho Mok *Editors*

The Reinvention of Liberal Learning Around the Globe

 Springer

Crossing Cultures: Liberal Learning for a World in Flux

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Insung Jung · Ka Ho Mok
Editors

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ISSN 2730-7603

ISSN 2730-7611 (electronic)

Crossing Cultures: Liberal Learning for a World in Flux

ISBN 978-981-19-8264-4

ISBN 978-981-19-8265-1 (eBook)

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-8265-1>

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Foreword

The worst global pandemic in more than a century created unprecedented disruption to every segment of society, including higher education. Globally, over 1.6 billion students in 192 countries were impacted by school closures, eroding the post-secondary pipeline and creating the prospect of a lost generation of college students (UNICEF, 2020). Precipitous drops in enrollment were exacerbated by a record number of job losses due to COVID-19, making college less affordable and accessible and by burgeoning skepticism around the value of a college degree. Food and shelter insecurities, the expansiveness of the digital divide, and skyrocketing mental health issues enhanced the barriers for enrollment and completion at higher education institutions of all types. Yet, despite these monumental challenges, a moment of extraordinary opportunity has emerged for revolutionizing higher education in ways that will better prepare students around the world for work, citizenship, and life within a future none of us can fully predict.

At a time when there has been a rush toward narrow vocational and technical training as the best approach to strengthening economies and producing graduates who are immediately employable, the multi-faceted “wicked problems” of which COVID-19 was emblematic instead invite a reinvigorated commitment to liberal education. Pressing questions around how to allocate scarce medical resources in times of crisis; the extent to which it is permissible to curtail individual freedom for the public good; how to tackle the global warming that contributed to the pandemic; and how to respond to increasing polarization and partisanship that has led to a staggering surge in anti-Asian, anti-Semitic, anti-Black, and homophobic hate crimes, cannot be addressed without applying the knowledge and skills foundational to a liberal education.

Indeed, the challenges we are facing as a global community illustrate that a liberal education for the twenty-first century must be one in which the humanities, arts, and sciences are fully integrated. As several authors in this volume note, it is the type of education that mandates the acceleration of active learning by providing students with practice applying their knowledge and skills from across disciplines to real-world problems that matter both to the student and to society. Championing liberal learning also entails being mindful of the dangers of ideological filtering and catalyzing the

independent thinking necessary to discern the truth in an age of misinformation—one in which controlling the narrative seems more important than uncovering the facts. Therefore, liberal education involves engagement with a diversity of perspectives and the fostering of dispositions required for students to move beyond their own viewing points by considering the possibility that some of their most deeply held beliefs might be mistaken. Moreover, an emphasis on liberal learning reaffirms the democratic purposes of higher education by promoting civic engagement and moral reasoning essential to advancing racial and social justice and mitigating authoritarian tendencies (Carnevale et al., 2020).

Many of the chapters contained in this book confirm decades of research, highlighted in Finley (2021), indicating that the outcomes and experiences of a liberal education are also the most effective tools by which to achieve career success and social mobility. For this reason, all colleges and universities should work toward scaling and sustaining a culture of engagement in which every student is given equitable access to high impact practices, such as internships, undergraduate research, and first-year seminars, that promote connections between educational experiences and long-term career success. In addition, assessment of student work must focus on asset-based approaches that encourage a growth mindset and opportunities for continuous improvement that result from grappling with increasingly complex problems rather than adhering to a system of ranking and sorting students based on their perceived deficits.

Consistent with these ideals, the contributing authors present a collective call to action to reimagine liberal education in ways that upend the persistent institutional systems, beliefs, and practices that have privileged some at the expense of others. Their compelling words simultaneously constitute a challenge to those seeking a swift return to normal by foregrounding a consideration of those for whom normal may not have worked at all—confronting directly the question of whether the pressure to get “back to normal” is one that will position all undergraduate students to meet contemporary challenges for a rapidly changing, globally interdependent world. In the process, they provide an exciting, new equity-minded vision for a liberal education for the twenty-first century.

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Part I
Setting the Scene

Chapter 1

Introduction: Redefining Liberal Arts Education in a Time of Crisis



Insung Jung and Ka Ho Mok

Abstract Over recent years, higher education institutions including small liberal arts colleges have been faced with various challenges including a decrease in the number of applicants and subsequent financial shortages. The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified their difficulties and revealed both the strengths and weaknesses of liberal arts colleges and their programs. This chapter discusses a few of the challenges and difficulties that liberal arts colleges are experiencing during the COVID-19 pandemic that are drawn from academic literature and the media. It explains how this book is prepared and organized to explore the unique approaches to overcoming such challenges adopted by several selected world liberal arts colleges, and it goes on to redefine liberal arts education for the future in a specific sociocultural context.

Keywords Educational reform · Liberal arts education · Liberal education · Liberal learning · Online education

1.1 Introduction

The authors have in combination spent almost three decades teaching and researching in liberal arts colleges: The International Christian University or ICU located in Tokyo, Japan, in the case of the first author and Lingnan University in Hong Kong in the case of the second author. During our careers, we have observed that our undergraduate students get full attention from faculty and staff and engage in interactions with faculty and peers both inside and outside classrooms, which would be rare in large research universities. We have also observed that our students are constantly encouraged to be critical, creative, and collaborative and to develop a “service mind” and global citizenship via small group discussions and experiential

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I. Jung and K. H. Mok (eds.), *The Reinvention of Liberal Learning around the Globe*,
Crossing Cultures: Liberal Learning for a World in Flux,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-8265-1_1

learning programs, while building English and other language competencies to be able to communicate with the world. All of this has resulted in our colleges obtaining high evaluation from students and external evaluators, with our graduates being known to play leading roles, especially in academia and international communities and to have higher earnings compared with graduates from large public universities in the respective communities. Like our colleges, many liberal arts colleges have generally produced more graduates who advance to PhDs (especially in science and engineering areas) than other larger research universities (Tachikawa, 2016; Volk & Benedix, 2020) and have achieved a four-year graduation rate two times higher than that of public universities (Docking & Curton, 2015), and the earnings of those who graduate from liberal arts colleges are known to be higher than those from other types of higher education institutions (HEIs) (Carnevale et al., 2020).

All these could lead one to believe that liberal arts colleges have been doing well. But the reality is that, despite their quality education and practical achievements, small liberal arts colleges, particularly private ones, have faced various challenges and difficulties more serious than larger research and/or public universities. As Moner et al. (2020) succinctly summarize, “Institutions [*small liberal arts colleges*] are struggling to maintain viability, sustain revenue, and assert value in the face of changing demographics, dramatically increasing costs, neoliberal re-imaginings of higher education as a factory to produce skilled workers and ... (p. 1).” With the COVID-19 pandemic, the situation seems to be getting worse. In the USA which has the largest number of small private liberal arts colleges in the world, we hear that several small private liberal arts colleges have closed completely or announced their intention to close the entire institution or end their undergraduate program in a couple of years (Aspegren, 2021; Gordon, 2021; Seltzer, 2020). It is said that small liberal arts colleges in the USA are under greater pressure compared with their counterparts in other countries (Marber & Araya, 2017; Moner et al., 2020). To a lesser degree, small private liberal colleges in Asia and other regions have also furloughed their staff and hired more part-timers and used endowment funds for emergency purposes, seen a rapid decrease in donations, and/or expanded so called practical programs, while public liberal arts colleges and larger universities remain in a better financial situation.

As Jung et al. (2016) argued, the story, of course, is not all one of doom and gloom. Despite the deteriorating financial situation and the decline in enrollment, there are still liberal arts colleges that attract good students and continue to thrive: there are still students, parents, and employers who appreciate the contribution of liberal arts education to the individual, business, and society as a whole, and many HEIs and governments that promote integration of liberal arts education into their curricular. Several liberal arts colleges have survived and thrived by adding vocational and professional programs, expanding liberal arts education into their graduate programs; through the strengthening of their linkage with business and real-world sectors, and more rigorously promoting fund-raising campaigns, increasing tuition fees, admitting more students, and generally diversifying their programs and services (Ferrall, 2011; Jung et al., 2016; Kirby & van der Wende, 2016). Many liberal arts colleges have

sought cost-effectiveness of their expensive personalized education by collaborating with other HEIs at bilateral, national, regional, and international levels.

This chapter will further consider the above-mentioned challenges most liberal arts colleges have been experiencing, especially during the recent crisis. It will then introduce the book's chapters and explain the steps some successful liberal arts colleges have taken to redefine and reform their liberal arts education to overcome such challenges. We discuss the problems, opportunities, and good practices from: (1) the diverse perspectives of the authors from different regions (e.g., Africa, North and South America, Asia, Europe, and Middle East), (2) the emerging body of literature on higher education, liberal arts education, globalization, and technology-based learning, (3) our own work on higher education and liberal arts education (Jung et al., 2016, 2018, 2021; Mok, 2016, 2017; Mok & Montgomery, 2021; Mok et al., 2021a, 2021b, 2021c), and our collective experiences and collaborations with colleagues from liberal arts colleges in numerous countries including China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, India, Nepal, the Philippines, the UK, the Netherlands, the USA, as well as countries in Africa and Latin America.

In our book title, we use *liberal learning* as a term that highlights the main purpose of liberal arts education and as a general term which represents other similar concepts such as liberal education, general education, and liberal arts and sciences liberal arts and sciences education. Across the chapters, however, we let our authors make their own choice of the terms to fit their unique contextual features and views on liberal arts education. In many cases, these related terms will be used interchangeably. In other cases, a particular term will be used to highlight a certain aspect of liberal arts education.

1.2 Experiencing Challenges and Difficulties During the Crisis

We live in a world in flux where technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution are advancing at an unprecedented rate, the young population is sharply declining, the education and research market is becoming increasingly international, collaborative and at the same time highly competitive, and lifelong learning is becoming the norm to prepare people for multiple careers and future jobs that are not yet existent. Even the best institutions are not immune to these rapid changes, and small liberal arts colleges are more greatly affected. Serious challenges faced by liberal arts institutions in different parts of the world and possible directions are extensively discussed in several recent publications including Ferrall (2011), Chaves (2014), Jung et al. (2016), Kirby and van der Wende (2016), Moner et al. (2020), Roth (2014), and Volk and Benedix (2020), and we will therefore not reiterate those in this chapter. Instead, we will highlight a few serious issues that are experienced or at least perceived by small liberal arts colleges especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Money has been the most serious issue of small liberal arts colleges as Docking and Curton (2015) frankly pointed out: as indicated above, with the COVID-19 pandemic, small private liberal arts colleges are confronted with more seriously decreased revenues and unexpected expenditures. Nietzel (2020) and Smola (2020) report the difficulties that several liberal arts colleges in the USA have faced since the pandemic broke out, including another round of budget cuts, laying off of employees, and downsizing or terminating programs. Pomona College, one of the top liberal arts colleges in the USA known for rich resources, had to do temporarily furlough its non-faculty staff during the pandemic. Similarly, Smith College and Dartmouth College furloughed their employees or cut working hours. Doane University (Nebraska), Ohio Wesleyan University, and Illinois Wesleyan University eliminated, consolidated, or downsized several academic programs due to continuously declining enrollments and the financial strain due to the pandemic. There is no doubt that, with only a few exceptions, large-scale research universities and public universities have also faced financial issues. However, small private liberal arts colleges across various regions have generally suffered more due to their limited sources of financing, diseconomies of scale, and more spending on infrastructure and training for online education at institutional and individual levels.

Besides financial difficulties, many residential liberal arts colleges have also seen technological and pedagogical issues while teaching and learning online and dissatisfaction with online course delivery, as reported by their students and faculty during the pandemic. For example, STEM faculty and students at Wesley College in the USA expressed strong preference for face-to-face classroom sessions even though various teaching and learning supports were provided during emergency remote teaching (D'Souza et al., 2020). Their dissatisfaction with new changes is understandable as liberal education values close contacts and communication between faculty and students and among students in a residential community of learning while enjoying teaching and learning in high-context small classes. In a Japanese context, faculty members of the International Christian University (ICU) reported a range of issues with emergency online teaching during the pandemic: among which were students' lack of motivation and competencies for self-directed online learning and faculty members' difficulties in utilizing hardware or software for online instruction (Jung et al., 2021). Similarly, a study led by Lingnan University, a liberal arts college in Hong Kong (Xiong et al., 2020) reported that more than 60% of the university students perceived online education to be worse than face-to-face instruction mainly due to lack of in-class and after-class interactions and unstable internet connections. Increased institutional support, such as training workshops and manuals and on-demand troubleshooting, updated infrastructure, faculty's increasing experience with online education, and students' quick adaptability, did result in these colleges reporting increased student satisfaction and faculty adjustment (Anstey et al., 2020; D'Souza et al., 2020; Jung et al., 2021).

Another challenge that universities in general have faced is increased mental health issues of their students. Several studies have been conducted across the world to investigate the mental health of students in large universities; for example, those of Fruehwirth et al. (2021), Li et al. (2021), and Wang et al. (2020) which have revealed

increased stress and anxiety of students during the pandemic. Similar mental health and well-being issues have been reported in liberal arts colleges. Flame University, a liberal arts college in India, conducted a survey with 570 college students (mostly female) which revealed that around 37% had serious depression and about 28% had moderate or severe anxiety (Shankar & Bhutada, 2021). Another study conducted by ICU (Center for Teaching and Learning, 2020) with 1208 students who took online classes in Spring, 2020, reported increased volumes of physical and mental issues that students experienced while taking online courses. Common issues included backache, eye strain, headache, tinnitus, and psychological stress with the main causes of these issues reported as excessive screen time, difficulties with staying motivated, and lack of interactions. There is a fear that disruptions of campus life and mental health during the COVID-19 may cause more serious problems, such as a decrease in the number of applicants to small liberal arts colleges.

1.3 Redefining Liberal Arts Education

The various challenges and difficulties discussed above have affected HEIs, including liberal arts colleges around the world. While the core function of higher education remains unchanged, the needs of society, students, and HEIs are constantly emerging and evolving in response to changes in demographic, sociocultural, political, and technological sectors. To survive and thrive, HEIs must innovate to adapt to the changing needs of different stakeholders. Over the recent years, especially since the pandemic broke out, several liberal arts colleges have disappeared completely, some have been forced, or have decided, to embrace vocational and professional education more widely, yet others have cut their already tight budgets, laid off employees, and/or terminated majors or programs (see Baker et al., 2012; Ferrall, 2011; Jung et al., 2016; Nietzel, 2020; Smola, 2020, for examples). Some liberal arts colleges have even begun to redefine the liberal arts for the coming years. When the pandemic is over or indeed becomes endemic, there might be fewer liberal arts colleges and programs left, and those both surviving and thriving will most likely be those colleges that have successfully handled the challenges and difficulties and have made adjustments and changes in their goals, curriculum, and teaching methods. This leaves the important question for liberal arts educators and policymakers of: *how should we maintain our core values of liberal arts education during a time of urgent social, technological, and economic pressures and at the same time, how should we rethink and redefine liberal arts education for the future?* To address this question, we have invited authors who have actively led research in and practice of liberal arts education and higher education to share their unique experiences and knowledge for the future development of liberal arts education by penning their own chapters in this book.

The premise of this book is that a liberal arts education is an approach to preparing students to develop skills in creative problem-solving, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration, while aiding in the development of a moral and civil character (Chopp, 2014), in addition developing “a well learned and highly ethical person (Ma,

2018, p. 3)” as well as an undergraduate learning process across all fields of study. The book will highlight that the aim of liberal arts education should not be to teach an array of humanities courses, but to bring *liberal learning* to students by encompassing both arts and sciences including practical and professional areas. Liberal learning happens when learning is broad and deep, open to different ideas, people, and experiences, and consciously and reflectively engages in multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary learning trajectories.

We have been observing both a decline in liberal arts enrollments and the emergence of a wide range of new models and approaches to liberal arts education experimented with by traditional liberal arts colleges and other types of liberal arts programs around the world. Now is the right time to understand these trends in liberal arts education, discuss the challenges and opportunities they bring, and explore the innovative models and initiatives for new liberal arts that are being created by forward-thinking colleges and universities.

1.4 Organization of the Book

This book will address questions including, but not limited to:

- What changes or lack of changes have been observed in the core values, concepts, and models of liberal learning across different contexts and in different institutional settings?
- How can we relate such values, concepts, and models to liberal (and broader) learning?
- Have we observed tensions between the existing models of higher education and liberal arts and sciences education?
- What difficulties/challenges have liberal arts colleges and programs in each region faced and how have those issues been addressed?
- How are various types of institutions, in different parts of the world, addressing the challenge of preparing their students for an unpredictable, uncertain, and inter- and cross-cultural future?
- What are some newly emerging and successful models of liberal learning, linking learning to a vocational and professional education?

Each chapter will address one or more of these questions. We discuss the chapters below, grouping them into three themes. The chapters include theoretical and conceptual discussions, case studies and lessons learned from different regions, research implications, and practical and policy advice to help practitioners/educators and policy leaders in rethinking and improving values, goals, and practices of their liberal arts education.

1.4.1 Part I: Setting the Scene

Part I of this book discusses the traditions of liberal arts education and recent changes in higher education as these topics are the critical foundation necessary in redefining and reinventing liberal arts education.

Two editors of the book, Jung and Mok, open this chapter with a discussion with a broad context of the difficulties/challenges that small liberal arts colleges and programs have faced and how those difficulties/challenges have been addressed in the subsequent chapters.

In Chap. 2, Jiang explains liberal arts traditions in the East and the West using two specific cases: in China and the USA, and compares respective traditions and discusses how they have shaped the concept and practice of liberal arts education in each society. He then offers recommendations for policymakers, educators, and researchers who wish to develop or reform liberal arts education.

In Chap. 3, Yonezawa and Shimauchi focus on so called international liberal arts education that is spreading especially outside of the USA, based on case studies of five countries with different geopolitical contexts, namely the Netherlands, Australia, Malaysia, South Korea, and Japan. Their chapter helps readers understand an important change that has happened in undergraduate education and liberal arts traditions in the Asia-Pacific and Europe.

1.4.2 Part II: Diverse Approaches to Reinventing Liberal Learning

Part II, across its 10 chapters, considers diverse approaches that liberal arts colleges and universities in Asia, North and South America, Africa, Europe, and the Middle East are taking to both redefine and reinvent liberal learning in their own individual context.

Schneider opens Chap. 4 with an explanation of historical backgrounds and the key concepts embedded in the Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs) for liberal learning and how the American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) identified those ELOs. She goes on to examine the ELOs' implications for both civic and career-related learning and explores the possibilities of applying the ELOs and other AAC&U strategies to the development of frameworks for achieving liberal learning in contexts beyond the USA.

In Chap. 5, Mike explores the concept of “the Development University”, a foundational notion that the American University of Nigeria (AUN) in Africa has adopted in planning and developing its curricular, pedagogy, and research activities. She discusses AUN's approach to reinventing its liberal arts program in which all students must be trained in three areas: entrepreneurship and marketing, arts and sciences, and information technology, to promote liberal learning across both traditional liberal arts subjects and practical fields of study. She further discusses AUN's development

strategies including the Feed and Read Program which was created in support of Boko Haram refugees and other sustainability support initiatives and women empowerment schemes.

In Chap. 6, Zalles, Montúfar, and Velasco shift attention to the approach taken by Ecuador to reinventing liberal learning based on critical analysis of recent challenges that higher education in South America has faced. They discuss how Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ) has responded to those challenges and through which it has become an outlier within the local and regional higher education system. They attribute USFQ's provision of affordable high-quality liberal education to its unique approaches such as combining the liberal arts philosophy and an entrepreneurial spirit in the curriculum, maintaining quality faculty via continuous professional development and research support, and internationalization of the campus.

Moving to South Korea, Lee examines how liberal arts education is integrated in law in Chap. 7. While integrating liberal arts into a practical field is, to say the least, quite challenging, Lee presents evidence to realize this vision of Christian Jurisprudence as a liberal art, despite initial difficulties and incompetence. The passion and capacity building of its faculty are indicated as one key factor to produce successful results in liberal arts education in law.

Mok opens Chap. 8 with a review of the foundation of the Alliance of Asian Liberal Arts Universities (AALAU) co-launched by 15 Asian universities in 2017 and asks such questions as: why and how have traditional research universities in Asia tried to introduce liberal arts education as an approach to higher education reform and how successful and effective the reform has been in their own context. Mok further discusses the major challenges and opportunities for the development of liberal learning in Asia in the post-COVID-19 era, drawing implications for policy leaders at major comprehensive universities when engaging in integrating liberal arts education into their education system. Mok also discusses how regional cooperation and collaboration among Asian universities will become a growing trend both during and post-COVID-19.

In Chap. 9, Al Lail tackles an important issue facing HEIs and women's education in the Middle East by analyzing the case of Effat University located in Saudi Arabia. She examines the unique forms of liberal education Effat offers in order to advance female empowerment in the region and discusses how Effat's liberal education has contributed to female education and the expected increase in their participation in the workforce to 25% by 2030, as set in the National Transformation Program.

While many liberal arts colleges focus on undergraduate programs, Xiong examines views on having graduate programs in liberal arts colleges in Chap. 10; based on thorough review of related literature and case studies in different regions. He focuses on two types of graduate programs at Lingnan University in Hong Kong, examining their features and internal and external challenges. He proposes possible approaches to the sustainable development of graduate programs which integrate liberal arts characteristics and seize opportunities in the future.

Now shifting to Europe, in Chap. 11, Abrahám examines the emergence of three models of liberal arts colleges since the return of liberal arts education to Europe by the Bologna Process in 1999. The three models are: the independent model,

the University College model, and the integrated model. Based on the overview of about 80 HEIs in Europe that are identified as a liberal arts college or inspired by a liberal arts model of education, the author discusses how these HEIs collaborate at the European Consortium of Liberal Arts and Sciences and respond to ECOLAS' Manifesto Calling for reform of the current undergraduate model of liberal arts education.

In Chap. 12, Hastings examines a new partnership model that has been created between the International Christian University in Tokyo and the Japan ICU Foundation in New York. While regional partnerships (e.g., AALAU in Chap. 8 and ECOLAS in Chap. 11) are important for reform and reinvention of liberal arts programs and members' capacity building, this bilateral partnership between a college and an independent foundation located so far from each other sheds light on the understanding of a new partnership model that is grounded in global citizenship education and in the service of the common good. The author discusses JICUF's initiatives including Global Link, the United States Scholars Initiative, and the Syrian Scholars Initiative that have recently begun applying this new partnership model and concludes the chapter with advice for policy leaders and educators for future partnerships to promote global liberal learning.

In Chap. 13, Ke and Zhang examine how five leading liberal arts colleges and liberal arts programs within large comprehensive/research universities in East Asia have developed and implemented innovative approaches to enrich student learning experiences online since the breakout of COVID-19. Virtual exchange programs, short-term international academic conferences and cultural events, and collaborative online international learning or COIL are among those effective strategies to enhance students' global learning and communication opportunities when in-person visits are limited. Problem-based learning or competency-based learning is found to be promising in motivating students' engagement in discussions and collaborative work.

1.4.3 Part III: Toward the Future

Part III considers the future of liberal learning in the post-pandemic era by examining crisis leadership in liberal arts colleges and the possibilities of online learning reinventing liberal arts education and exploring possible scenarios for liberal arts colleges in the post-pandemic future.

Gigliotti, author of a recent book titled *Crisis Leadership in Higher Education: Theory and Practice*, opens Chap. 14 with a snapshot of possible crises facing liberal arts colleges in and outside the USA. He then discusses three effective leadership themes for liberal arts colleges together with effective risk and crisis prevention, management, and communication during the multiple phases of such crises based on related research and theories. He argues for a values-driven approach to crisis leadership and urges policy leaders of liberal arts colleges to clarify and reinvent the unique mission of their colleges as they engage in both immediate actions and

strategic, long-term, and sustainable development for the future of their respective college.

In Chap. 15, Einfeld explores innovative ways of creating online learning environments in order to reinvent liberal arts education and improve liberal learning based on a review of perceptions, practices, and lessons learned from online liberal arts education before and during the pandemic. He further articulates various approaches to promoting virtue and civic engagement in a digital age, combining in-context and online learning, and also providing lifelong learning and micro-credentials in the future.

Jung opens Chap. 16 with a discussion on opportunities and positive experiences which liberal arts colleges have accumulated during the pandemic that could be used strategically to reinvent the colleges at the institutional level. She proposes six possible scenarios for liberal arts colleges in the post-pandemic future: *Back to normal*, *Blended learning*, *Flex curriculum*, *Learning online and Experience in residence*, *Open networking*, and *Lifetime liberal learning*. She argues that in selecting and adjusting a scenario, or a combination of scenarios, policymakers must carefully examine the extent of disruption that their college is both willing and able to make for the uncertain future in consultation of key stakeholder groups.

Finally, two editors of the book, Mok and Jung conclude this volume in Chap. 17 with the integration of the key takeaways from the previous chapters and discussion on remaining issues and future development agendas.

1.5 Concluding Remark

We think that the greatest strength of this book is in the wide diversity of perspectives and experiences presented by our international authors who have examined issues of liberal arts education in their own unique contexts. We hope these diverse perspectives and approaches engage our readers in further discussion of the challenge in examining and exploring possible directions for future liberal learning.

In the last two years, higher education systems across the globe have confronted the unprecedented global health crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic: teaching and student learning have been adversely disrupted especially when faculty and students have been forced to utilize an online environment. Notwithstanding, the crisis has also created new opportunities for academics to seriously reflect upon the value of face-to-face interactions in teaching and learning in higher education environments. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, various international surveys have repeatedly reported on student dissatisfaction with having online teaching and learning as the only platforms available (Amoah & Mok, 2020; Bergan et al., 2021; Mok et al. 2021a, 2021b, 2021c). Although we cannot entirely discard the value of introducing technology-enabled platforms for university teaching and learning, it is obvious that learning experiences cannot be fully maximized without face-to-face interactions, especially in higher education and learning which go beyond cognitive dimension and include social, emotional, and mental aspects

(Aoki et al., 2022). According to Selingo (2021), three simultaneous forces are driving demand for enhancing student learning for the post-COVID-19 period and higher education leaders must pay sufficient attention to these forces; (1) student well-being, (2) appropriate adoption of technology in teaching, and (3) marketing to the post-COVID-19 generation.

How would HEIs convince the post-COVID-19 generations to pay the high fees to learn and obtain higher education degrees? Does higher education still matter to them in the post-COVID-19 era? What benefits could they obtain from HEIs if online learning remains the primary mode of teaching? Critical reflections on the value of liberal arts education are needed with special emphasis on whole-person development, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach in knowledge creation, together with experiential learning forming a core dimension of higher education. The COVID-19 pandemic has indeed created space for leaders in higher education to critically revisit the importance of liberal arts education with a core objective of nurturing and preparing leaders for the uncertain future. Whether we are believers in liberal arts education or not, colleagues working in higher education must critically reimagine the future having been confronted with the COVID-19 crisis (Locke, 2021; Mok, 2022). HEIs must become more proactive in responding to rapid social, economic, political, and geopolitical changes because the future is very uncertain. HEIs also need to engage future generations in exploring new knowledge emerging from hybridity, intertwining innovation with the arts and sciences for an “integral education”. Moreover, HEIs should go beyond teaching hard knowledge to students and engage them in education with a strong emphasis on human dimension for promoting “education with a soul”, particularly when the whole world has tried very hard to push for STEM education (UNESCO, 2021). For a better future, we have a task to prepare our future generations to keep abreast of hard sciences and innovation in technology while at the same time not losing sight of the strategic importance of preparing our future leaders in caring for human betterment. Liberal arts education would then serve the uniquely significant role in higher education to nurture *Caring Leaders with Glocal vision* who can think globally and act locally to develop a better world. This book shares success stories and challenges that liberal arts colleges in diverse contexts have experienced while nurturing such leaders.

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Chapter 2

The Liberal Arts Traditions in Higher Education: The East and the West



You Guo Jiang

Abstract Over the last three decades, liberal arts education has become an emerging phenomenon in the East and the West. The revival of interest in liberal arts education in the mid-1990s demonstrates that the governments and the universities have begun to realize that current curricula, with their narrow focus on professional training, are insufficient to enable students to meet today's global needs and challenges. The liberal arts, they are learning, not only lead to broad general knowledge, but also develop skills crucial to critical thinking, creativity, moral reasoning, and innovation. Indeed, the reemergence of liberal arts education is a result of the great need to educate well-rounded global citizens who possess the above-listed skills, as well a sense of social and moral responsibility in the East and the West contexts. Liberal arts education will have economic, political, social, and cultural effects in international society. Globally, liberal arts programs and curriculum reforms have emerged in many countries. This chapter will focus on China as an example for the perspective of the East and on the United States for the perspective of the West.

Keywords Higher education · Tradition · History · East and West

2.1 The Liberal Arts Tradition in the East

The emergence of liberal arts education in China in the last two decades is a new phenomenon (Li, 2006). Nevertheless, higher learning and liberal arts education have a long history dating back more than 2500 years to the Confucian era. For example, in *Analects* (2:15), “the Master said: ‘To study and not think is a waste. To think and not study is dangerous.’” Hayhoe (1989, p. 54) states that “traditional Chinese higher education can be traced back as early as the Eastern Zhou dynasty (771–221 CE). By the Tang Dynasty (618–907 AD), there was a whole range of higher education institutions (HEIs), headed by the *Guo Zixue* (school for the sons of the emperor) and the *Tai Xue* (often translated university or greatest learning and study) which took

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I. Jung and K. H. Mok (eds.), *The Reinvention of Liberal Learning around the Globe*,
Crossing Cultures: Liberal Learning for a World in Flux,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-8265-1_2

major classical texts of the Confucian school as their curricular content.” Around the tenth century CE in the Tang dynasty, the private academy *Shu Yuan* (“academy of classical learning,” a system of schools in ancient China) was set up in China. With government support, it was the main institution of the Chinese higher education system for the next one thousand years.

Fundamentally, Confucius taught that social harmony could be achieved only if humans were free from deprivation and given proper education, with a sage-king governing the nation. Confucianism emphasizes that the value of education is first of all for individual fulfillment, and then for the purpose of social development. Although Confucius was interested in building an ideal society under the sage-king’s leadership, he also believed that personal moral perfection was the foundation of a good society (Zhang, 2006). Personal education and cultivation were at the very core of Confucian thinking. The intrinsic value of education for personal development has remained the most essential idea in the Confucian tradition, and it exerted a dominant influence on the Chinese educational system until the 1920s. In ancient Chinese culture and Confucian tradition, to promote all-around development, students were required to master six practical disciplines called the Six Arts (*liù yì*): rites, music, archery, chariot racing, calligraphy, and mathematics. Men who excelled in these Six Arts were thought to have reached the state of perfection: the stage of the sage or gentleman. From the point of view of classical Chinese philosophy, the Confucian tradition provides some roots for liberal arts education; although the Six Arts are not directly related to liberal arts education as it is usually understood today, they can be regarded as an ancient parallel to liberal arts education.

Moreover, Confucian educational ideology emphasized the responsibility of an individual to society and the nation. It is thus conducive to cultivating global citizens, which can be considered as the core value of contemporary liberal arts education. Although Confucius and his teachings stress personal moral development and integration, he was also concerned with the social function of education. For instance, in *The Great Learning*, the eight characters of moral and self-cultivation show how personal integration and social order are closely connected:

Things being investigated, knowledge became complete. Their knowledge being complete, their thoughts were sincere. Their thoughts being sincere, their hearts were then rectified. Their hearts being rectified, their persons were cultivated. Their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated. Their families being regulated, their states were rightly governed. Their states being rightly governed, the whole kingdom was made tranquil and happy.

In *The Great Learning*, Confucius also stressed five habits: study extensively; enquire accurately; reflect carefully; discriminate clearly; practice earnestly. In the Confucian tradition, liberal arts education emphasizes the purpose of education as becoming a “gentleman or sage” through social, emotional, moral, intellectual, and psycho-spiritual integration. The content of education correspondingly includes broad knowledge.

From very early times, Chinese thinkers and society accepted that Confucian teachings are the center of education. *The Great Learning* requires an internal transformation, a conscious decision to open oneself to possibilities in historical, cultural,

and social conditions. Confucianism as expressed in the *Four Books* is a guide to becoming fully human. More than that, Confucianism shows systematically how to integrate the perspective of social life into the ordinary dimension of one's life, and articulates the purpose and meaning of education. The value of education is to help a person to live a fully human life—a life of *Ren* (humaneness)—and to realize that humanity and the achievement of sagehood are the supreme goals of all people, to be fulfilled by an education based particularly on the curriculum of the Six Arts: rites, music, archery, chariot racing, calligraphy, and mathematics.

Although Confucian classics were dominant in curricula and helped to maintain the social hierarchy, some thoughts from Daoism and Buddhism were incorporated into the Chinese education system in one way or another. The ideals of Neo-Confucianism from the Song Dynasty (960–1278 CE), which encompassed more than traditional Confucianism and included other elements, were canonized and adopted as standard content in the civil service examinations that qualified people to become scholar-officials within the imperial bureaucracy. As Hayhoe and Peterson (2001, p. 2) state:

Ever since the era of Confucius (551–470 B.C.E.), Chinese thinkers have stressed the importance of education as a means of self-cultivation and recruiting “men of talent” to administer the affairs of state. The value that the Chinese culture traditionally placed on education, both for self-enlightenment and the service of the state, was greatly strengthened. [It was formerly] known as Daxue (Studies of the Way) and today as Neo-Confucianism.

In the late Ming Dynasty, scholars such as Huang Zong Xi and Gu Yan Wu were among those who opposed the civil service examination system and who sharply criticized it for retarding Chinese development. As a result of the Western powers' invasion of China in the late nineteenth century, science and technology courses were added to the curriculum that had previously comprised the Confucian classics. The last Qing Dynasty government began to send some schoolboys to study advanced Western sciences and technology in the United States and subsequently in Japan. By 1875, the Qing government had sent 125 students to the United States, and about 25,000 students were sent to Japan between 1890 and 1911. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the abolition of the centuries-old civil examination system transformed the structure of the old education system. Major courses in arts, sciences, law, commerce, medicine, agriculture, and engineering were added to the university curriculum in China (Hayhoe, 1989). Liang Qi-Chao, the late Qing Dynasty reformer, educator, and scholar who drafted the first prospectus for Peking University (the former Metropolitan University) in 1898, emphasized the integration of Western and Eastern knowledge in education and pointed out that educating well-rounded citizens is the foundation of education. In 1902, the government of the Qing Dynasty promulgated the first policy on university education in modern China—the *Regulations of the Metropolitan University*—which aims at setting the correct goal for students' development and training well-rounded citizens (Shu, 1961).

Looking back at China's long history of educational development, its traditional culture and education also dealt with the ideas and trends of liberal arts education. The earliest liberal arts education in China can be traced back to the Confucius era

two thousand years ago, including the introduction of the ancient academy system in the Song Dynasty. The peak of liberal arts education in China was during the Republic of China period. Due to the influence and influence of Western scientific and humanistic education concepts, a group of famous educators and reformers who had studied Chinese and Western culture, such as Ma Xiangbo, Cai Yuanpei, Mei Yiqi, and Zhang Boling, were committed to the cultivation of persons who had a thorough knowledge of China and the West through liberal arts education in comprehensive universities. Such values as free critical spirit, innovative consciousness, professionalism, and social responsibility were emphasized. For example, Aurora University and Fudan University led by Ma Xiangbo, Peking University and Tsinghua University led by Cai Yuanpei and Mei Yiqi, Nankai University led by Zhang Boling, and even South-west United University during the Anti-Japanese War emphasized those values listed above in terms of student training, curriculum settings, and teacher development. All stressed a philosophy of liberal arts education.

In fact, a large number of talented students who have Chinese and Western knowledge, civic awareness, innovative thinking, and a critical spirit cultivated during the Republic of China era have made great contributions to the development and construction of New China. With the founding of New China, in response to the needs of the country's economic construction, socialist development, and the influence of political ideas, China adopted the Soviet education model from the early 1950s to the 1980s to cultivate specialized talents, liberal arts education ideas, concepts, and curriculum that were neglected during this period. Universities have been reorganized or merged and adjusted into professional colleges to train and draw upon all kinds of specialized talents for the country. However, this Soviet model also has many drawbacks, such as its emphasis on majors that ignore fundamental knowledge; its emphasis on science and technology that ignore the humanities; focus on skills and quality; focus on the social but ignoring the individual; and focusing on theory but ignoring practice.

For a long time, Chinese education has only imparted canned knowledge and information to students. Students were mainly passive receivers and listeners, lacking personality development, rather than being active participants and creators—and unwilling to challenge and doubt authority. Thus, changes must be made. Facing modernization, facing the future, facing the world, and integrating with the world is not just a simple slogan and direction, but a theme that needs constant thinking and new forms of education. Today, the continuous economic development of globalization has had a huge impact on the development model of world education, especially liberal arts education; these factors have also had an impact on Chinese society, culture, and education.

Being more aware of some problems in teaching and the general comprehensive quality of college students since the mid-1990s, the Chinese government and universities have reexamined the purpose of and the demand for quality education. Then they have begun to pilot liberal arts education models based on “cultural quality education” in some colleges and universities in order to overcome the limitations of China's over-specialization of higher education since the 1950s. With the increasing exchanges between Chinese educational institutions and their foreign counterparts,

Chinese society and the higher education system have assimilated some of the educational views of Western countries and regions, especially with respect to liberal and general education. Whole-person education has become better known and appreciated. Many Chinese universities have begun to imitate liberal arts education courses and concepts in Europe, America, Hong Kong, or Taiwan. However, in the past ten years or so, liberal arts education in many universities has gradually become a kind of additional, window-dressing, a fad or an embellishment. Substantial change has not occurred. In fact, most colleges and universities still focus on professional education. Thus, the cultivation and nurturing of students' humanities, morals, social skills, innovation, psychology, ideological value, and critical spirit are overlooked.

As China further enhances its dream to make the country culturally strong through its higher education, the Chinese government also tries to promote liberal arts education and integrate it as a more mainstream of higher education. In October 1995, the Ministry of Education held the first national conference on cultural quality education in Chinese colleges and universities at the Huazhong University of Science and Technology in Wuhan. This unprecedented conference laid a foundation for the initiation of general education in China (Li, 2006). After the three-year pilot program ended, the central Chinese government and the Ministry of Education in 1998 promulgated the "Opinions on Enhancing Undergraduates' Cultural Quality Education," which established a directory committee for cultural education.

In 1999, the Ministry of Education ratified 32 "Centers for the Enhancement of Cultural Education of University Students" to promote the reform and reconstruction of the undergraduate system. A year later, the Ministry of Education promulgated another policy emphasizing that cultural quality education is the foundation for implementing the national program of making China prosperous through science and education. Since then, the concept of "general education" has been incorporated into many institutions of higher education in Mainland China. Although the Chinese government and universities at different levels have made great efforts to promote liberal arts education, its implementation through policy reform, revisions of teaching plans and curricula, and faculty participation will continue to pose a challenge. Nevertheless, policy reform has established a solid foundation for developing the unique role and characteristics of liberal arts education in the context of building a powerful nation of higher education in China.

Although many Chinese colleges and universities vigorously promote the spirit and philosophy of liberal arts education in terms of policies, concepts, and curriculum arrangements, in practice, due to the drawbacks of the curriculum, obsolete teaching methods, and the awareness and understanding of liberal arts education by faculty and students is still under development. The philosophy and development of liberal arts education have not yet been fully integrated into the education system.

2.2 The Liberal Arts Tradition in the West

Western liberal arts education originated from the philosophy of education proposed by the ancient Greek philosophers Aristotle, Plato, and many others. Socrates emphasized the pursuit of truth, valued moral education, advocated dialectics and the concept of continuous reflection, which greatly influenced many philosophers and educators after him. These philosophers believe that the goal of liberal arts education was not only to cultivate professional skills, but also to help develop rhetorical, reasoning, and reflection skills through the teaching of humanities and natural science. For example, Cicero's liberal arts education included astronomy, poetry, literature, natural sciences, politics, and ethics. Plato's liberal arts education included poetry, drama, literature, mathematics, logic, astronomy, rhetoric, geometry, music, and debate. Aristotle divided the content of liberal arts education into six parts: logic, mathematics, geometry, astronomy, music, and philosophy. The traditional liberal arts education in ancient Greece and Rome significantly helped the development of higher education in the West. David Hume, Henri Newman, Adam Smith furthered the development of liberal arts education in the United States. In the eleventh century, Italy's University of Bologna, the subsequent establishment of Oxford, Cambridge, and Paris universities, all inherited the liberal education philosophy of ancient Greece and Rome (Nussbaum, 1997). From the twentieth century, the earliest educational institutions in Europe were established as monastic and clerical schools of higher learning—the predecessor of the university. At first, these monastic and clerical schools trained only monks and future priests, but were gradually opened to the laity to train future teachers.

Harvard College, established in 1636, also followed the traditional ancient Greek and Roman traditions of free education and curriculum (Jiang, 2013). However, in the early nineteenth century, the Enlightenment in Europe and America began to dominate. At the same time, after the independence of the United States, the Enlightenment view began to develop into the Midwest. Practical subjects such as science and technology became increasingly valued by society and government.

As the time fast passed, in September 1827, Reverend Jeremiah Day, president of Yale University, organized a five-person professor committee to discuss whether the classical humanities should be eliminated and published a milestone in the history of American education the following year. The reformed “Yale Report,” also known as the “Report on the Course of Liberal Education” emphasized adding more subjects to the original curriculum and pointed out that the purpose of university education is not to teach a single skill, but to provide a broad liberal arts foundation. It is not to create experts in a certain industry, but to train leaders. As an educational institution, universities should provide students with mental disciplines, expand the power of mental faculties, and enrich the mind with knowledge.

The “Yale Report” stressed long-term, systematic effort and nurturing to improve the cognitive functions of students. It argued that relying on one course, or reading a few books, or listening to a few lectures, or staying in a certain college for a few months does not produce the desired results, that the goal of university teaching is

to lay the foundation for excellence in education, and that excellent teaching must be broad, deep, and solid. The “Yale Report” also pointed out that the study of classical subjects can help train various professionals and leaders. It also advocated a comprehensive education, that is, one based on a liberal arts education that offers a wide range of courses. The “Yale Report” has profoundly influenced the future of American higher education, especially the development and reform of liberal arts education. It has laid a solid foundation for the education of innovative, critically thinking, innovative, ethical, and socially responsible citizens (Yale Report, 1828).

In the 1930s, the president of the University of Chicago Robert M. Hutchins promoted the reform and innovation of liberal arts education in American higher education. Hutchins believed that since the second half of the nineteenth century, economic development and utilitarianism negatively affected American education. Over emphasis on curricula and professionalization had a negative impact on students. By neglecting subjects, such as the humanities and history and emphasizing science and technology subjects also leads to an impoverished education. Hutchins boldly criticized American higher education that lost the spirit and philosophy of university traditions and overemphasized utilitarianism, pragmatism, professionalism, scientism, and market-oriented secularism. In his famous book “American Higher Education,” Hutchins maintained that American education—from middle school to university—has lost its direction and value orientation and became merely vocational training and a diploma mill. Many professions expect universities to cultivate science and technology by overlooking the disciplines that lay the foundation for university education, such as the humanities. He also believed that universities must have their own ideas and educational spirit. A liberal arts education composed of different departments can add much to a university’s spirit and make it better and more desirable. By majoring and selecting courses in humanities, students can be both trained for their future work and educated with a broader base. Hutchins merged the entire curriculum into four major aspects, namely the humanities, the social sciences, the natural sciences, and the biological sciences, and then set up corresponding departments and courses. Hutchins believed that before students enter professional learning and research, they should also study “Western classics’ great books.” These subjects also constituted the basic blueprint of American higher education liberal arts curriculum in the first half of the twentieth century (Hutchins, 1936).

Since Yale University published the “Yale Report” in 1828 and the University of Chicago initiated the liberal education reform of 1929 under the leadership of Hutchins, liberal arts education in American universities has become a model for many countries and regions to follow. During the Second World War, in order to maintain the core values of Western civilization, the “General Education in a Free Society,” published by Harvard University in 1945, and commonly known as the Red Book, can be called the watershed of liberal arts education in American universities. It clearly pointed out that general education is a whole-person education that helps to cultivate the intellectual ability and critical skills of students. It likewise engenders the social responsibility and moral sense of good citizens, a spiritual freedom, respect for life, and a sound and balanced whole-person education. After the Great Depression and World War II, Harvard President Conant convened a group of scholars and

professors in order to reorganize the backward economy brought about by the war and cultivate students to bear their future moral responsibilities (Li, 2006).

After more than two years of discussion on general education in universities, Harvard President Conant pointed out in a 1945 report that the war focused more attention and discussion of education in American society as a whole, especially liberal arts education. For Conant, advanced information and technology, high-end cutting-edge science, and excellent foreign language skills were insufficient for a truly solid educational foundation. They could not fully help students to become persons with critical thinking, good communication, correct judgments, and distinguishing noble values. More was needed to help shape American cultural characteristics, models, and classic wisdom. He believed that university education must combine both the liberal arts and professional education in order to profit from the classical Western humanistic traditions and cultivate well-rounded, socially responsible, and ethical citizens (Harvard University, 1945).

With the continuous changes of society from the 1960s to the 1990s, US colleges and universities also seemingly emphasized a utilitarian education. In response to new problems and challenges, Harvard University, imitated by other universities in the United States, reformed its liberal arts education curriculum again in 2002, with the theme of “how to be a human and how to live” to help students integrate the knowledge they learned in school. On February 7, 2007, Harvard University published a report on its liberal arts education reform on its school website. This was the final report of Harvard’s three-year general education reform. This newly revised liberal arts education model covered eight areas: aesthetic education and explanatory thinking, culture and belief, empirical and mathematical reasoning, ethical thinking, life science, physical science, global society, and the United States in the world (Harvard University, 2007).

The idea of a liberal arts education originated from ancient Greece, which deeply influenced the world’s famous universities, such as Paris, Oxford, Cambridge in the Middle Ages. It then had a profound influence in the seventeenth century on the development of American academic culture and higher education. Following Descartes, Western science and technology have engendered hundreds of schools of thought. Technology and civilization have leapt to a new level. The industrial revolution also developed rapidly and has had a lasting and profound impact on the European continent. Since the nineteenth century, many universities in the United States have implemented or updated liberal arts education reforms, which combined science with humanities, majors, and liberal arts, and made them the core of the development of higher education. The humanities and holistic development became intrinsic elements of a quality education.

The founding of German research universities in the nineteenth century made science education and research a new mainstream subject in universities. Although the development of science education and technology has had a great impact and influence on traditional humanities and liberal arts education, many European and American universities have not ignored the development and importance of a liberal arts education.

With the development of the global economy in the past 30 years, because the United States has not been able to cultivate sufficient scientific and technological talents to meet the domestic demand and the impact of market utilitarianism, some experts and institutions suggest that more professional courses should be offered to cope with the knowledge-economy and need. To a certain extent, some universities in the United States have gradually neglected the traditional liberal arts and have progressively inclined to the professional education model in their courses. For the development of comprehensive qualities, especially in the planning of courses, a liberal arts education is almost a basic requirement for many universities. With the continuous changes in society, the liberal arts in American universities have not been rejected because of the increasing demand for professional education, university rankings, and market economy or academic utilitarianism. Instead, the liberal arts have increasingly gained more recognition and support. More attention to the ultimate value and significance of education, especially the liberal arts colleges with undergraduate education, has been given (Nussbaum, 1997).

Liberal arts education in the United States can be traced back to fifth-century BCE Greco-Roman and European origins. Although liberal arts education today varies from institution to institution, it continues to remain an integral part of the American undergraduate course of study. Socrates' vision of "the examined life" and Aristotle's idea of "reflective citizenship" are still valued highly in the mainstream of the American education system. Critical thinking, ethical reasoning, intellectual dexterity, creative imagination, cultural competency, direct and effective communication—these are the skills employers and the industry value most. They are what students learn through American higher education institution's approach to a liberal arts education of the whole person.

2.3 Some Challenges for the Future of Liberal Arts Education

2.3.1 Changes in Educational Trajectories

Since entering the twenty-first century, the development of globalization and internationalization has profoundly affected the political, economic, cultural, scientific, technological, art, and education fields of various countries. Great changes have taken place in the development of global education, which is also an inevitable historical result and trend. Massification of higher education, transnational education, overseas branch schools, joint degrees, international cooperation, education without borders, international education projects, international student and teacher mobility, university rankings, distance education, school-enterprise cooperation, joint training programs, bilateral cooperation projects, academic careers, quality assurance and certification agencies, and large-scale online education such as massive open online courses (MOOCs) have become a major development in the internationalization and

globalization of contemporary education. In the development of globalized education, more and more scholars believe that if contemporary students are to become leaders of the multicultural and future world, in addition to learning in science and technology and other professional knowledge, they also need to be formed by the liberal arts.

2.3.2 Increased Needs for Strong Liberal Arts Education

In the context of contemporary globalization, academic research on the development trend of future higher education requires us to have an international perspective. Education authorities and educational institutions in many countries around the world have not implemented liberal arts education courses through policy and curriculum reforms to varying degrees. Many colleges and universities have not adjusted the traditional mode of university education through curriculum innovation, teacher training, and project exchanges.

Both the East and the West's education views have not paid sufficient attention to the pedagogy of the liberal arts education of professional, innovative, ethically and critically minded, and socially responsible students educated in both the sciences and the humanities. The global higher education system's interest in cultivating students' critical spirit, innovative thinking, speculative models, problem-solving, and the ability to work in a diverse environment and cultural teams not only changes the way teachers teach and interact with students, but also changes the modes of learning and the content of students' learning. For example, the role of humanities and the liberal arts in education in different countries and regions discussed in this book is a good example of a changing curriculum thinking in a globalized and internationalized perspective. In the midst of these changes, HEIs, university administrators, and faculty members in the East and the West have not reevaluated their liberal arts programs and implementations in their best efforts. They need to think about how faculty members can lead and guide students to learn the essence of liberal arts education. Furthermore, the universities have not made clear policies to support and encourage faculty members and students to teach and appreciate liberal arts since many universities weigh more on STEM subjects.

2.4 Recommendations for Policy Makers, Researchers, and Educators

As all higher education systems have been affected by the COVID-19 in the past two years, the future development of liberal arts education will be affected as well. Universities and colleges are at a transformative moment. At least for the duration of the COVID-19 crisis and after, higher education is being forcibly transformed, HEIs

in the East and the West must continue to pay more attention to the liberal education values of interdisciplinary studies and critical thinking. The universities should not only train students with skills and technology, career training, or job market demands but prepare students for a more complex world.

On the other hand, many universities are facing financial crises and budget cuts during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, the humanities and social sciences as major parts of liberal arts education face the greatest threat from COVID-19 by far. The liberal arts programs have struggled to compete with STEM-centered degrees, and many will be forced to close. From the students' perspective, as they face a tougher job market and industry, many will focus on more pragmatic priorities, such as accounting, business, and finance. Liberal arts education may eventually lose their attraction to them.

Despite challenges and resistance, several HEIs in the East and the West have developed various policies and programs to promote liberal arts education throughout their system and adjusted their educational vision, teaching goals, curriculum content, teacher training, learning and certification models, etc. Although the higher education system varies in each country and each region, it is still possible to learn from HEIs in other countries and regions that have rich experience and models in liberal arts education. The following recommendations are offered for policy makers, researchers, and educators who wish to formulate relevant policies and carry out the reform and promotion of liberal arts education curriculum concepts throughout the society and higher education system.

First, at the research level, there is a need for more studies on liberal arts education. The current research on international higher education focuses on the impact of the global financial crisis on education, the popularization of education, private education, and the international flow of students. Only a handful of studies cover the development and the result of liberal arts education globally. Future research is needed to investigate the impact of liberal arts education on whole-person integration.

Second, at the government level, the governments and the Ministry of Education of countries in the East and the West must establish a policy to support and promote the liberal arts program.

Education is an essential element of social development in every nation, region, or society and is an important factor for individual success. But more importantly, it prepares and equips students with the knowledge and skills that are needed in order to participate effectively and responsibly as well-rounded members of society who possess values and a sense of morality directed toward the good of society.

Third, at the university level, the higher education institutions should reform the policy for awarding grants for research and innovative teaching as an incentive to reduce the tension between research and teaching, so that teachers will spend more time teaching creatively with the spirit of liberal arts education. Teaching should be an important component of the criteria for faculty promotion; moreover, teaching should be more than lecturing and facilitating workshops and seminars, but it should also cultivate the creativity, critical thinking, and analytical skills of students. Additionally, faculty members should be able to teach what students need to learn.

Fourth, at the leadership level, it is urgent for the universities to pay more attention to develop their teachers' competencies to teach classes in a more creative way. Policy makers and university administrators must help faculty members develop an acute sense of educational responsibility for their undergraduates and provide guidance about what educated, civilized, and responsible citizens should be like and what they should know about in the globalized world. The leadership of each university must embody the ideals and values of education and embody the spirit of the humanities. They should not only be smart, accomplished, skillful, and expert, but also wise, mature, personable, and visionary to ensure whole-person development. They must inspire each member of the university to develop a philosophy of life that values the liberal arts while making its best effort to become a world-class university.

Fifth, at the faculty level, while policy making, faculty development and involvement, and curriculum development are important to the success of a liberal arts education program, the spirituality of faculty members, administrators, and policy makers is also essential. A good university challenges its students to ask personally and socially important questions. If the spiritual dimension of faculty members, administrators, and policy makers is not developed, it is hard to expect them to be fully accountable and responsible for the formation of students as integral persons. One cannot maintain the idea of a university. Teachers' involvement in social, leadership, accountability, and community service activity can be a manifestation of their spiritual development and quest for meaning. These do make a difference in students' development and cultivation. Only when faculty members and administrators are fully engaged can a liberal arts education be fruitful and successful in the East and the West.

Sixth, at the cultural level, there is much in Western philosophy and pedagogy and Christian tradition that can guide the Chinese educators in the process of educating the whole person, but it is also important to consider how China's Confucian traditions of learning and its philosophy can enrich higher education and deepen and enhance its development in the West. On the one hand, many Chinese universities followed the American model of liberal arts education, and this model has broadened the views of Chinese universities on education. There are many differences in culture, tradition, politics, and values between the American and Chinese contexts, and hence, more exchange and dialogue are needed.

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Chapter 3

Gaining International Perspectives Through Undergraduate Education: Comparative Case Analysis Focusing on International Liberal Arts Provision



Akiyoshi Yonezawa and Sae Shimauchi

Abstract In this chapter, we examine the practices of international undergraduate education by focusing on the liberal arts in five, mostly medium-sized, countries with quite different geopolitical contexts: the Netherlands, Australia, Malaysia, South Korea, and Japan. We analyze whether the reforms of undergraduate education in these countries are moving in the direction of global convergence or divergence based on the respective contexts of each country's society and higher education system. We explore whether changes are based on intrinsic values and directions inherent to universities and higher education arising from their education and research activities, or extrinsic values and directions demanded by society and industry, such as human resource development and industrial innovation. Our findings show that no single direction can be argued to be a "global trend." This implies that each country and university should carefully examine and identify the global landscape and the most relevant direction to pursue in terms of university education.

Keywords International liberal arts · Undergraduate education · Convergence · Divergence · Internationalization · Comparative analysis

3.1 Introduction

Over the last three decades, globalization has had a significant influence on higher education. Regarding the relationship between higher education and globalization, a report by Marginson and van der Wende (2009) has been widely cited as arguing for the increasing role of higher education in the age of globalization. In their report, the authors adopted a neutral definition of globalization as "the expansion, deepening,

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© The Author(s) 2023
I. Jung and K. H. Mok (eds.), *The Reinvention of Liberal Learning around the Globe*,
Crossing Cultures: Liberal Learning for a World in Flux,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-8265-1_3

and acceleration of global interconnectedness” (Held et al., 1999, p. 2). However, they do not perceive globalization as a single, universal phenomenon, but rather as phenomena with subtle differences depending on the country or region, the language used, and the academic culture. Furthermore, the manifestation of its effects varies greatly depending on the type of higher education institution.

Within university education, undergraduate education today plays an important role in helping students gain international perspectives. Especially in the Asia–Pacific region, national curriculums and their link with the entrance examinations for higher education have traditionally posed strong national characteristics with regard to primary and secondary education for the purpose of national integration, social inclusion, and citizenship (UNESCO Bangkok Office, 2015). By contrast, graduate education and the labor market tend to be directly linked with global settings, and the need to study and work with peers from other countries with various linguistic and cultural backgrounds is inevitable. Under these circumstances, over the last quarter of a century, liberal arts education has experienced substantial development, especially in Asia, and has strong relations with a globalized economy that requires globally competent knowledge workers (Godwin & Altbach, 2016).

Today, undergraduates, especially those undertaking liberal arts education in various countries and institutions, tend to stress “international” aspects, promoting English medium instruction (EMI) and employing co-learning between domestic and international students. The spread of “international liberal arts education,” however, has also led to a variety of educational patterns and directions.

This chapter presents the practices of international undergraduate education by focusing on the liberal arts in five, mostly medium-sized, countries with quite different geopolitical contexts: the Netherlands, Australia, Malaysia, South Korea, and Japan. We examine whether the reforms of undergraduate education in these countries are moving in the direction of global convergence or differentiation based on the respective contexts of each country’s society and higher education system. We further assess whether the trend is based on intrinsic values and directions inherent to universities and higher education arising from their day-to-day education and research activities, or and directions demanded by society and industry outside universities and higher education, such as human resource development and contributions to industrial innovation.

3.2 Changing Context of Undergraduate Education

3.2.1 Impact of Globalization

For most countries in the Asia–Pacific region, the period from the end of World War II to the 1980s can be identified as that in which higher education systems developed mainly in connection with nation building, whereas the period from the 1990s to the very recent past was that in which the nature of higher education systems changed in

connection with globalization (Altbach & Umakoshi, 2004). In the last three decades, university education, especially undergraduate education, has been challenged with responding to globalization in many ways.

First, the decline and transformation of Soviet and Eastern European higher education with the end of the Cold War increased the global influence of Western higher education systems, especially that of the United States (US). With the collapse of socialist systems, Russia and other Eastern European countries abolished Marxist education and underwent some painful university reforms, including the collapse of university finances and the acceptance of self-financed students (Huisman et al., 2018). In China and Vietnam, which adopted market economies under socialist regimes, structural reforms modeled by the US and Western Europe were implemented, including the integration of previously existing Soviet-style single universities and the construction of comprehensive universities (Hayhoe et al., 2012; Trần et al., 2014).

Second, the dominance of English as a global lingua franca became apparent through the drastic increase in international student mobility worldwide. The international mobility of students has expanded significantly in the twenty-first century, with the number of students worldwide enrolled at universities outside their home countries continuing to grow, from 1.97 million in 1998 (74.5% of whom were studying in member countries of Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development: OECD) to 5.34 million in 2017 (69.7% of whom were studying in OECD countries) (OECD, 2020, 2021). To encourage an increasing number of students to rapidly move across borders, most of the higher education systems and institutions in East Asia and the world expanded their provision of programs instructed in the English language (Galloway et al., 2020). Part of this demand has been commercialized in anticipation of tuition income, whereas some countries, such as Japan and China, have expanded their acceptance of international students while maintaining their own languages as the primary languages of instruction. Under this context, when such programs are based on national (non-English) languages and cultures, undergraduate education tends to face more difficulties in terms of attracting international students. While English is widely used as the academic lingua franca in graduate education and research activities, even in non-English-speaking countries, national languages are also actively used as the medium of instruction at the undergraduate level in, for example, Japan, South Korea, and the Netherlands. As shown in Table 3.1, in many countries, the ratio of international students in universities is higher for graduate programs than for undergraduate programs.

Third, learner-centered approaches have become widespread in university education, partly in close relationship with internationalization in higher education (Gaebel et al., 2018). The institutionalization of quality assurance in higher education became dominant under new public management policies, which required university education to be accountable to students and taxpayers. The measurement of learning outcomes as an indicator of the development of students' knowledge and skills has attracted policy attention (Tight, 2019). Although these ideas and methods related to the assessment of learning can be applied across national borders, in reality, each country tends to maintain its ownership in terms of the quality assurance of higher

Table 3.1 Share of international students in major OECD countries (2020, %)

	Bachelor's	Master's	Doctorate
UK	16.1	40.0	41.2
Australia	15.5	50.0	33.4
Canada	14.4	20.1	35.8
Netherlands	11.3	19.3	47.9
France	7.1	13.0	37.9
Germany	7.0	17.1	23.1
OECD total	4.9	14.3	24.3
US	4.5	12.4	25.7
Korea	3.2	10.6	16.7
Japan	3.2	10.5	20.9

Source OECD (2022) Statlink <https://stat.link/c50hqh>

education, with a loose or partial commitment to international quality assurance networks. In Europe, the Bologna Declaration, which aimed to establish a regional higher education arena, was issued in 1999, although governmental intervention in quality assurance has continuously been an issue (Chu & Westerheijden, 2018). As the Bologna Process expanded beyond Europe, the idea of basing the formation of students' skills and knowledge on international quality assurance and the international mutual recognition of degrees and qualifications became widespread (Alemu, 2019).

Fourth, with the expansion of graduate schools, the main role of bachelor's programs has changed from that of terminal education to an interim step for post-graduate education. As a result of the Bologna Process, countries in Europe, such as Germany, which originally had an integrated system of education up to the master's degree level, newly institutionalized bachelor's and master's programs, creating the need to redefine the aims and scope of such bachelor's programs (Dunkel, 2009). Some Australian universities, such as the University of Melbourne and the University of Western Australia, implemented curriculum reforms to consolidate their highly segmented bachelor's programs with the systemic development of postgraduate study (James & McPhee, 2012). The massification of higher education has also provided an opportunity to integrate non-university institutions, which had previously been distinguished from higher education as postsecondary education, as an equivalent to undergraduate university education, as seen among universities of applied sciences in Europe (Adelman, 2009). In Japan, since the late 1980s, many junior colleges have been upgraded to four-year universities. In South Korea, the recorded statistical rate of higher education enrollment of around 100% was partly achieved due to the upgraded status of specialized universities as a part of its university system (Yonezawa & Kim, 2008).

The widening influence of the US higher education model, the emergence of a global higher education market with EMI, the rapidly developed international networks of higher education quality assurance, and the further expansion and

upgrading of higher education systems, as described above, are all interrelated and manifest the progressive transformation of national, regional, and even global higher education.

3.2.2 Rise of Nationalism

Since the mid-2010s, however, the rise of nationalism has had a tangible impact on higher education systems (Douglass, 2021). The Trump administration in the US imposed restrictions on the acceptance and entry of students from certain countries (Hacker & Bellmore, 2020), and the treatment of students from European countries emerged as a social issue in the wake of the withdrawal by the United Kingdom (UK) from the European Union (EU) (Mayhew, 2022).

In response to the significant development of higher education in East Asia, moves were made to develop an East Asian higher education arena, such as the CAMPUS Asia project launched based on initiatives of China, South Korea, and Japan in 2010. However, this scheme has occasionally been stalled due to the different national interests among these influential countries, although the continuous development of regional collaboration has been realized as a wider and more diverse regional network of Association of South East Asian (ASEAN) and “+3 (China, South Korea and Japan)” or wider regional collaborative frameworks (Chun, 2016).

In line with this, the discussion and actions regarding “internationalization” in higher education have progressed as a response to the globalization of society. In the 1990s, the internationalization of higher education grew in importance as an international discussion by the OECD and other organizations (OECD, 1999). However, as early as the 2010s, the internationalization of higher education began to be perceived as a negative phenomenon and as a norm and a pressure rather than an opportunity (Brandenburg & de Wit, 2011). There have been notable cases of the growing movements of “anti-globalism” and “nationalism” actually affecting the international mobility of students and researchers, such as the assault of a South Asian student in Australia and the delay in the issuance of visas to students and researchers from certain countries in the US and the UK.

Altbach and De Wit (2017) pointed out that nationalism has a high affinity with the commercial internationalization industry, whereas the realization of internal internationalization at home in universities and the fostering of global citizenship are delayed in societies where nationalism is on the rise. The global and national views are not necessarily diametrically opposed, as national contexts and perspectives as part of everyday knowledge still remain, even in elite research universities oriented toward global activities (Friedman, 2017).

3.3 Dynamism of Undergraduate Education Reforms

The various changes that have taken place in bachelor's programs all over the world can be summarized as university education reforms linked to globalization, and liberal arts education is no exception (Lewis, 2018). Nevertheless, one of the reasons why university education continues to be in need of "reform" is that in the current education system, university education, especially bachelor's programs, is strongly required to function as a nexus between secondary education under the national curriculums and the globalized postgraduate education and labor market for highly skilled workers. Figure 3.1 is a simplified representation of the position of undergraduate education in the current educational and social systems. This figure shows how today's undergraduate education is required to play a role in transforming students' perspectives from national and domestic to global and international ones.

3.3.1 Theoretical Models on Global Complexity and Dynamism

However, the actual higher education reforms and changes observed over the past 30 years in various countries and regions have been diverse and complex and are hardly a unanimous phenomenon moving in a single direction. In the studies of international higher education, a center-periphery model prevails, where

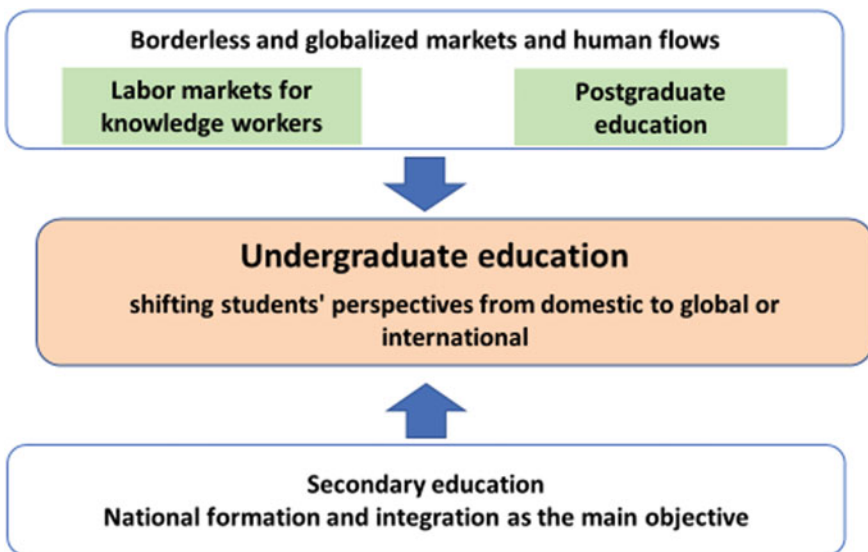


Fig. 3.1 Role of undergraduate education in the global age

Western/American higher education exerts an influence on higher education in other parts of the world. The “peripheral” higher education systems tend to be trapped into a syndrome of catching up with the trends seen at the “center.” Consequently, the imbalanced power structures between East and West have been recognized as one of the dominant theoretical perspectives (Altbach, 1998; Altbach & Selvaratnam, 1989). However, Umakoshi (2004) and Cummings (1997) also point out tendencies unique to East Asia, where the family and private sector take a complementary role with regard to state-provided education in terms of higher education investment, typically seen in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines. Marginson and Xu (2022) further highlight the differences in higher education between East and West, which are deeply rooted in cultural and conceptual ideas concerning civilization.

In the current world faced with globalization, more diverse and intertwined regional and national factors shape patterns of ideas and practices regarding university education. Each country and university now needs to explore possible approaches in relation to the internationalization of university education according to its own internal and external context. Diverse directions can be taken in terms of the prospects and implementation of undergraduate education, and a comprehensive discussion on the frameworks is needed to explain this complexity and dynamism.

O’Byrne and Hensby (2011) conducted a theoretical review of global studies and indicated the coexistence of multiple models of global perspectives: (1) globalization (a “one world” orientation), (2) liberalization (the erosion of barriers between nation-states), (3) polarization (the world is divided into rich and poor), (4) Americanization (the American empire is sustained through hard and soft power), (5) McDonaldization (the standardization of practices across the world), (6) creolization (ongoing local transformations through regional flows), (7) transnationalization (the emergence of a level of governance above the nation-state), and (8) balkanization (the division of the world into distinct and conflicting cultural blocs). This model variety reflects the processes and dynamics involved in all aspects of contemporary social life, including university education. O’Byrne and Hensby (2011) stress that there is no single way of looking at the world. Their allowance regarding the use of multiple models to interpret the world clearly contradicts the view that universities all over the world should catch up with “global trends” based on a single standardized future direction (i.e., an idea similar to that of the “McDonaldization” model mentioned above) (Kariya, 2018).

3.3.2 Variation in the Global Landscape

The variation in the direction of university reforms, especially those symbolically implemented in the undergraduate programs related to the international liberal arts of each country, can be defined according to its position in the global landscape of higher education and society. This is because university education, as well as the higher education sector as a whole, are now inseparable from global geopolitics and the national arms race in terms of knowledge and innovation (Hazelkorn, 2017; Marginson, 2018), as described below.

First, US higher education has been the main model of university education since World War II, and this tendency has been strengthened under globalization. For example, since the end of World War II, Japan has consistently referred to US trends in higher education to formulate its future vision, which includes modifications with regard to the country's own national context, and this tendency is still strong today (Breaden & Goodman, 2020). However, this does not mean that the US itself has not been affected by globalization over the past 30 years (Johnstone et al., 2010). The US is still the world's largest host country for international students, but its share of the world market has been declining, and the international student flow is more evident at the postgraduate level than at the undergraduate level (Bound et al., 2021). Under the rapidly changing geopolitical environment, the US has also been making various efforts to reform its undergraduate programs and make them internationally compatible to respond to globalization. In the domestic context, employability and the relevance fit to social and industrial needs tend to be stressed. However, among the top most selective universities and colleges, values based on their liberal education tradition have been maintained and developed through the expansion of the international student market.

Second, the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) have increased their global presence in higher education, backed by the rapid increase in the student population (Schwartzman et al., 2015). China is the world's largest higher education system in terms of the size of its student body, and the international competitiveness of its top universities, particularly in terms of research capacity, ranks highly in Asia and is likely to increase further (Gu et al., 2018). However, due to its scale and diversity, Chinese higher education faces major domestic contradictions, such as disparities in wealth and poverty and conflicts arising from ethnic and cultural diversity (Yang, 2018). Furthermore, these BRICS higher education systems exert great influence on other countries, affecting not only their neighbors but also countries with a large intake of international students, such as the UK and Australia (Marginson & Xu, 2022). Together with the surrounding Greater China region, China appears to be strengthening its confidence in terms of developing its own identity in university education and reacting to the demand for human resource development by its own society (Marginson & Yang, 2020).

Third, major advanced economies other than the US, represented by Japan, Germany, and other members of the G7, are facing tough challenges related to university education reforms in response to global competition, symbolized as university rankings (Hazelkorn, 2017). These countries have mature higher education systems with a strong path-dependence structure, especially up to secondary education, as in the established national schooling tradition (Ben-David, 1977). However, they do not have economic and social scales equivalent to those of the US and China, nor are they flexible and agile in response to the rapidly changing global environment, as seen in smaller-scale countries, such as Singapore. These difficulties in terms of higher education reforms have been particularly pronounced over the past three decades for the UK, a major English-speaking nation that should have an advantage regarding globalization (Deem et al., 2007). The UK has been facing direct competition with other Anglophone countries in relation to flows of people, knowledge,

and capital. The UK has also faced a dilemma with regard to its integration with or separation from the rest of Europe. Under this tough international context, the UK's higher education reforms, such as the introduction of quality assurance and the research excellence framework, have strongly promoted a pseudo-market approach in the past 30 years during this era of globalization, and the student and knowledge industries have emerged as the main players in university education reforms. The Higher Education Funding Council, which had served as a buffer body between the state and universities, was dismantled and replaced by the Office for Students, which deals with students and student affairs policy, and Research UK, which deals with research policy.

Another example of a country facing complications is Japan. To respond to globalization, Japan has implemented various higher education reforms, highlighting British new public management as one of its major models since the 1990s in addition to its continuous referencing of US higher education (Yonezawa, 2019, 2021). German universities have also faced challenges in response to globalization and regionalization. However, at least among the leading universities, the academic values symbolized as "excellence" have been more or less maintained and even further developed through national policies, such as academic excellence initiatives and strategies (de Wit & Altbach, 2021).

Lastly, under globalization, some countries with relatively small populations have shown a strong presence as "successful" models in higher education reforms, especially with the provision of competitive international university education. Singapore, an international city-state, is such an extreme model, referred to as a "knowledge hub" by Knight (2014). Australia, the Netherlands, South Korea, and Malaysia also belong to this category. Contrary to the assumption derived from the center-periphery model, these countries that have provided swift and agile responses to globalization are now perceived as good practice models for countries with larger populations and economies, such as Japan and Germany, to refer to. However, the directions these countries are pursuing in their higher education reforms should be examined in further detail because the approaches of these countries, as well as their universities, are quite different from one another.

3.4 Framework

Based on intensive discussion among international project members and external experts, we identified the two axes mentioned above—convergence and divergence and intrinsic and extrinsic—and developed a framework.

In order to examine the impact of globalization on higher education, van Damme (2019) suggests a framework based on the axes of convergence and divergence. Referring to Marginson and van der Wende (2009), Van Damme (2019, p. 13) reconfirmed that "higher education institutions and systems are firmly embedded in national, regional and local contexts, but define themselves within global space characterized by specific ordering principles and power relations." In this context, university

education and the related skill development and qualification systems show various patterns in the balancing of the convergence of globalization trends and divergence in response to national and local societal needs.

Here, “convergence” refers to the idea that university education around the world will eventually merge into a single model, often recognized as being the ideological model that represents English-speaking countries, such as the US and the UK. “Divergence,” by contrast, refers to the idea that university education around the world will differentiate into multiple models; for example, China and countries in Europe, such as Germany, will continue to present their own ideas and models of university education based on their own intellectual and cultural heritage. The direction taken by each country and university lies in the balance between these two opposing philosophies.

In addition to the convergence–divergence axis, we should assume another axis exists—that of intrinsic–extrinsic values. In reforming university education, faculty members may wish to define the curriculums, contents, and pedagogies of university education in accordance with the intrinsic values or the value generated from daily academic and education activities. However, the government and the market (students and industry) expect universities to set the nature of university education in accordance with the needs of learners and society, represented as the idea of human resource development and human capital (extrinsic value).

3.5 Positioning of Country Cases

The focus of the discussion in this chapter is on the current context and directions of reforms in international undergraduate education, in many cases with interdisciplinary and liberal arts components. As a comparative research project with international members, we identified five countries, namely Australia, the Netherlands, South Korea, Malaysia, and Japan, as case studies in the development of international undergraduate education. This study was originally designed to provide implications of Japan’s undergraduate education reform through comparative case studies (Yonezawa et al., 2022). The above four countries other than Japan, which had a population of 126 million in 2020, are included in the last category discussed at the end of the previous section: countries with relatively small populations (ranging from 17 million in the Netherlands to 52 million in South Korea) and regarded as “successful models” of international education. Because of their relatively small sizes and the fact that they are surrounded by strong neighbors with reference to the latters’ economies and populations, both the higher education and societies of these countries have engaged in active adaptation to the emergence and development of a knowledge-based global economy. Japan, a G7 member country that is facing declines both in terms of its population and presence in the global economy, may find these cases useful to consider with regard to its future orientation.

We implemented site visits to survey the representative practices of international, mostly undergraduate level, university education in these case study countries from 2016 to 2020. We analyzed related policy and university documents and interview

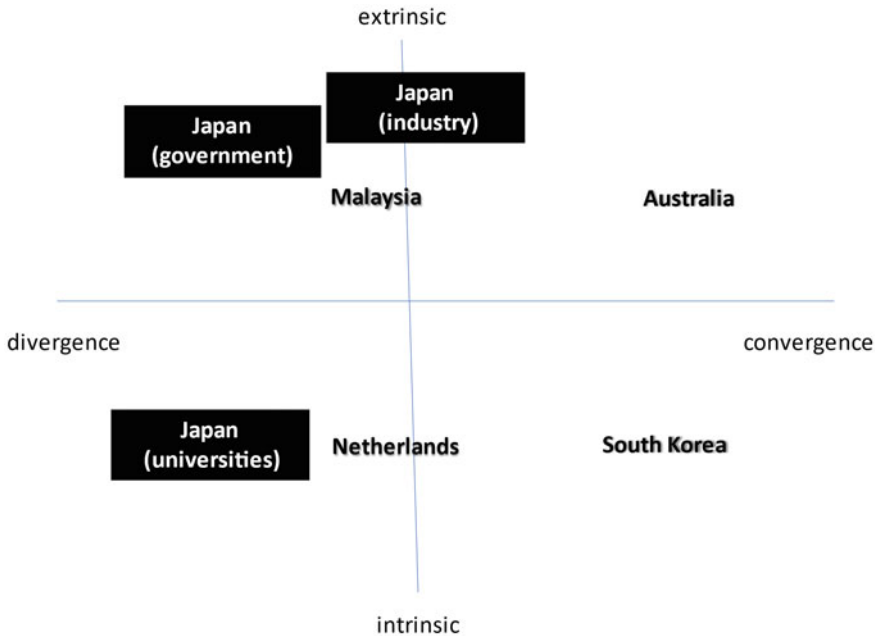


Fig. 3.2 Directions taken in undergraduate education reforms

survey data collected through site visits with research expert members from the respective countries. The following sections summarize the findings of our survey analyses, and Fig. 3.2 shows the relative positions of the countries in terms of the approaches taken.

3.5.1 *Australia*

In 2016, 28% of Australian citizens were foreign born, and 21% were second-generation immigrants with foreign-born parents (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS],). Under these circumstances, the Australian curriculum, which provides comprehensive guidelines for the content and achievement goals of school education up to secondary education, is based on the concept of “intercultural understanding,” which is the ability to identify similarities and differences between one’s own culture, language, and beliefs and those of others, and to discover connections between oneself and others and to promote mutual respect.

However, Australian higher education has been recognized as a major export industry, in which international students can learn under a curriculum with global standards in English (Harman, 2005). The government and universities in Australia

have also committed to higher education reforms that enhance the skills and competence fit to the global economy backed by the rise of Asia. For that purpose, some universities, such as the University of Melbourne, have reorganized undergraduate programs so that students can pursue broad and interdisciplinary studies (James & McPhee, 2012). Furthermore, Asian literacy was stressed and placed at the core of the Australian national higher education policy, and this policy trend has continued as the New Colombo Plan, the current government program for study exchange (Jones, 2018).

The state's demand for global marketing among universities as an educational service industry will take precedence over multiculturalism rooted in its own education and local society. In this sense, the orientation toward "extrinsic convergence" can be identified as a key characteristic of Australian university education, especially with undergraduate programs being opened up to a wide range of international students. Therefore, this orientation encompasses the discrepancy between the university campus community and the local multicultural society that spreads out around it.

Initiatives to internationalize the university curriculum and to find common ground between Australian students and international students through international collaborative learning in the classroom are also promoted (Arkoudis et al., 2010; Leask, 2015). However, we also observed a strong tendency for Australian universities to encourage the centralized assimilation of international students from diverse backgrounds, resulting in a lack of multiculturalism rooted in the country's society and campus community. The internationalization of university education in Australia is especially aimed at capturing the growth potential of neighboring Asia and meeting the career needs of international students and the global labor market.

3.5.2 The Netherlands

Dutch universities, which have a tradition of offering discipline-based, long-term expertise education up to the master's level in Dutch, have pursued drastic educational reforms to respond to economic globalization and regional integration, particularly the Bologna Process, which, since 1999, has aimed to create a European higher education arena with a common regional framework of bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs (Witte et al., 2008).

Specifically, with an awareness of liberal arts education in US as well as UK Oxbridge-style college settings, Dutch "university colleges" have been designed to provide liberal arts and science undergraduate education in the English language for co-learning among international and Dutch students (Adriaansens, 2017). 10 out of 13 universities in the Netherlands have established affiliated university colleges, and their educational practices have also influenced a wide range of existing expertise education at Dutch universities.

The process of these university reforms has elements of both traditional continental European university education (“divergence”) and the elite liberal arts education in English languages that originated in the US and is expanding around the world (“convergence”). These reforms can be identified as being driven by a university’s own educational values (“intrinsic”) (Bog & van der Wende, 2016). The education settings of university colleges place more importance on interdisciplinary twenty-first-century skill education in small-sized classes not directly linked with employability skills, based on the knowledge that, in the Netherlands and the UK, 80% to 90% of university college graduates typically proceed to master’s programs (Law, 2016; Redden, 2013). Although the country’s national policy maintains its position of placing its own language and culture at the foundation of higher education, the reality of Dutch university education is that it is moving toward convergence, with English being widely used to meet the needs of students who are interested in regional and global citizenship and career development (Earls, 2016; Sklad et al., 2016). Thus, we can identify the characteristics of university reforms in the Netherlands symbolized by the development of university colleges as at the boundary between intrinsic differentiation and intrinsic convergence.

3.5.3 *South Korea*

Historically, Korean higher education has been shaped by a combination of various foreign influences, including Confucian ideas introduced from China, the colonization by Japan in the first half of the twentieth century, and the development of a national higher education system with strong linkages with the US (Jung, 2018). Since, and even before, independence in 1945, many Korean students studied at universities in English-speaking countries, especially in the US (Kim, 2018). At the graduate level, nearly 60% of Korean students who study abroad choose the US (Shin & Choi, 2016).

Under the conditions of studying abroad and career development through global mobility woven into the fabric of national elitism, both undergraduate and graduate classes and programs targeting Korean students but given in the English language have expanded and become widespread (Park, 2011; Pillar & Cho, 2013).

The shift from Korean to the English language in research and teaching at Korean universities has proceeded in close connection with both the posed incentivization through government policies in response to globalization as well as national and international university ranking indicators. Through Brain Korea 21, the national academic excellence initiative, governmental incentives are also offered for programs that provide EMI to attract international students to Korea. However, these universities have also been actively committed to providing EMI, for example, requiring teaching in English for newly recruited faculties (Byun et al., 2011).

In the late 1990s, English was introduced as a medium of instruction in particular degree programs at top private universities, such as Yonsei University and Ewha Women’s University. According to a study by Kim (2017), the percentage of English

courses at prestigious universities in Seoul between 2005 and 2010 experienced a twofold to threefold increase. Although the curriculums and content of these EMI programs, especially at the undergraduate level, are based on interdisciplinary studies or liberal arts, the dimension of interdisciplinary and liberal arts learning is not emphasized as students and their parents are mainly interested in practical skills and disciplines, such as English language skills and business management knowledge. Our interview survey during the site visits revealed that many parents and students understand the value of liberal arts and have a strong interest in education and studying abroad in the US. However, we also identified their enthusiasm for practical studies and the value of English as an essential skill for employability. Even at elite universities, majors that do not lead to careers are not popular, emphasizing the importance of cultivating expertise through majors and minors (double majors).

Thus, the undergraduate education of Korean higher education has intrinsic drive to adapt global values under the dominant influence of US university education both on the circulation of academic human resource and knowledge production. In this case, an “intrinsic–convergence” approach to university education is prominent.

3.5.4 Malaysia

Composed of a multi-ethnic and linguistic population, Malaysia has pursued its unique identity of university education under strong governmental initiatives for nation building since its independence from British colonization in 1957 (Sato, 2007). The Malaysian government rebuilt the education system, which historically used different educational languages in a complex combination of four languages (English, Malay, Chinese, and Tamil) and different curriculums, into an education system with Malay as the language of education and unified national educational content and curriculums, which include subjects on Islamic civilization (Lee, 2004). The use of the Malay language was made mandatory at all levels of public education, including higher education.

Since the 1990s, however, due to the globalization of the economy and multiculturalism, privatization, and deregulation, the use of English in education has been allowed and partially promoted. In 2002, the government made English the language of instruction in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) courses in elementary and secondary education, as well as in university education and research (Gill, 2005). In 1996, the Private Higher Education Institution Act was enacted. Since then, at private universities and higher education institutions, including foreign university branch campuses, programs instructed in non-Malay language (English), with only a small portion of compulsory Malay language and society subjects, have been widely diffused. National universities, similar to their counterparts in Japan, Korea, and China, are expected to provide world-class education, nurture human resources, which will contribute to Malaysia’s future development, and conduct globally competitive research with the goal of improving their positions in the world university rankings.

Under the circumstances discussed above, however, the challenges of developing a university education with unique national profiles are ongoing (Wahi, 2015). Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), which was established in 1970 as the first national university with Malay as its language of instruction, has established its mission and strategy as affirming and promoting the value of the Malay language while globalizing knowledge within the framework of national culture. UKM also confirms that it does not exclude other languages from instruction, and we found that English is mainly used in programs, especially in STEM fields, with the acceptance of international students with various linguistic backgrounds. We also found that Malaysian students at UKM are well adapted to the bilingual and multi-lingual learning environment. Although Malay is required for one's thesis, dissertation, and presentation, postgraduate students publish articles in English.

The above-mentioned higher education development that stresses both the national language and culture as well as international competition can be identified as “extrinsic” in the sense that the university responds rather passively to the demands of the state and society. Nevertheless, the choice between the English language and the Malay language in university education is notable for its oscillation between the influence of the global context (“convergence”) and the movement toward national integration (“divergence”) with regard to multi-ethnic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds. Thus, the Malaysian case could be placed somewhere between the “extrinsic–convergence” and “extrinsic–divergence” axes.

3.5.5 *Japan*

Unlike other country cases with medium-sized populations that are renowned for their agile responses to globalization, Japan, as a G7 member, is facing greater difficulty in its response to internationalization and global competition in university education. Although Japan is located in the East Asian region where most higher education systems have experienced significant success both in terms of internationalization and improvements in their rankings, Japan's universities have generally been criticized for their unmet expectations regarding their positions in the rankings due to both the slow process of responding to internationalization and underinvestment by the government (Yonezawa, 2020).

We could argue that the difficulties that Japan's university education system is facing are based on discrepancies among the major stakeholders with regard to internationalization. The universities, the government, and industry in Japan have strong national contexts and a desire for “internationalization.” However, the approaches taken toward internationalization chosen by the three stakeholder groups (universities, the state, and the market) are different and do not seem to be integrated into one common direction.

From the standpoint of universities and faculty members, although Japan's bachelor's degree programs have undergone various educational and governance reforms, the content of education has basically been developed within universities by faculty

members who belong to national academic communities and have relatively weak linkages, either with international academic communities or the globalized industrial world.

However, there is an “extrinsic” factor in that the universities are increasingly exposed to the “demands of government” and “demands of industry,” which push them toward “convergence,” even though these entities, like the universities, also have strong national characteristics (Yonezawa, 2021). The Top Global University Project, a ten-year government project to promote the internationalization of universities, which has aimed to achieve academic excellence from 2013 onward, can be identified as an example of such incentive programs provided by the government. EMI has also been promoted, although it is not necessarily recognized as such an established mainstream educational initiative as internationalization at home (Shimauchi, 2018).

The discrepancy in higher education and academic systems between universities, the government (nation-state), and industry (market) was shown by Clark (1983) through an international comparison of higher education systems, including that of Japan. However, Marginson and Rhoades (2002), referring to Australia and other countries that have responded remarkably well to the progress of globalization, argued that a higher education system is formed as an agency that integrates universities, the state, and industry across global, national, and local dimensions. This new framework for the twenty-first century integrates universities, the state, and industry as an agency to create a higher education system that is global, national, and local. These arguments are also referred to in Japan as “industry-government-academia collaboration” and “all-Japan” approaches to higher education reform. However, these ideas have still not been integrated into one overall initiative yet, as seen in the other cases we included in this chapter.

3.6 Conclusion and Implications

This chapter discussed how universities and countries are reforming their university education, especially with regard to international liberal arts education at the undergraduate level. In the countries examined as providing successful models in terms of their active responses to globalization, namely Australia, the Netherlands, South Korea, and Malaysia, we observed variety in the approaches followed in relation to both the convergence–divergence and intrinsic–extrinsic axes. Thus, our findings from the comparative analysis indicate that no single direction can be identified as a “global trend.” This implies that each country and university should carefully examine and identify the global landscape and its position in it and identify the most relevant direction it should pursue with regard to its university education, especially in international liberal arts education at the undergraduate level.

We also found that Japan’s case indicates a discrepancy between the three parties (universities, the state, and the market) concerning the direction of university reforms in relation to internationalization. This discrepancy poses a barrier to generating a decisive moving force in university reform and leads to the underachievement of

educational performance, especially from international and global perspectives. In the other cases with smaller populations examined in this chapter, such an apparent discrepancy was not observed. In other words, these higher education systems with medium-sized populations have continuously faced significant challenges from the globalized economy, society, and academic community, and the three parties have had to take cooperative actions in the form of integrated agency.

The spread of COVID-19 in 2020 developed into a pandemic involving the entire world, forcing a major shift in the nature of international education at universities around the world. As an alternative, online exchange programs, courses, and education and training for international understanding are rapidly expanding, opening up the possibility of providing a wider range of students with international learning experiences in cyberspace without traditional physical travel. These cyberspace learning experiences are not limited to cognitive learning, such as language training and specialized lectures, but also include international co-curricular programs that promote interaction among students from different countries and cultural backgrounds through online cooperation among multiple universities.

In the midst of the above changes, how will the framework shown in Fig. 3.2 and the positioning of each case study change in the future? University education is influenced by both the intrinsic value of the university itself and the extrinsic value of external societies, such as government and industry, and there can be both global convergence and divergence in university education, even in a new environment where education in cyberspace is more widespread than before.

In terms of the functions expected of bachelor's degree programs, the fact that the pandemic has temporarily eliminated most of the opportunities for international experience is nothing but a great loss. Focusing on shifting from a national perspective to a global perspective in bachelor's education, we see that the opportunities for international experience provided by overseas study, through physical interaction with international students in classrooms and on campuses, have become more valuable.

The most likely scenario is that a sense of crisis and a full-fledged response to such a situation will take the form of unification among universities, government, and industry under the slogan of industry-academia-government collaboration. Thus, there will be a risk that the movement will become more domestically confined under economic nationalism. We stress the importance of the development of liberal arts in undergraduate programs to suit the local context, while a mutual understanding and the respect of "others" are gradually but inevitably becoming the core values of university education.

Acknowledgements This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Numbers JP16KT0087, JP19H01621, JP20H00094, and JP18K13196. We are grateful to Aya Yoshida, Yukako Yonezawa, Jeremy Breaden, Don. F. Westerheijden, Jorrit Snijder, Yangson Kim, Machi Sato, Chang Da Wan, and all the project members and collaborators for contribution in data collection, survey, and discussion for this work.

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Part II
Diverse Approaches to Reinventing Liberal
Learning

Chapter 4

For the U.S. and the World: Clarifying What Matters in a Contemporary Liberal Education



Carol Geary Schneider

Abstract Liberal education is in the middle of far-reaching, still unfinished, but highly consequential reinvention. Drawing on the author’s long history with U.S. liberal learning reform initiatives, this chapter explores key themes in this reinvention with particular attention to the larger purposes of liberal learning and the emergence of “High-Impact Practices (HIPs)” that provide contemporary ways of helping students achieve a quality liberal education. The author explores AAC&U’s LEAP initiative and the sources of its recommendation that the aims of liberal learning can and should be fostered across all fields of study, including career-related majors. In the final section, she recommends ways that educators around the globe can use LEAP resources—especially its Essential Learning Outcomes and vision for students’ Signature Work projects—to strengthen their own curricula. The chapter includes templates that faculty can use to advance liberal learning across their majors and designs for connecting general education with majors.

Keywords Liberal education’s core purposes · Integrative liberal learning · Liberal learning in career majors · Essential Learning Outcomes · Students’ Signature Work projects

4.1 Introduction

It was the fall of 1977 and I had just come to the University of Chicago as a mid-level administrator. Still working toward a Ph.D. in early modern history at Harvard, I had signed on for a position creating professional development programs for faculty and leaders in higher education and business.

Note that AAC&U changed its name to American Association of Colleges and Universities in 2022. The organization’s name at the time of publication is used in the references for this chapter.

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© The Author(s), under exclusive license to Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2023
I. Jung and K. H. Mok (eds.), *The Reinvention of Liberal Learning around the Globe*,
Crossing Cultures: Liberal Learning for a World in Flux,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-8265-1_4

When I met the Dean who headed my division, he went unexpectedly to what he saw as the essence of the University's approach to liberal education. "We take great pride here," he declared firmly, "in teaching absolutely nothing useful."

Inwardly, I recoiled. I was too timid and too new to challenge his assertion but privately I thought: That is absurd! Why on earth would anyone come to a university, much less to professional development programs, to learn "absolutely nothing useful"?

The University of Chicago is one of America's great universities and to this day, a global and U.S. leader in undergraduate liberal education. A decade of working there gave me important insight into the liberal education tradition the dean was referencing. But it also afforded direct involvement in a reinvention of that tradition that had already begun to take root (Grant et al., 1979; Orrill, 1997; Schneider, 2004, 2005, 2018).

The remainder of this chapter describes the major themes in the contemporary reinvention of liberal education that has been gaining ground in the U.S. for more than four decades and the significance of that reinvention, both for students and for our volatile, globally interconnected world. But before we explore the new developments in liberal education, let us examine the backdrop for my dean's astonishing assertion. It helps provide a useful point of departure for the key argument in this paper: namely, that the purposes and core practices in a quality liberal education are currently in the middle of long-term, still unfinished, but highly consequential redesign.

4.2 Liberal Education is in the Middle of Long-Term and Transformative Change

As I later came to realize, that University of Chicago dean was distilling a vision of liberal learning that had been promulgated far and wide during his own formative years by Chicago's world-famous president, Robert Maynard Hutchins, and shared by many others in the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century (Menand, 2010; Winterer, 2002).

This view of liberal education heralded the study of "universal questions" and the love of learning "for its own sake." It drew bright lines between the "true liberal arts"—the humanities, social sciences, sciences, mathematics (the arts were only included later in the twentieth century)—and what some at Chicago called the "merely applied" fields that sought to prepare students for specific careers, whether in business, education, health, engineering, technology, public administration, and more.

The "true" liberal arts were viewed as catalysts for students' formative development, helping learners develop "powers of the mind" (Levine, 2006) and a cultivated sense of civic and ethical responsibility (Kimball, 1986; Miller, 1986). Proponents saw the liberal arts and sciences as superior forms of learning—routes to higher levels of intellectual, ethical, and social development than more narrowly construed

fields of study could provide. They routinely lamented “vocationalism” and sought to counter it.

As a practical matter, this “liberal” or, as it came to be known, “liberal arts” approach to college learning never fully won the day in the U.S. Collegiate study in the arts and sciences disciplines primarily did become the norm in the nation’s most selective institutions: major research universities like Harvard, Chicago, and the University of Virginia; and in small private colleges, like Williams and Pomona, that began to style themselves as “liberal arts colleges.” These institutions’ influence and prestige helped ensure preeminence for liberal education both in the U.S. and in many parts of the world.

But the U.S. was a restlessly entrepreneurial society. It needed educated people who could bring trained intelligence to a host of new industries and enterprises. Fields like engineering and business and literally hundreds of other career studies fought their way into the university, and both “liberal” and “practical” education moved forward side-by-side in the nation’s major universities (Rudolph, 1992) and, by the twenty-first century, in the great majority of the nation’s liberal arts colleges (Ferrall, 2011). Even in the post-World War II hey-day of the liberal arts tradition, large numbers of students chose to major in career and vocational fields rather than in the humanities, arts, social sciences, or sciences.

I emphasize the long-standing tug-of-war between the liberal/liberal arts tradition and career-related studies for two reasons. First, the new directions in liberal education described in this chapter mark a significant departure from that earlier “true liberal arts” resistance to practical and career studies. Today, much of the dynamism in U.S. liberal education stems from a new determination to prepare students both for their roles as global and U.S. citizens and for work in an innovation-fueled economy. Liberal education’s reach is expanding to encompass career fields rather than to resist them.

Further, where Hutchins and other liberal arts educators envisioned a cerebral and text-based approach to liberal learning, today’s liberal arts leaders preach almost in chorus the value of experiential or “real-world” learning: internships, practicums, community-based service-learning projects, community-based research, “issue laboratories,” and more. These hands-on learning experiences help students connect theory with practice, analysis with action, and individual learning with the collaborative problem-solving skills graduates will need both at work and in civil society. Where once liberal education explored “man and his world” through books and discussion, today many liberal education leaders warmly embrace participation in that world, in all its diversity, complexity, dissension, and digital connection, as an essential component in students’ liberal learning.

But there is a second reason, a chastening one, to face directly the long-standing “anti-vocationalism” which helped define the liberal arts tradition well into the twentieth century. The fact is, when highly influential educators like Hutchins insisted that their institutions did not prepare students for jobs, legions of Americans believed them and marched briskly off in a non-liberal arts direction. Liberal education proponents still struggle today against older notions that a liberal or liberal arts education is non-vocational by design.

Moreover, the historic dividing lines between “the liberal arts and sciences” and “career fields” live on to this day in the typical U.S. university, working against many of the new directions that I will discuss in the remainder of this chapter. In many universities, students are asked to choose, even before they enroll, whether they will select their major in the “liberal arts” college or in one of numerous career-related colleges.

Most U.S. students do, in practice, take numerous required general education courses in liberal arts and sciences fields. But from day one, far too many college students are basically invited by the institution’s admissions practices to see required arts and sciences courses as a detour from their primary reason for being in college—which is to gain access to economic opportunity for themselves and their families.

I argue in this chapter that it is time to fully retire the traditional distinctions between the “true liberal arts and sciences” and career-related fields of study. Students do need the “big picture” knowledge that the liberal arts and sciences studies can provide. But they also need guided practice in applying their learning to real-world contexts, long a strength of most career fields. As we explore below, the new directions in liberal education point the way toward a much-needed 21st-century blend that *combines* big picture learning with real-world skills, experiences, and judgment.

4.3 Core Purposes, Innovative Practices: Key Themes in the Reinvention of Liberal Education

I have suggested above that U.S. liberal education is in the middle of long-term, much-needed, and potentially transformative change. In what follows, I summarize three primary themes in this ongoing reinvention.

As we will see, two of these themes provide 21st-century approaches to the most enduring purposes of a liberal education: (1) *cultivating intellectual development or the powers of the mind* and (2) *fostering civic and societal responsibility*.

The third major theme in the reinvention of liberal learning is a newer and distinctively contemporary purpose for liberal learning: (3) *helping students integrate, adapt, and apply their learning across multiple contexts*.

My evidence for this analysis is drawn from the terrain I know best: the countless reform initiatives burgeoning across U.S. higher education (Maimon, 2018; Moner et al. 2020; Schneider, 2021). But the core purposes of liberal education are not limited to any particular culture or societal context.

Readers from across the globe will likely see much in the analysis below that resonates in your own institutional and cultural contexts. And, in the final part of this chapter, I offer specific recommendations for strengthening students’ liberal learning that educators can use in any institutional context, in any part of the world.

4.3.1 The Powers of the Mind: Fostering the Arts of Inquiry and Intellectual Judgment

“So how do you teach critical thinking to your students”? I once asked a young economist early in her career. “Well,” she responded, “I present the important economic concepts to them in my lectures, and then they think about them. Critically.”

The approach she described remains, of course, all too common in higher education. But unfortunately, the assumption that simply exposing students to complex ideas will result in critical thinking helps explain why many U.S. college graduates rank so low—both on standardized tests and in employer judgment—on liberal education fundamentals like critical thinking and analytical inquiry (Arum & Roksa, 2011; Bok, 2006, 2021; Finley, 2012; Hart Research, 2018).

To their credit, many faculty members have recognized the need to change course. In both selective and broad access institutions, many are actively experimenting with better ways to foster the arts of inquiry and analysis. Strategies include intensive first-year seminars on challenging liberal arts and sciences topics; writing-across-the-curriculum, including in students’ majors; undergraduate research projects woven into degree requirements; creative projects often done in groups; community-based research projects, senior capstone projects and courses, and more. Some entire state systems are focusing on students’ academic “mindset,” which means helping students move away from seeing themselves as “receivers” of expert knowledge toward intentionality about their own role in discerning the meanings, validity, and applications of different concepts.

Through these innovative practices, educators are bringing new sophistication to the task of teaching students how to examine complex issues, how to find, evaluate, and deploy evidence in reaching a conclusion, how to engage diverse perspectives in forming those conclusions, and how to both apply and revise their knowledge in tackling new problems and unscripted or open-ended questions.

The reinvention remains incomplete. Many students are benefitting; many others are still waiting to be included. But in experimenting with more powerful ways to teach today’s students the “arts” of inquiry and judgment, contemporary faculty are bringing renewed vitality to one of the oldest goals of liberal education: the thoughtful and creative use of human reason.

4.3.2 Civic and Ethical Responsibility: Engaging Students in Civic Inquiry and Complex Problem-Solving

As a history instructor, discussing wicked problems in today’s political climate may perhaps be the most important way I can foster civic learning (Vanover, 2018).

U.S. educators have proclaimed since the eighteenth century that higher education should cultivate the knowledge and “civic virtues” needed to sustain a self-governing—and now globally engaged—democracy. But the meanings of “educating students for democracy” are very different today from anything educators from earlier eras could possibly have imagined. Today, collaborative, intercultural, equity-minded, globally framed, and community-based projects are the new civic frontiers for our 21st-century world of diversity, contestation, and deepening interdependence.

Many U.S. leaders talk about engaging students with society’s “wicked problems,” meaning problems where disputes are not over fact, but rather over what is the *right* thing to do. For millions of U.S. students, society’s “wicked” problems are realities in their own lives: poverty, hunger, health and food insecurity, social distrust, and subtle or overt discrimination. And, whether they are privileged or still struggling for a toehold in the middle class, all students inherit a world racked by pandemics, endangered by climate change, and upended by the ferocity of authoritarian movements in the U.S. and worldwide.

In my own college days, topics like these were addressed in co-curricular activity rather than credit-bearing courses. But today, many U.S. students work on such democracy challenges even in the first-year curriculum—and recurrently thereafter. The history professor quoted above, who teaches in an open access two-year community college, does much more than invite students to “discuss” controversial questions. Instead, in courses like “History and Film,” he asks students to make documentaries related to fiercely debated issues in their own communities (Vanover, 2018).

This intensified focus on civic engagement and societal choices is happening in nearly all fields—from science courses taught through the lenses of important contemporary social and ethical questions such as the pandemic or HIV/AIDS, to social justice issues addressed in professional fields, through the diversity and global education movements, to internships, service learning, and field-based projects where students work with real-world organizations, both local and global, to address important problems.

Student participation remains uneven, to be clear. Millions of U.S. students never take even a single course that includes a community-based project. But with authoritarianism on the rise, both in the U.S. and around the world, there is new urgency and new leadership for making civic inquiry and democracy engagement part of every student’s college learning (Schneider, 2022).

4.3.3 Integrative Liberal Learning: Helping Students Integrate, Adapt, and Apply Their Learning from First to Final Year

“The panel recommends ... new emphasis on educating students to become intentional learners... Intentional learners are integrative thinkers who can see connections in seemingly

disparate information and draw on a wide range of knowledge to make decisions” (AAC&U, 2002).

“Integrative learning,” the third formative theme in the reinvention of liberal education, is a much newer goal for college learning. It emerged in the wake of the early twentieth-century reinvention of liberal education, when a previously sequential and common curriculum was reorganized into “disciplines,” with students given enormous freedom to choose their (typically) 120 required credit hours from a sprawling menu of general education and major field options (Rudolph, 1992). For many students, unhappily, this new freedom resulted in a fragmented and incoherent education (Ratcliff et al., 2004). Indeed, very recently, community college leaders have identified the “self-service, cafeteria-style” education as a significant factor in their sector’s very high dropout rates (Bailey et al., 2015).

Against this backdrop, helping students make connections across the different parts of their learning has been a conspicuous theme in almost every one of the hundreds of curricular renewals I have observed or assisted over the past four decades. From first-year “learning communities” that bring discrete courses together around a common topic to thematic and cumulative four-year designs for general education to capstone projects and the popularity of community-based learning, educators are working to give students multiple, structured opportunities to make connections across disciplines and fields, to connect theories with practice, and often to explore their own lived experiences in their studies.

Hundreds of institutions also are experimenting with ePortfolios, in which students are encouraged to assemble their own significant assignments and projects, and create accounts of how the different parts of their education intersect (Eynon & Gambino, 2017). Similarly, approximately half of U.S. undergraduates now complete some version of a senior capstone course or project (Schneider, 2015). Some capstone courses are designed to help students see how the different parts of their studies fit together; others require the student to tackle a significant project which shows what they can do with their learning.

All these innovations reflect a 21st-century recognition that the curriculum needs to provide students with guided and ongoing practice in connecting different parts of their learning and in linking their learning both to their own long-term goals and to the world they inherit.

4.4 Preparing Students for a Complex and Turbulent World

Two cross-cutting trends stand out in this summary of the ongoing reinvention of liberal education. The first is a clear shift toward embedding students’ own “hands-on” and integrative work into institutional and program requirements, both in face-to-face learning environments and in online learning. Each of the innovative learning strategies noted above—first-year seminars, writing-across-the-curriculum,

undergraduate research, collaborative projects, diversity and global learning, civic projects, internships, study abroad, capstone projects, ePortfolios—requires active and ongoing effort from students themselves. Each requires students to integrate content knowledge with an array of liberal education skills: critical and creative thinking, communication, evidence-based reasoning, engaging diverse perspectives, and more.

Recent research has shown these practices to be “High Impact,” meaning that the more frequently students do them, the more likely they are to complete their degrees and report higher levels of learning (Kuh et al., 2017; Valentine et al., 2021).

Research also shows that these High-Impact Practices (HIPs) provide “compensatory benefit” for students who arrive less well prepared, or from chronically underserved racial/ethnic backgrounds, since their gains from participation are higher than those of white peers (Kuh, 2008). The key insight, then, is that students’ guided practice in effortful and integrative learning is beneficial, reinforcing students’ motivation to complete their education and helping them develop a stronger sense of their own educational accomplishments.

The second cross-cutting trend is the new emphasis on braiding problem-centered inquiry into both general education and majors. A century ago, the key liberal arts agenda was establishing the “disciplines” in their own departments and giving students “study-in-depth” by creating concentrations or “major” programs keyed to those departments. Today, in contrast, educators are engaging students with big questions, “wicked problems,” or what the National Science Foundation terms “grand challenges.”

Almost by definition, these big questions and wicked problems require cross-disciplinary inquiry and integration. No single academic field can claim sufficiency in providing workable solutions to such urgent challenges as climate, health, prosperity, peace, justice, or racial reconciliation.

As recent world-shaking catastrophes have made staggeringly clear, creating feasible solutions requires contributions from multiple contexts: scholarly, ethical, economic, technological, and operational. Creating solutions also requires collaborative work, often across political and socio-cultural divides, and in digitally enabled environments that extend around the globe.

The disciplines still play a significant role in a quality liberal education, as we discuss below. But educators are increasingly recognizing that to thrive and contribute in a turbulent world, graduates will need active practice in working on the world’s hard problems, across disciplinary lines and with partners whose perspectives are different from their own.

4.5 A Liberal Education for All College Students, Not Just the Fortunate Few

Significantly, the core purposes and cross-cutting trends described above apply to all fields of study, not just the liberal arts but professional and technical fields as well. And, indeed, efforts to strengthen students' intellectual skills, civic and ethical capacities, and integrative acumen can already be found in all disciplines, including career fields such as business, engineering, health, technology, education, or public administration.

This is good news, both for the future of liberal learning and for its potential service to the wider world. Once we recognize that every major can play its part in helping students acquire the hallmark capacities of a contemporary liberal education, then liberal learning, which for centuries reached only a tiny few—can be positioned as an intentionally *inclusive* design for higher learning, relevant to all postsecondary students and influential in all aspects of their lives: personal, civic, economic, global.

The liberal arts and sciences remain a necessary part of a liberal education, to be sure. The humanities, arts, social sciences, science, and mathematics together explore the contours of both the human community and the biophysical universe. These studies provide needed preparation for life in a complex and interconnected world. Moreover, for students worrying about career opportunity, employers have consistently contended that success in today's economy requires broad plus specialized learning, not narrow specialties alone (Finley, 2021; Hart Research Associates, 2013, 2015; Humphreys & Kelly, 2014).

That said, the most consequential shift in the reinvention of liberal education is a dawning recognition that its larger purposes can and should be addressed across all fields of study, and all parts of the undergraduate experience. Liberal learning is not and cannot be limited to the arts and sciences alone.

4.6 Making the LEAP: A 21st-Century Framework for Liberal Education

As the many ambitious innovations described above took root, I was privileged to both witness and help advance them, first in my work at the University of Chicago with educators across the U.S., and then, from 1987 to 1998, as a vice president and from 1998 to 2016, as a president of what is now called the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U).

AAC&U was founded in 1915 as the Association of American Colleges or AAC. Initially, membership was restricted to four-year independent liberal arts colleges and to colleges of arts and sciences within larger universities, public and private. Well into the twentieth century, AAC leaders largely shared and frequently urged the legacy view that the “liberal arts college” was and should be non-vocational.

But in 1976, after an internal self-study, AAC changed course. It declared its determination to provide “humane and liberating education” for all students, not just those in liberal arts colleges (Schneider, 2021). The organization threw open its doors to the entirety of non-profit higher education, including the professional and career schools that were part of every community college and university. Acknowledging its bigger tent, AAC became AAC&U in 1995.

And, by design, the association became a gathering ground for countless “reform agendas.” Across several dozen grant-funded national and international projects, literally hundreds of AAC/AAC&U institutions worked together in the 1980s and 1990s to revitalize general education; “re-form” college majors (both arts and sciences and career majors); develop faculty-friendly designs for assessment; make diversity learning part of the undergraduate curriculum; promote global learning in professional, science, and other majors; make science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) reform more effective and inclusive; and advance gender equity for women.

By the time I was named AAC&U’s president in 1998, I strongly believed that, given the swirl of restless innovation and reform, U.S. higher education needed to develop new clarity both about the overarching “aims of liberal learning” and about how all the new practices emerging in U.S. education might best help diverse learners achieve those aims.

With millions of dollars in funding from U.S. philanthropy, we began a multi-year dialog about these questions. The dialog was broad-based. It included faculty, administrators, and students from every kind of institution; it also included employers and civic leaders and both institutional accreditors and accreditors for specific professions. We studied the research on employer expectations, and we drew intensively from AAC&U’s own work on diversity, civic, and global learning, and on college majors (Schneider, 2021).

By 2004, we had reached four conclusions:

1. There was much wider consensus on specific goals for student learning than most educators either presumed or articulated, across both the liberal arts and career fields, and between educators and employers (AAC&U 2004; Peter D. Hart Research Associates, 2004).
2. The consensual goals were clearly linked to core purposes of a liberal education over the centuries: intellectual development, ethical and civic development, and broad, big picture knowledge (Schneider, 2005, 2018). The dialog further emphasized the need to help students learn to both integrate and apply their learning.
3. Most of the engaged learning innovations emerging in higher education—first-year seminars, writing-across-the-curriculum, undergraduate research, diversity and global learning, capstone projects, etc.—could be seen as means to the core purposes of a liberal education, including integrative and applied learning (Schneider, 2004, 2005; Schneider, Preface to Kuh, 2008).
4. At best, only a small fraction of U.S. learners was participating in these new forms of highly engaged, hands-on learning (AAC&U, 2002). Most were still

hindered by a cafeteria-style undergraduate experience in which students take courses to meet requirements or fill out their schedules, with little understanding of how different parts should or will add up.

And there was one more, very sobering conclusion for an organization with a mission of advancing the “aims of liberal learning.” U.S. higher education had fallen almost completely silent on the entire subject of liberal learning. Key practices foundational to liberal learning—like writing or civic learning—were being reinvented across the U.S. But the results were enveloped in what I termed a “conspiracy of voluntary silence” (Schneider, 2004).

The word “liberal” itself had been weaponized politically in the U.S., and change-minded educators were simply avoiding any effort to connect their reform priorities to the liberal education tradition. Thus, educational redesigns even at institutions strongly committed to the liberal arts were routinely described as the Green Valley College Plan or the new University Studies Plan. An earlier U.S. tradition of examining and articulating the intended purposes of a “liberal education” was fading from view.

All these realizations led AAC&U to declare in 2005, on its 90th anniversary, that the association would launch a 10-year change agenda titled LEAP—Liberal Education and America’s Promise (Schneider, 2005). LEAP was planned to last through AAC&U’s 2015 Centennial but was eventually extended beyond that date.

LEAP leaders set out to provide a clear framework for a contemporary liberal education that would articulate learning goals both for educators and for learners, and that would advance “systemic change” in the organization of the undergraduate curriculum so that contemporary college students would successfully gain the intended learning.

LEAP had two overarching aims: (1) ensuring high-quality liberal learning, titled “Inclusive Excellence,” for all learners, not just the more fortunate students, and (2) providing a flexible roadmap that educators could use to strengthen students’ liberal learning in their own diverse institutional contexts.

From the outset, AAC&U announced and insisted that LEAP did not apply just to general education and/or to the disciplines historically identified with liberal or liberal arts education. The arts and sciences needed to be included in a liberal education, to ensure broad learning about the world students inhabit. But the other core purposes of a liberal education—developing the “powers of the mind,” civic and ethical responsibility, and integrative and applied learning—could and should be fostered in every academic field, liberal arts, and career fields alike (AAC&U, 2002).

LEAP struck a chord with educators across the U.S. and abroad. Interested readers can find a full history of the initiative and its far-flung impact in my recent book: *Making Liberal Education Inclusive* (Schneider, 2021). They also can read a bracing and democracy-oriented update of the LEAP vision in AAC&U’s 2020 publication, “What Liberal Education Looks Like,” which is freely available on AAC&U’s website.

Below I focus on two aspects of the LEAP initiative that provide useful points of departure for educators in any part of the globe who want to strengthen their

own institution's approach to liberal education. The first is what LEAP termed the "Essential Learning Outcomes," which provide transparency about what students should gain from a quality liberal education. The second is The LEAP Challenge, which was announced in 2015 and expressly designed to give students themselves a "stake" in and ownership of their own educational journeys.

4.6.1 *The Essential Learning Outcomes*

AAC&U's Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs) were identified in dialog with educators, both in the liberal arts and in professional fields, and with business and civic leaders as well. They were presented to higher education as a broad frame of reference, with institutions encouraged to adapt them as needed for their own settings and students.

The specific learning outcomes included in the ELOs were identified *inductively*, by taking a close and comparative look at what different groups of stakeholders, including liberal arts educators, career educators, civic leaders, and employers considered important (AAC&U, 2004).

As readers can see in Table 4.1, AAC&U tied these specific learning outcomes to four necessary strands in a contemporary liberal education: Broad Knowledge (across the liberal arts and sciences); Intellectual and Practical Skills (combined); Personal and Social Responsibility; and Integrative and Applied Learning. But the specific outcomes within each strand—e.g., critical and creative thinking, intercultural knowledge and competence—were drawn from AAC&U's wide-ranging and inductive analysis. This is almost certainly the reason that educators and employers alike have repeatedly affirmed their agreement that the ELOS describe needed forms of learning for today's students (Schneider, 2021).

In addition, informed by the reform efforts advancing across higher education, my AAC&U colleagues and I added to the ELOs a set of "reform priorities" for each of the four strands of liberal education depicted in Table 4.1.

For example, for Broad Knowledge, we urged that studies in the liberal arts and sciences should be "*Focused* through engagement with big questions, contemporary and enduring" (italics in the original). With this guidance, we invited educators not just to "cover the basics" in different disciplines, but to engage students directly with complex questions, and help students discover how different disciplines, or different "great texts," illuminate those questions. We were deliberately striking a balance between legacy views that liberal learning should engage students with perennial or "universal" questions and newer views that students should work on problems that matter in the world around them.

For "powers of the mind," we chose the heading "Intellectual and Practical Skills. We emphasized that these capacities needed to be "*Practiced extensively* across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards for performance." This guidance was—and is—intended as a direct critique of the idea that any single course, whether in writing or critical thinking or any of

Table 4.1 Essential learning outcomes

<p>Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through study in the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages, and the art <p><i>Focused through</i> engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring</p>
<p>Intellectual and Practical Skills, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inquiry and analysis • Critical and creative thinking • Written and oral communication • Quantitative literacy • Information literacy • Teamwork and problem-solving <p><i>Practiced extensively,</i> across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards for performance</p>
<p>Personal and Social Responsibility, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civic knowledge and engagement—local and global • Intercultural knowledge and competence • Ethical reasoning and action • Foundations and skills for lifelong learning <p><i>Anchored through</i> active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges</p>
<p>Integrative and Applied Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies <p><i>Demonstrated through</i> the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems</p>

the other learning outcomes, can ever be sufficient to build students' competence. Intellectual and Practical Skills should be articulated and emphasized at all levels of the curriculum, beginning in precollegiate education and continuing through general education, majors, and connections between them.

The terms Personal and Social Responsibility were chosen as synonyms for “Ethical” and “Civic Responsibility,” which we knew to be among the most enduring purposes of a liberal education (Kimball, 1986). The specific learning outcomes in this category spelled out priorities for today's diverse and globally interconnected societies, calling on educators both to help students examine the world's complexity and to engage students directly with partner communities working to solve some of society's festering problems.

Book learning alone, we knew from our work on diversity and civic engagement, was necessary but not sufficient to build civic and diversity competence. For this reason, students' development of personal and social responsibility should be “*Anchored* through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges.”

And finally, Integrative and Applied Learning should be “*Demonstrated* through the application of knowledge, skills and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems.” The language of the ELOs assigned this integrative work to *both* general education *and* majors and connections between them. AAC&U was sharing leaders'

conviction that problem-centered and integrative learning should be a goal for majors and advanced study, not just for introductory-level general education courses.

4.6.2 How Educators Can Use the Essential Learning Outcomes

The ELOs provide a point of departure for any institution that wants to clarify how its educational program benefits both students and society. Faculty, educational leaders, and community partners can consult this widely used template and refine it to incorporate their own institution's distinctive emphases. For example, a college or university focused on educating global leaders might want to braid global themes through all four strands of the ELOS—Broad Learning, Intellectual and Practical Skills, Personal and Social Responsibility, Integrative and Applied Learning. Religious mission institutions can amend the ELOs to include spiritual knowledge and development. And all educators should watch AAC&U's pending ELO revisions related to students' mindsets, digital fluency, engaging difference, and more (personal communication).

Yet even as campus leaders develop their own local templates for liberal learning, I strongly recommend keeping some version of the ELO's primary organizing categories: Broad Knowledge, Intellectual and Practical Skills, Personal and Social Responsibility, Integrative and Applied Knowledge. These categories headline the hallmark purposes for a contemporary liberal education. They also make it easier to see how specific educational objectives—like communication skills or teamwork and problem-solving—contribute to these larger purposes.

4.7 The LEAP Challenge: Make Students' Signature Work a Quality Standard for Liberal Education

A second LEAP resource that any institution can use is "The LEAP Challenge" which was developed nearly a decade into the LEAP initiative and released at AAC&U's 2015 Centennial Annual Meeting. The LEAP Challenge calls on higher education to make hands-on "Signature Work" a goal for all college students and tangible proof that students can use their cross-disciplinary learning and skills to execute a complex project (Peden et al., 2017; Schneider, 2015).

Signature Work can take many forms. It might involve student research, a creative project, a community-based collaboration, or a supervised practicum with related reports of various kinds both from the student and from mentors. It might involve an ePortfolio illustrating the student's work across time on a problem or question related to the student's goals and interests. Whatever the format, the Signature Work should address an issue the student cares about and should include substantial writing

explaining why the issue matters, what the student was trying to achieve, and what was learned from the endeavor.

The advantage of Signature Work is that it gives students themselves a sense of destination across the different parts of their education. Signature Work further instantiates the idea that a liberal education prepares graduates to deal with “unscripted questions,” challenging problems where the best answer remains unknown and where any answer may be actively contested.

Students will face such unscripted questions both at work and in life. (In today’s economy, if work assignments can be done to rule, they already are being automated.) Students can be told from their first week in college that their liberal education will help them develop the knowledge, skills, ethical judgment, and practical experience they will need to work productively on complex questions in the world beyond college. And educators need to deliver, of course, on that promise.

Figure 4.1 shows how the entirety of students’ studies provides preparation and practice so that students can succeed with a substantial Signature Work project. It further illustrates how students can create clusters of cross-disciplinary studies that combine both career preparation and civic preparation. For example, the “Environmental Sustainability Pathway (STEM Field) in Fig. 4.1 shows how students can work on a significant public question—recycling reclaimed cooking oil into biodiesel, a renewable energy source—in a way that builds both career skills and a deeper awareness of community endeavors to advance sustainability.

Figure 4.1 may seem to envision Signature Work as a solo project which each student does alone. But Signature Work also can be done collaboratively. The case studies in AAC&U’s *Rising to the LEAP Challenge* (Peden et al., 2017) show how both Portland State University and Worcester Polytechnic Institute prepare each student to do collaborative culminating projects, linked to their majors and designed in partnership with community organizations. Both collaborative learning and civic engagement are woven together in students’ learning journeys and in their Signature Work projects.

4.7.1 Signature Work: Empowering for Students and Galvanizing for Liberal Education

The call for all students to do integrative Signature Work projects follows directly from the major themes and trends in the reinvention of liberal education. As we have seen in these pages (and in other chapters as well), educators already are braiding big questions into the college curriculum; emphasizing new strategies to help students develop the hallmark learning outcomes of a liberal education; and making High-Impact Practices—which include capstone projects and ePortfolios—an expectation rather than an option for today’s students.

At the same time, The LEAP Challenge provides a way to give students themselves a stake in their liberal education. Signature Work can kindle students’ imagination,

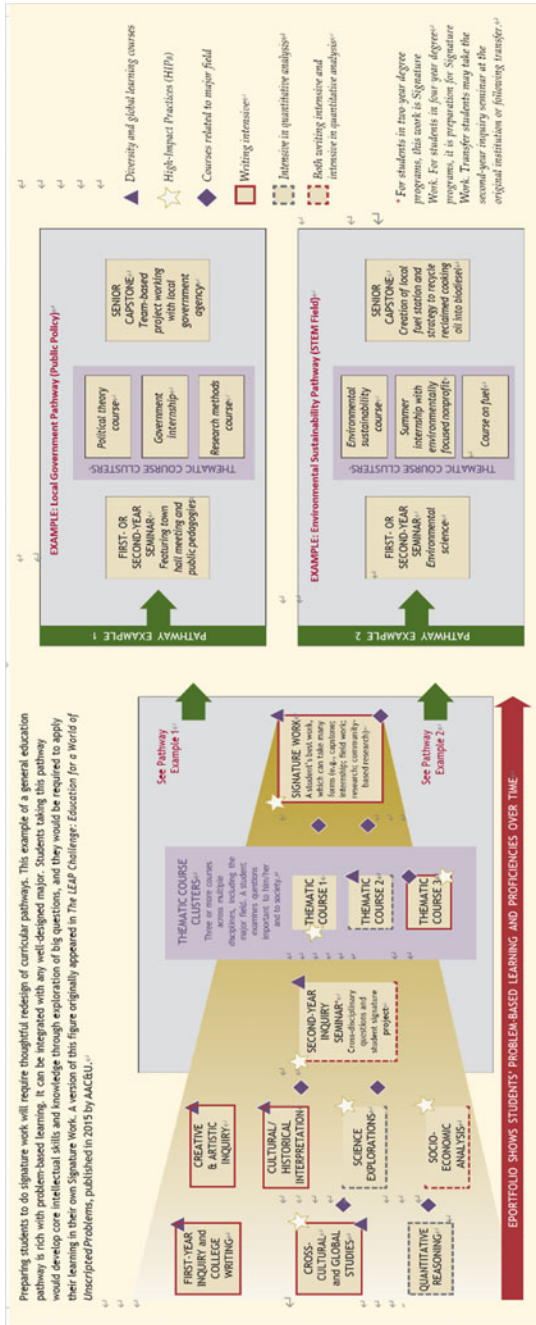


Fig. 4.1 Sample guided pathway with signature work

help them discover a sense of purpose, and come to see themselves as co-creators of important knowledge, not just as receivers and recyclers of “expert” conclusions.

All this is part of a long-term shift in our core conceptions of higher education, the so-called shift from “teaching” to “learning,” with the role of the faculty member evolving from “expert and sage” to an exemplar and guide for students’ engagement in inquiry and exploration. In effect, The LEAP Challenge calls on educators to *accelerate* the reinvention of liberal education by creating a clear vision for what advanced students can do and providing purposeful guided practice across the educational experience so that students will be ready to meet these high expectations.

From first-year courses that invite students to give voice to their own questions to later experiences in a second-year integrative seminar or thematic clusters of courses around topics that matter to students, students can gain proficiency in connecting knowledge, skills, and practical problem-solving. And as they dig into complex questions, they can discover for themselves—experientially—how multi-disciplinary liberal learning adds value both to their self-understanding and to their real-world know-how.

Gallup research (2014) has provided evidence that there is a direct correlation between doing a project in college that required a semester or longer and graduates’ perception of deep engagement in their post-college careers. Signature Work has a long-term impact on students’ lives—and thereby, serves the wider society as well.

4.8 What Next? Recommendations for Global Educators

Institutions around the world are at different places in relation to the reinvention of liberal education described in this chapter. But every college and university still has work to do in the long-term project of providing an empowering liberal education to all its students. The key to that project is redesigning programs—providing more purposeful pathways to students’ achievement of “essential” liberal learning outcomes.

With this in mind, here are my top recommendations for educators working in higher education institutions around the world for your next step action.

4.8.1 *Articulate Your Own “Essential Learning Outcomes”*

Have your faculty and leaders clearly articulated your own institution’s description of Essential Learning Outcomes? If the answer is “Yes,” how and how effectively, are those expectations communicated to students and other stakeholders? Do students know what they need to achieve in a quality liberal education? Do they know why those learning outcomes will matter in employment, civil society, and their own hopes for the future? Do faculty tie the intended learning outcomes to their own course-based assignments?

If you don't yet have a clear statement of your goals for liberal learning and students' expected learning outcomes, begin your own local version of the broad dialog AAC&U orchestrated before releasing the LEAP ELOs (Table 4.1) and plan for that inquiry to remain self-renewing, so that new faculty, staff, students, and other stakeholders become and remain active participants in your continuing campus dialog about what matters most in an empowering liberal education.

4.8.2 Foster Liberal Learning Outcomes Across All Majors and Fields of Study

If you have already articulated your intended learning outcomes, have faculty discussed their application to departmental majors? Table 4.2 provides a template you can readily adapt to any major program. Begin a systematic effort to build such mapping into program review so that every field of study—career programs and liberal arts fields alike—can explain and evaluate its success in fostering the liberal learning that you are promising your students.

4.8.3 Build Students' Signature Work Projects into Degree Requirements

Do you know which and how many of your departments already *require* a significant culminating project or practicum? Enlist those departments in a review of what it takes to support students effectively in preparing for Signature Work projects. Then, begin a systematic, faculty-led process of embedding both Signature Work preparation, and, if needed, your Essential Learning Outcomes, into each program's degree requirements.

4.8.4 Make General Education a Catalyst for Integrative Liberal Learning

Is your general education design an asset or an obstacle to students' preparation for problem-centered and inquiry-based learning? Across the U.S., many general education curricula still adhere to the 1909 Harvard University design for "breadth/depth"—broad learning in the first two years followed by specialized learning in the final years (Rudolph, 1992). Breadth/depth also has found a foothold in global institutions that sought to adapt aspects of the U.S. model for liberal arts education.

Table 4.2 Template for fostering students' ELOs across a program of study

Content	Introductory course	Research methods	Advanced content Course A	Laboratory/practicum	Advanced content Course B	Advanced content Course C	Advanced content Course D	Capstone work
ELO 1: Disciplinary knowledge base (models and theories)	Introduced		Reinforced		Reinforced	Reinforced	Reinforced	Mastery/assessed
ELO 2: Disciplinary methods		Introduced		Reinforced		Reinforced		Mastery/assessed
ELO 3: Disciplinary applications	Introduced		Reinforced		Reinforced		Reinforced	Mastery/assessed
Critical thinking								
ELO 4: Analysis, evaluation and use of evidence		Introduced		Reinforced	Reinforced		Reinforced	Mastery/assessed
ELO 5: Engaging and applying diverse perspectives	Introduced	Reinforced		Reinforced		Reinforced		Mastery/assessed
Communication								
ELO 6: Written communication skills	Introduced	Reinforced		Reinforced		Reinforced		Mastery/assessed

(continued)

Table 4.2 (continued)

	Introductory course	Research methods	Advanced content Course A	Laboratory/practicum	Advanced content Course B	Advanced content Course C	Advanced content Course D	Capstone work
ELO 7: Oral communication skills		Introduced	Reinforced		Reinforced	Mastery/assessed		
Integrity/values								
ELO 8: Academic and disciplinary ethical standards			Introduced		Reinforced	Reinforced		Mastery/Assessed
SLO 9: Responsibilities to society	Introduced	Reinforced	Reinforced	Reinforced		Reinforced		Mastery/assessed
Students' Signature Work project(s)								
ELO 10: Problem-centered inquiry and project development		Introduced		Reinforced	Reinforced	Reinforced	Reinforced	Mastery/assessed
ELO 11: Working with diverse partners	Introduced	Reinforced			Reinforced		Reinforced	Mastery/assessed
ELO 12: Self-regulation and metacognitive skills	Introduced			Reinforced	Reinforced	Reinforced		Mastery/assessed

Note: This table is based on a model developed by the Center for University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment at the University of West Florida (<http://uwf.edu/cutta>). It was adapted to align with AAC&U's LEAP Challenge focus on Students' Signature Work projects

Unhappily, that 1909 model is counterproductively out of date. We are now in a dynamic knowledge-driven economy and world, which needs far more from educated citizens than the legacy “breadth/depth” model can provide. The early 20th-century division of labor is standing directly in the way of purposeful, problem-centered, integrative designs for liberal and general education. If your students see general requirements as something to “get out of the way” before they can dig into a specific field of study, your organizing principles for general education are very likely in need of redesign.

If redesign seems needed, use your locally articulated Essential Learning Outcomes—and dialogs with students, employers, and community leaders—to jump-start an intentional process of general education renewal. The goal should be to make general education a first-to-final year “spiraled pathway” in which students have multiple opportunities to explore their own questions and educational goals, including career goals, in the context of broad, thematically organized, cross-disciplinary studies. And, as already recommended, braid plans for students’ cross-disciplinary Signature Work into your designs for both general education and students’ majors (see Tables 4.1 and 4.2).

4.8.5 Break Out of the Silos: Embrace Liberal Learning for a World Lived in Common

Majors and their host departments will be the make-or-break context for the effectiveness of a 21st-century liberal education. If individual disciplines are essentially siloed apart from other disciplines, students’ learning will remain fragmented. But when faculty in different fields of study take seriously the value of cross-disciplinary inquiry and students’ Signature Work, then general education and major programs can work together, fostering students’ attainment of Essential Learning Outcomes and preparing every student to both navigate and contribute to a global community marked by complexity, daunting challenges, and the certainty of constant change.

The world’s shared future will be in our students’ hands. We owe them the preparation to bring wisdom and judgment to the hard work of tackling the world’s urgent problems and helping to shape a better tomorrow.

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Chapter 5

Being the Premier Development University for Africa: A Case of the American University of Nigeria



Jennifer Heaven Mike

Abstract The curricula, pedagogies, research approaches, and philosophical orientations of classical universities, particularly in Africa, have focused on preparing students for government/civil service employment. The American University of Nigeria (AUN) stands out as a citadel that aims to instill leadership, values, and fosters development through the production and distribution of knowledge for Nigeria, Africa, and indeed, the entire world. AUN prides itself on training future leaders to realize their development objectives. AUN also equips students to serve as instruments of national development, in addition, to stimulating their service potentials to contribute to their immediate and extended communities. Over time, it has aided several community service projects such as the Feed and Read Program (to teach and feed vulnerable children) and the Adamawa Peacemakers Initiative. AUN has also facilitated several sustainability support initiatives and empowerment schemes. This chapter discusses how AUN, as an active agent of socio-economic and human development across the country, has implemented a liberal educational approach that equips problem-solving and critical thinking skills, an all-inclusive curriculum, and faculty who are devoted to teaching, research, and mentoring of students to solve societal problems. It also examines some pronounced challenges, and AUN has faced in terms of security, welfare, and a global pandemic and concludes with lessons learned for practitioners and policymakers who are working in liberal arts institutions.

Keywords Liberal Arts Education · Development University · Problem-solving teaching

5.1 Introduction

Nigeria's higher education system comprises a university sector and a non-university sector (colleges of education and the polytechnics) (QAA, 2019). Higher education

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© The Author(s), under exclusive license to Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2023
I. Jung and K. H. Mok (eds.), *The Reinvention of Liberal Learning around the Globe*,
Crossing Cultures: Liberal Learning for a World in Flux,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-8265-1_5

at the university level is highly valued in Nigeria since it is perceived as a means of cultural transmission, social integration, selection and allocation, personal development, and the gateway to endless career possibilities (James & Botimi-Slaboh, 2019). The federal and state governments have majority control over university education. Over the years, the number of recognized universities has grown exponentially from 5 in 1962 to 170 in 2019, with private institutions representing an estimated 46% of all Nigerian universities (QAA, 2019). Nigerian university structure closely resembles the educational system of the United States with undergraduate bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, and doctoral degrees, including diplomas and professional courses being offered across science, humanities, and art disciplines.

American University of Nigeria (AUN) (formerly ABTI), a private university, was founded in 2004 by Atiku Abubakar in Yola, Adamawa State, in the Northeast region of Nigeria. Armed with a unique dream and vision to educate the next generation of leaders that will facilitate a prosperous future for Nigeria and Africa as a whole, the founder approached the American University in Washington D.C. for a blueprint for a liberal-oriented American-style development university. AUN currently runs undergraduate, masters, and doctoral degree programs in science, humanities, and art courses and also offers professional and summer courses.

The liberal arts tradition and philosophy are at the heart and soul of AUN's curriculum. A liberal arts university essentially builds students to be free and independent scholars, confident communicators, knowledgeable citizens, and critical creative thinkers who will address human problems and transform their societies. AUN is a leading university that embraces liberal arts education by providing the foundation for students to solve problems, adapt, collaborate, and view issues from multiple points of view across diverse fields. A notable difference between the dedicated liberal arts tradition of AUN and other universities in Nigeria is that AUN relies heavily on student participation, critical interactive discussions, and a high level of student-teacher interaction, mentorship, and teamwork. AUN offers majors for particular areas of study and minors for students who want to acquire knowledge in a different field of study, in addition to their primary focus. Elective courses are also offered to all students who wish to develop specific talents or acquire specialized skills/knowledge based on their interests and goals (see: <https://www.aun.edu.ng/index.php/campus-life/student-affairs/community-engagement-and-service-learning>). For example, the school of Law offers undergraduates unique courses such as Human Rights Law, Environmental Law and Policy, Gender, Law, and Development, Technology and Cyber Law, Medical Law and Ethics (including HIV/AIDS and the Law), Labor and Industrial Law, and Trial and Advocacy as specialized elective courses. Many of these courses are only available at the graduate level in other universities. These distinctive courses are particularly designed to imbibe students with a commitment to human and economic development while also equipping them to promote social justice and progress. AUN prides itself on training future leaders, as well as educating these potential leaders to realize their personal development goals, which positions itself as a development university.

5.2 AUN as Africa's First Development University

As Africa's first development university, AUN is the only university with an American-based education in Sub-Saharan Africa, and it centrally provides its students with the tools to achieve personal growth and attain their fullest potential. AUN's educational system is also structured to ensure that every student serves as 'both a stimulus and agent' of economic and human development (see: <https://www.aun.edu.ng/index.php/about>). The development focus is on all ramifications: human, social, mental, personal, entrepreneurship, community, and national development. All courses are structured to reflect this development orientation. For example, the entrepreneurship courses in the School of Business and Entrepreneurship are designed for students to recognize opportunities at all times and to translate these opportunities into values. These entrepreneurship courses are open to all students at AUN. In line with AUN's commitment to community development, the various community development (CDV) courses introduce students to the importance and concepts of community development and citizenship while also instilling in them the commitment to social responsibility. Many courses are specifically designed to teach students leadership skills and the importance of good governance. Such courses include among many others, Ethics and Leadership and Topics in International Relations which is centered on diplomacy (AUN, n.d.). Specifically, the course Women and Development provides an interdisciplinary approach to evaluating the important and central roles women play in developing countries. The course, Law, Society, and Development (Law 213), exposes students to different development prospects in the law as it relates to society and contemporary issues. In this Law 213 class, issues that cut across societies, particularly developing countries are raised and discussed from legal, social, and development-based perspectives (e.g., issues of sustainability, good governance and rule of law, children and women's rights, corruption, and social control). AUN is the first university to offer this course at an undergraduate level. Other universities offer similar courses at a graduate level. Without a doubt, law students mainly end up as judges, legal advisers, or company secretaries and hold political positions that will have an impact on society. They are critical in shaping the social, political, and economic behaviors of the society. In this vein, the course is designed to ensure that law students always think outside the box, engineer social changes, and stand out as model citizens of society.

Furthermore, AUN is a development university through its focus on students' critical thinking, problem-solving-centered approach and leadership development. Through this pedagogical approach, the next generation of Africa's leaders is developed through general education courses alongside majors, minors, and elective courses (see: <https://www.aun.edu.ng/index.php/about>). Courses within this learning style require that students enroll in some mandatory courses according to their majors, while also giving room for a choice of elective courses with informed advice from Program Chairs and Academic Advisors. This informed approach prepares students to confidently make individual choices that match their aspirations, talents, and respective goals. Consequently, students complete their 4 or 5 years of study at AUN

with individual refined knowledge and methods of approaching world development, given that they have been through an educational system that caters to different talents. This is in addition to the patriotic and communitarian values they acquire. As human beings are individual and distinct, so is the education that is instilled in AUN students to individually and collectively make Africa and the world a better place.

AUN strives to employ some of the best resources and develop effective syllabi with a predetermined set of objectives to teach the students (Merrill, 2020). The foreign and locally trained professors are mainly internationally renowned experts and well-recognized researchers from different disciplines concerned with areas such as poverty alleviation, public healthcare, law, entrepreneurship, environmental sustainability, third-world economics, and technology development. At AUN, professors are more than instructors; they also play pastoral roles. Each instructor must allocate office hours where students can meet them one on one to discuss academic-related challenges and to receive guidance on any academic, mental, or emotional issues.

The university has adopted distinctive approaches to training students to think for themselves, be creative, and solve new problems through active class participation (see: <https://www.aun.edu.ng/index.php/about>). During class, students are encouraged to be active learners by asking questions, discussing course materials that are read before the commencement of every lecture, thinking critically, engaging in group sessions with fellow students, and peer teaching. In many cases, students are graded by their professors for every discussion session to encourage active participation. Class participation is considered important because the instructor of the course can understand the point of view of every student and help them to widen their horizon by considering issues from other perspectives. Furthermore, all students are encouraged to confidently defend the ideas that are derived from these activities and come up with new approaches and solutions (see: <https://www.aun.edu.ng/index.php/about>).

Similarly, the university ensures that the class limit does not exceed 20–25 students so that every student is catered for individually. The small class sizes also make it easier for students to make presentations in front of their peers and faculty (Jacob, n.d.). Public speaking seminars and workshops are available to improve students' public speaking skills. In the end, students of AUN go out to the world as creative, solution-driven, and self-assured adults who can confidently contribute to the drive for development in Africa and the world over.

To maintain the value of the university and mitigate frictions that might cause disruptions to learning, the University's Student Code of Conduct explicitly instills responsibility and discipline in all enrolled students. This discipline is aimed at molding their characters as it is the foundation for development. Discipline also impacts the learning process by creating a stress-free environment and motivating the students to focus on values that matter. Through the University's Judiciary Office and Disciplinary Committee, AUN fosters a community that provides students with the opportunity to reap potential, while also protecting the health, safety, property, and human rights of staff and fellow students.

5.3 Liberal Education Approach and Development-Oriented Pedagogy

5.3.1 Multidisciplinary Curriculum

The curriculum of AUN is multidisciplinary, as the goal is to equip these potential leaders with diverse knowledge to enhance their innate interests, capabilities, aspirations, and talents. However, being a university that allows students to integrate specialized knowledge and skills with a hands-on-solution background, students do not only focus on the courses offered within their opted majors (see: <https://www.aun.edu.ng/index.php/academics>). For instance, law students do not only engage in law courses, but they also undertake courses in entrepreneurship, management, and marketing fields, as well as, arts, mathematics, and science courses to achieve a liberal multidisciplinary education.

5.3.2 Liberalized Process of Choice

According to the current AUN's President Margee M. Ensign, AUN's liberal education emphasizes a learning system of education that provides students with the choices to take courses that are varied and respond to the discovery and explorations that the students need to become model citizens and to contribute widely to social, political, and economic development. The courses available under the umbrella of AUN's liberal education approach allow students to study broadly and learn from other fields, in addition to specializing in a particular major. Through a liberalized process, students could be equipped with knowledge in ethics, history, civilization, culture, entrepreneurship, behavioral sciences, languages, literature, etc., irrespective of their majors. They could be also equipped with the knowledge of science with introductory courses in computing and IT, mathematics, biology, physics, chemistry, natural and environmental sciences, geology, etc., with the end goal of not only training specialists but generally developing knowledgeable global citizens (see: <https://www.aun.edu.ng/index.php/academics>). The advantage of this approach is that students can effectively conduct several types of research across disciplines, evaluate information, learn or draw from multiple disciplines, express various observations, and effectively use technologies. These are the primary features of the development aspect of the university. The accomplishment of this method is evident in its students who are sought out for their knowledge.

5.3.3 *Emphasis on Global Learning*

The Study Abroad exchange program has been implemented by the university to encourage global learning, enhance global partnerships, and provide an opportunity for students to experience a different style of education at a partner institute. Through exchange programs, students significantly interact with, learn from, and mingle with other students of different backgrounds and orientations. This widens their understanding of the historical, artistic, political, and social traditions of different societies and increases the level of tolerance for people of different backgrounds and cultures. Students are, therefore, afforded the opportunity to visit other schools abroad and enroll in a university affiliated with AUN (over 48 universities in about 25 countries) for a period of six to twelve months. Their credits are transferable, and AUN students only pay their home institution tuition fees on these exchange programs. The program also supports international students and scholars. As a commitment to liberal arts education, AUN is a member institute of the Global Liberal Arts Alliance (GLAA), an international partnership of colleges dedicated to promoting higher education in liberal arts.

5.3.4 *Impacts of AUN's Liberal Education*

There are several reports of alumni who go on to do great things for the world and humanity. For example, Charles Charles, an alumnus and a business transformation manager, has described how his hunger for success and professional development is grounded in the principles of self-discovery and continuous improvement that he imbibed at AUN (Instagram Post b).

Other feedback from parents and students on their success after receiving AUN's liberal arts and development-oriented education is a testament to the positive outcome of AUN's liberal arts pedagogy. An alumnus Donatien Ishimwe, a specialist in Petroleum and Gas Exploration Geophysics in Rwanda, has said about his education at AUN as follows:

AUN's Liberal Arts Education system, extracurricular campus activities, leadership service, and excellent physical and intellectual environment shaped me into a creative, critical thinker, and innovative leader in love with the good causes of my country (Instagram Post c).

Another alumnus, Gregory Tanyi who graduated in 2016 and is currently undertaking his Ph.D. expressed how his education at AUN equipped him with the necessary social capital, skill, and zeal to conduct research that will lead to improving his society (Instagram Post a). A proud parent of a student who graduated from AUN also showered accolades on school as she shared her glowing experience of watching her son excel at AUN (American University of Nigeria, [2021a](#), [2021b](#)).

5.4 Community Service and Development Culture

5.4.1 *Community Service-Oriented Approach*

AUN adopts a communitarian approach to education to develop the common good. The development-oriented culture of AUN is further achieved through community engagement service and student leadership programs on campus. Central to the mission of the university is community service which aims to provide opportunities for impacting services to local communities, while also grooming conscientious students (see: <https://www.aun.edu.ng/index.php/campus-life/student-affairs/community-engagement-and-service-learning>). This is by ensuring that AUN students believe in the responsibility of contributing time and talent for the advancement of their communities and society at large. It is a process that is instilled in them from the first day of enrollment at the university during the freshmen orientation. Students are thereby encouraged to voluntarily offer service to the community from an understanding of the importance of community service at this stage. In the same vein, community engagement events are organized by a dedicated office for this purpose (student affairs) on weekly basis. This office guides student volunteers on outreaches and humanitarian activities. Various visits have been orchestrated by students and passionately supported by the university. Some of these volunteer jobs include teaching the women in the community how to read and write, teaching young girls menstrual hygiene, and giving out sanitary towels, basic literacy, peacebuilding, and several humanitarian efforts.

Other voluntary services undertaken by students include as follows;

- Tutoring sessions in English Language, mathematics, computer knowledge, and income generation;
- Sewing lessons for women;
- Small business development for women;
- Renovation and painting of buildings, most especially small schools in the township of Yola;
- Garbage cleanup;
- Tree planting to help the environment;
- Drug awareness campaigns; and
- Donations to victims of floods and other needs in neighboring towns.

Through these activities, students get the opportunity to work hand-in-hand with people and local organizations within the community, health clinics, community associations, and the local government. In 2017, AUN students engaged the social media to promote religious tolerance and campaign against religious extremism in the heat of inter-communal, political, and sectarian crises that led to the countless loss of lives in the North (Ezeamalu, 2016).

Students are especially encouraged to develop activities that will impact the vulnerable members of society such as children, the elderly, women, and indigents. This community service-oriented approach drives students to be more active learners

and acquires experiences that connect them to various communities. As part of their community service engagement, some AUN students recently donated food items and money to an elderly woman (Instagram Post d). Another student, Jemimah Pam, through her foundation, renovated a dilapidated building in an impoverished community to create a better conducive environment for learning. Students who have impacted positively in their communities are honored with the President's Leadership Award and several other service awards in recognition of their noble contributions.

5.4.2 Leadership Development

Another way in which the development-oriented culture of AUN is achieved is through student leadership opportunities on campus. Leadership is encouraged and available from the highest student body, the Student Government Association (SGA), to several clubs and societies positions and a Campus Activities Board that hosts events for students. Students take up leadership roles through elections. These leadership positions significantly enable students to learn the art of building relationships within teams, defining identities, and achieving tasks effectively. It also provides an opportunity to identify and display effective communication and interpersonal skills. In addition to the personal development skills they acquire, this leadership direction is a necessary grassroots skill that will be required for the task of shaping the world as students are encouraged to think broadly and facilitate development activities by the university.

Furthermore, students can apply to the Emerging Leaders Academy (ELA), a year-long leadership program that is designed to enhance the leadership skills of students while fostering interpersonal skills, social skills, ethical skills, and enhancing their moral responsibility. World-class leaders and renowned motivational specialists are invited to motivate and inspire students by sharing their inspirational stories to enhance students' leadership capabilities in the ELA.

The University's Honor Society also promotes leadership, service, character, and scholarship. The Honor Society is a prestigious society of the university that consists of students who have distinguished themselves academically. The society's focal points are academic excellence, community, leadership, and integrity. Members of the society volunteer to tutor their peers who require academic assistance. Students in this society also organize workshops and seminars to assist fellow students and outreach to sensitize individuals on various topics such as hygiene, female empowerment, and environmental sustainability. This society depicts the virtue of community development and the sense of selflessness that AUN has instilled in its students for the benefit of humanity. The Women Leadership Council is another club for both males and females who are passionate about female empowerment and addressing the challenging issues that women face.

5.4.3 *Environmental Sustainability*

AUN is particular about cleanliness and environmental sustainability, a system that has been put in place to ensure that recyclable materials are properly recycled. The sustainability unit of AUN creates esthetically pleasing art pieces and beautiful ornaments from waste materials. Plastic bottles are used to create pen holders and decorations made out of paper. The university often donates recycle bins to the community. Field trips and excursions are organized for students to educate the community on the importance of maintaining cleanliness and the eco-friendly disposal of waste. This is to heighten the sense of responsibility students have for their community. Specifically, a student's club called STARS club is dedicated to environmental sustainability. The club engages in sensitization campaigns on eco-friendly activities, environmental conservation, and proper waste disposals. Similarly, the club regularly donates waste bins and recycled products to various communities.

5.4.4 *Community as Partner*

AUN is not only positioned to engender development through its students but also it is actively engaged in development issues around the community. The university perceives the community as its partner and protector and so it identifies challenges and takes active steps to address them. AUN has partnered with several donor organizations, national, and international NGO's including the United Nations to offer research, humanitarian, and development assistance to many communities in Nigeria.

5.4.4.1 *The Feed and Read Program*

For example, the Feed and Read Program is an AUN initiative to promote education through literacy classes while also alleviating hunger by providing a meal a day to impoverished children, the homeless (Almajiris), and vulnerable out of schoolgirls (Atiku Center, 2019).

5.4.4.2 *The Adamawa Peace Initiative*

To promote peace in the face of violent extremism by the terrorist group Boko Haram and to help inoculate society against extremist ideologies, the Adamawa Peace Initiative (API) was established in 2012 (Donohue, 2016). The API is built on close ties with prominent Christian and Muslim clerics, community, and business leaders to identify vulnerable youth who were subsequently trained on literacy, ICT, STEM, entrepreneurship, and sporting activities to prevent them from joining radical organizations. The university assumed a similar role with respect to humanitarian response

(Ating, 2015), food distribution, and essential supplies to assuage the impoverishment of internally displaced refugees who were forced to flee from Boko Haram (Ensign, 2016). Eventually, more than 300,000 persons were fed and assisted to resettle by AUN with the support of staff, students, and faculty over 18 months. These projects are driven by AUN's goal of leading the students to be the catalyst of development by example. To this end, AUN is poised as an agent of development itself by playing an active direct role in the development of society.

5.4.4.3 Atiku Development Center

Furthermore, AUN's Atiku Development Center was specifically set up to foster development and research in the areas of health, education, human capital development, peacebuilding, etc. The center has facilitated several projects including the USAID sponsored Strengthening Education in the Northeast Nigeria States (SENSE) project which aims to improve the delivery of high-quality education in selected communities (see: <https://atikucenter.org/projects/usaidsense>), and the Building Resilience through Sustainable Agriculture (BRSA) project to ensure food security by enhancing the agricultural capacities and livelihood of indigent farmers, displaced returnees, farmers in host communities, and farmers that are in IDPs camps in three communities in Adamawa State (see: <https://atikucenter.org/projects/eu-brsa>).

Being a development university, AUN embarks on these projects with a mission to help the country and serve as an agent for change through knowledge and deed.

5.5 Challenges of Africa's First Development University

Since its founding as Africa's premier development university, AUN has recorded success in its goal of educating great minds and leaders. Nonetheless, AUN has surmounted several challenges to remain one of the first African universities to foster the creation of new knowledge and at the same time, equip students with the skills and knowledge to thrive and lead. Some of the challenges and approaches adopted by AUN to address the challenges are further discussed.

5.5.1 Insurgency (*Boko Haram*) and Civil Unrest

The insurgency challenges in the Northeastern part of Nigeria by Boko Haram and other militant groups have generally impacted the Nigerian educational system. From assault, threats, abduction of students and staff, to murder, sexual violence, and burning of public buildings (such as schools), the peculiar security challenges of the Northern parts disrupted many educational activities. In particular, *Boko Haram*

worsened the low literacy level in the Northeast region of Nigeria, with schools being the target of attacks since 2009, leading to the closure of over 1500 schools permanently (Segun & Dele-Adedeji, 2016). A study found that the Boko Haram insurgency significantly demoralized students from attending regular school periods because of the unsafe environment which is prone to attack at any unpredicted time (Fareo & Muktar, 2020).

Unfortunately, the only campus of AUN is situated in Yola, Adamawa State, which is in the insurgency-inflicted Northeast region of Nigeria. While the university itself has never been and is not prone to attacks from the insurgency or any civil unrest, the fact that it is situated in the inflicted region presented a challenge to Nigerians in other regions who were reluctant to admit their wards into the university. At first, this affected the enrollment rate which should have been high considering the educational standard of the university.

To combat the issue of insecurity, the university undertook some preventive measures for the safety of students and staff including the construction of high fences around the campus and residential areas, installation of closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras at strategic locations, intensifying security of the schools, and provision of escape routes in the case of an invasion. With the use of sophisticated security, including drones that soar above and around the campus, and horses and K9 (dogs) that patrol the interior and outskirts of the campus, AUN can effectively boast of high-quality security designed to guard persons and property against a broad range of attacks (<https://www.aun.edu.ng/index.php/news-events/news/sa-adatu-abubakar-more-than-a-uniformed-guard>). In addition, a special squad of armed personnel who are always in the bush and armed mobile police around the campus and at various places and other strategic security measures effectively secure the students and staff. Every person wishing to enter the campus is searched and properly identified to enhanced security protection. Over 400 well-trained security officers keep the environment safe, making AUN one of the most secure environments in the whole of Nigeria (see: <https://www.aun.edu.ng/index.php/campus-life/health-center/health-center-news/parents-learn-about-aun-security-health-and-student-life>). AUN's security personnel is made up of educated, well-trained, and disciplined men and women. The Assistant Vice President of Safety and Security Operations at AUN, Dr. Rawlins, a well-experienced security expert and U.S. Army Veteran who served in Afghanistan, oversees the administration and activities of security at AUN. Regular security briefing sessions are held for concerned or prospective parents to learn more about the measures that the university has put in place to ensure the safety of lives and property on and off-campus. Staff and students are routinely updated with security and safety information by email.

Currently, however, the insurgency is not a threat to Adamawa state as the Nigerian authorities have effectively responded to and stabilized the threats posed by Boko Haram and other radical groups. Nonetheless, the protection of students and staff remains a high priority, and the security unit is hands-on to guarantee safety. The rate of enrollment has significantly picked up due to the serious approach by AUN to protect the lives and properties of students and staff.

To further promote peace and harmony in the host state, AUN has played a central role in sponsoring a peace and resolution culture through the Adamawa Peace Council (APC) (Ensign, 2013) and other peace intervention activities.

5.5.2 Economic Instability of the Nation

Nigeria has witnessed several economic upheavals as a result of the weak Naira, fall in oil prices, among other factors (Abraham, 2016). Typically, the economic instability impacts the ability of people to afford higher education which AUN offers. The university tries to cushion the effect of economic instability by offering scholarships to deserving students and permitting the payment of fees in installments.

5.5.3 Poor Internet Connectivity and Lack of ICT Competencies

The university prides itself in its e-Library. With access to over 30 online databases, there is global access to an array of information, scholarly resources, and a large collection of e-books and journals to aid digital learning. In addition, the university's library boasts of over 26,000 volumes of print collections and 200 titles of print periodicals, with more added every year. This makes AUN a digitally-driven university, in addition to being a development university. AUN has been a wireless campus since its inception and all students have access to computers and a strong Internet connection (Ensign, 2013). However, the prime resource advantage that it offers is not properly exploited when students are not physically on campus as a result of poor Internet connectivity in many regions of Nigeria. This, in turn, puts a dent in the stride for digital learning in Nigeria, because the facilities/resources are available, but they cannot be easily accessed by many researchers and learners outside the university.

To improve ICT competencies, AUN has collaborated with other organizations and provided basic computer ICT training to school teachers, the unemployed, students, farmers, small business owners, civil servants, etc. To further inculcate an ICT culture in Nigeria, AUN's African Center for ICT Innovation and Training (ACIT) partners with international ICT organizations for several services ranging from IT training to IT consultancy as well as non-IT training programs for certifications. Primarily, the center builds the competence and ICT skills of individuals, researchers, government agencies, and corporate bodies. Scholarships are regularly offered to those in need.

5.5.4 Learning Through the COVID-19 Pandemic

Nigeria, like many other countries, had to grapple with the crippling effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the end of March 2020, the alarm bells began to sound on the growing spread of the COVID-19 virus, and many educational institutions, including AUN, were forced to shut down to flatten the rate of transmission and curb the growing spread of the virus.

To ensure that the lockdown measures did not significantly affect the academic calendar or disrupt learning, AUN adopted several means, including online learning services with interactive software to virtually teach and impart knowledge to the students and to mitigate the loss of learning. To conclude the semester, teaching was undertaken remotely and on digital platforms. Exams were also concluded online.

Online faculty and student interaction are not new to AUN. The university actively operates a Canvas system, a Web-based learning management system (LMS) which is used by instructors and students to access and manage online course resources, and enhance learning. Canvas allows professors to post grades, information, and assignments online, and during the COVID lockdown period, instructors seamlessly relied on the university's Canvas system, Zoom, Active Presenter, Google Meet, and other online learning platforms to continue teaching and learning remotely.

Several measures including a longer school session, adjustments to the academic calendar, and informal distance learning were employed to abridge the disruption to learning. Commendably, no academic session was lost as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic unlike the case of many public and private universities in Nigeria.

5.5.5 Inequality and Challenges of Digital Learning

The sudden shift away from the classroom to online learning may have affected the learning and assimilation of some students. Of course, students were used to learning in person, getting detailed explanations on PowerPoint slides, and connecting directly with their instructors. The sudden switch to full remote learning proved a little problematic to some students. While others can adapt and excel in virtual learning, it may have affected some students who were unable to assimilate in the new remote learning environment, leading to an inequality in learning. Students who lacked reliable Internet access and/or technology also struggled to participate in digital learning, and this created a gap to effective online learning. Similarly, there was a significant gap between those from privileged and disadvantaged backgrounds who could afford Internet services and better digital equipment to maximize the benefit of online learning. Access to technology in most households may vary, and access to high bandwidth Internet or computers/smartphones is related to family income. Another challenge was the distraction from unorganized environments outside the classroom.

To address this and get the full benefit of online learning, AUN trained faculty to adopt a concerted effort to provide a structure that goes beyond replicating a physical class/lecture. Instead, instructors used a range of collaboration tools and engagement methods that promote an inclusive and personalized method of teaching in their online delivery. Upon resumption, faculty/instructors also undertook revision sessions to bridge the learning gap and bring students up to date.

5.6 Lessons Learned from AUN: Suggestions for Practitioners and Policymakers

Despite several challenges, AUN is in a class of its own with its liberal arts education style and development-driven pedagogy, and this should be a primary factor for education practitioners and policymakers to consider in designing an education that is distinctive and relevant in the new age. In the words of Professor Jacob, *‘in the new and growing space, the liberal arts provide the requisite education for our young, emerging leader to build a national consensus against corruption, ethnicity, religious bigotry, and other vices that have held the nation down for so long’* (Jacob, n.d). The following lessons are identified as a learning point for other development-oriented liberal arts institutions, practitioners, and policymakers.

First, the importance of infrastructure including stable and fast internet connection, well-equipped libraries, digitalized learning materials, and online learning platforms should be noted. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in at least one positive lesson for us, the recognition that online learning is a significant mode of liberal education. AUN stayed on top of learning despite the sharp disruption to physical learning activities mainly because faculty and students were already acquainted with online learning technologies and faculty managed to engage their students in video-based learning, active discussions, and academic resource sharing. Through this pandemic, we have learned the importance of disseminating knowledge across borders using both the classical classroom and online learning platforms and that online learning technology can play a central role in teaching and learning. Thus, it is incumbent upon all educators to explore the full potential of online learning. As shown in the case of AUN, it is important to be fully prepared to augment liberal learning using digital technologies.

Second, having a clear education policy in place is essential to promote liberal education even in the face of unforeseen challenges. The policy supporting the liberal arts approach and development-oriented pedagogies provides a sound and robust environment for development goals to thrive. When the regulating bodies for education in Nigeria were laid back and reluctant to adopt an online method of continued learning, and consequently, students were kept on a long meaningless break, AUN, unlike other universities in the country, was well equipped with the policy which allowed the options of rolling out remote learning to its students and thus was able

to move to online education swiftly and effectively when the government announced the resumption of schools.

Third, it is recommended that liberal arts institutions develop proactive measures to reduce students' financial and economic instability. Economic instability is an unfortunate situation. With the various payment solutions available to the students, coupled with scholarships and work study programs, AUN has tried to be proactive in ensuring that the next generations' educational prospects are less affected by their financial situations. This is a point worth considering to ensure that students are not adversely affected by their financial predicaments.

Fourth, securing a safe physical environment for learning is a paramount step to make liberal learning a seamless process for students, especially in some developing countries where conflicts and violence are social issues. AUN has dedicated 24-h state-of-the-art security for this reason, and this has a great impact on campus safety and the active resident life of the students. Policymakers and educators should proactively seek to guarantee the campus safety and thus the mental peace of students so that it does not become an unnecessary clog in the wheel of their learning process.

5.7 Conclusion

Students who enroll in AUN are like diamonds in the rough, and the primary aim of the university is to 'polish' these diamonds so they can shine bright and also be useful to society. AUN's mission, vision, and goals are to develop students who are problem solvers with an attitude for service and leadership. Consequently, AUN's curriculum and extracurricular activities are specifically targeted at making the development-oriented leaders that Nigeria and Africa yearn for. There are other good public and private universities in Nigeria, but AUN stands out for its development culture and liberal arts approach. AUN has been successful in being a development university for Africa; developing and encouraging the use of technology to solve problems and support liberal learning, developing teaching and research goals, creating and sustaining a humanitarian, social and political environment to support its mission and vision. More so, it has been in the active business of graduating students since 2009 who have been positive contributions to Nigeria, Africa, and the world. Above-discussed AUN's holistic approach to liberal learning offers useful lessons for other universities that wish to further develop their liberal arts education.

Acknowledgements Special thanks to Taslim Oladoja and Jemimah Pam for their research assistance.

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Chapter 6

Liberal Education and the Entrepreneurial Spirit: The Case of Universidad San Francisco De Quito



Jorje H. Zalles, Carlos Montúfar, and Alexandra Velasco

Abstract Having disappeared from colonial Spanish American universities in the late eighteenth century, the liberal arts were brought back to life in Ecuador in a most impactful manner at Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ). This chapter tells the story of USFQ: the educational, social, and political context in which it was founded; the opposition it faced; its impact on its students, Ecuadorean education and society, evidence of and keys to its success, and ongoing challenges.

Keywords Liberal arts · Entrepreneurial spirit · Challenges · Keys to success

6.1 The Setting

In Spanish Colonial times, three universities, founded by three different religious orders, coexisted in Quito, today the capital of the Republic of Ecuador. The curriculum of the Jesuits' Universidad San Gregorio Magno, founded in 1621, was well aligned with the classic structure of the liberal arts: it included the humanities, the arts, rhetoric, grammar, theology, and canon law (Meza Cepeda & de Meza, 2006, p.415). With the expulsion of the Jesuits from the Spanish colonies in 1769, the liberal arts disappeared from university education in Quito, as neither of the other two colonial universities was aligned with them. Universidad de San Fulgencio, that fell into disrepute, was closed down by royal decree in 1786. Universidad de Santo Tomás became the sole survivor through the end of Spanish colonial rule and the establishment of the Republic in 1830, first as Universidad Central de Quito, and later as Universidad Central del Ecuador. Like many other State-run universities

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throughout Latin America, it became ever less focused on academic excellence and ever more on political activism and Marxist-Leninist indoctrination of its students.

Following a trend that had begun in Germany during the early Nineteenth century, born of the Industrial Revolution and the perceived need for scientific and technical education, a national engineering university, Escuela Politécnica Nacional was created by the Government of Ecuador in Quito in 1869, closed in 1876, and reopened in 1930 (Quiénes somos, n.d.). Its curriculum was, and is to this day, strictly limited to the technical fields, unlike those of great engineering schools like M.I.T. The M.I.T. School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (www.shass.mit.edu) offers courses in anthropology, comparative media studies and writing, economics, global languages, history, linguistics, literature, music, philosophy, political science, theater arts, women's and gender studies, any of which an M.I.T. undergraduate can select as a major or minor. www.shass.mit.edu, Accessed September 22, 2021. M.I.T. faculty members of world stature in non-technical fields have included, among many others, economist Walt W. Rostow and linguist and philosopher Noam Chomsky.

In 1946, the Jesuits founded a new private, denominational university, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador, PUCE that started with a law school. Its academic approach, modeled on that of major Continental European universities, has always tended toward the rigorous imposition of beliefs and “knowledge”, characterized by Brazilian educational philosopher Paulo Freire as the “banking” theory of education, under which students are viewed as piggybanks in whom “knowledge” is stuffed for later retrieval (Freire, 2017).

Through the 1970's and 1980's, persons seeking a university education in Quito were limited to those three options that in the words of Spanish philosopher Emilio Lledó were there “to help their students get jobs, not become cultured citizens” (Lledó & Ordine, 2021). Lledó was referring to universities in Spain and other countries in 2021, but his words are totally applicable to the universities in Quito at that time.

Through these several centuries, from the Sixteenth to the Twenty-first, Quito had gone from a highly conservative, Church-dominated capital of a minor political unit in the Spanish Empire to the less conservative, less Church-dominated, gradually more cosmopolitan capital of the Republic of Ecuador, one of many cities in several countries nestled in the Andes Mountains, some members of the élites of which have acquired university educations abroad, first mostly in Europe, and more frequently, during the Twentieth century, in the United States.

6.2 An Audacious Idea

Three young physicists, Ecuadoreans Santiago Gangotena and Carlos Montúfar and a Chilean citizen, Bruce Hoeneisen, who had come as a tourist, fallen in love with an Ecuadorean woman and decided to stay in Ecuador, first met as instructors in Quito's Escuela Politécnica Nacional in the late 1970's. They all held Ph.D. degrees from leading U.S. universities: Gangotena from the University of North Carolina

at Chapel Hill, Montúfar from the University of Notre Dame, and Hoeneisen from Caltech.

Alarmed by what they realized was the dismal reality of university education in Ecuador, they shared an idea that became a dream: founding a nondenominational liberal arts university in Quito.

The three founders, one of whom, Santiago Gangotena, was the entrepreneurial driving force, began to meet with friends and acquaintances to gather support. A small number of people, most of them educated abroad, embraced the idea enthusiastically and offered to help. The majority, however, scoffed in response: the idea was described as too audacious, unrealistic, mad, and impossible.

Undaunted, the founders and their small band of supporters continued to pursue the dream, which along the way acquired a name: Universidad San Francisco de Quito, USFQ, chosen in honor of the city, not the saint. The new university's name was a brilliant choice: it would be the City's University. Later, USFQ adopted a motto: "Goodness, beauty and truth".

A major hurdle lay in the fact that legal authorization for universities to function in Ecuador was at that time completely divorced from academic considerations or accreditation: it was, rather, a political matter to be decided by the National Congress. Quito's existing universities responded with hostility to news of the project, concerned not so much with the intellectual and philosophical challenge that it represented as with the fear that, if the new university were to be approved, there would be one more seeking to share the limited public funds available for universities. Hoping to neutralize at least that aspect of their opposition, the founders responded by announcing that they would forego public funding: USFQ would be strictly and entirely private.

Faced with the challenge of privately funding the project, and in the best spirit of creative entrepreneurship, the founders saw that it could be realized without the need for largescale capital investments, but rather with the voluntary contributions of many supporters. As the project gradually took shape, the wealthy owner of a large house offered to rent it to USFQ as its initial premises, a company that manufactured office equipment donated the desks for the first classrooms, others donated blackboards, office furniture, lighting fixtures, computers, and other office equipment. Academia Cotopaxi, the American International School in Quito, later provided USFQ with the opportunity to build larger premises on its campus and to use them rent-free. Donations of books, journals, and magazines began to come in for the USFQ Library that is today the largest and most up-to-date public library in Ecuador. As the first day of classes approached, a small group of parents, most of them also educated abroad, many of them criticized for their decision by relatives and friends, committed to sending a total of 112 of their sons and daughters to USFQ, rendering the project financially viable. It is worth noting that these founding parents and students signed waivers explicitly accepting the fact that the degrees the students would receive upon graduation would not be "official" university degrees under Ecuadorean law.

The start of classes was delayed for several years during the 1980's, in the constant quest for official approval that kept running into one after another stumbling block. Finally, in 1988, the Founders took the bold decision to start classes anyway, not

as an officially recognized university but as a “university project” sponsored by a foundation created to host it.

The liberal arts formally reappeared in Quito’s higher education on the first day of USFQ’s classes, September 1, 1988. It was not yet an officially approved university: it was termed the Foundation’s “Universidad San Francisco de Quito Project”. So strong was the resistance to this luminous new idea, from many quarters and for many reasons that it was not until late in 1995 that USFQ acquired official status as a university in Ecuador.

6.3 The Dream Became a Reality

Thirty-three years later, USFQ is ranked number 1 among Ecuador’s 78 universities and 60th among Latin America’s 424 ranked universities (QS Latin America University Rankings, 2021, n.d.). Its impacts on its students, on Ecuadorean education at all levels and, more broadly, on Ecuadorean society, have been enormous. Some of the more important are explored below.

6.3.1 *Impacts on USFQ’s Students*

The most critical impact on USFQ’s students—close to 20,000 graduates and a current student body of some 8000—relates to their self-image, self-confidence, and attitudes toward life. The experience, typical in Quito’s traditional universities, of authoritarian professors, imposition of beliefs and value judgments and rote-learning does little to promote a student’s sense of his or her own dignity and worth. The opposite experience, typical at USFQ, is that of being treated with respect, being heard when one questions or disagrees, being asked what one thinks, having one’s answers valued, feeling acknowledged, knowing oneself to be protected from any form of abuse by a high level of commitment to the internal *ethos* and by a strictly enforced honor code. That nurturing of their sense of own dignity has had an extremely important effect on a vast majority of USFQ’s students, as related on multiple occasions by them and by others.

One such story was often told by a member of the founding faculty, now retired. He had been invited to deliver a lecture at Universidad de los Andes in Bogotá, Colombia, and on the flight back had run into an old friend who was president of one of Quito’s major banks. The friend had offered congratulations for what he described as the “USFQ effect”, and when asked please to explain, had described having asked three different USFQ graduates, now employees of the bank, at different moments in recent weeks, if they knew how to do this or that, to which all three had given essentially the same answer: “No ... but I can learn.” There is wonderful self-confidence in a young person who, rather than lie in order to bolster his image in the eyes of his

boss, willingly admits not knowing how to do this or that. But what is even more remarkable is the additional comment: “but I can learn.”

Therein lies another critical impact that USFQ has had on a large number of its students: the realization that one’s years in university are merely the beginning of what will ideally be a lifelong devotion to continued learning, clarification, opening up of new fields of interest and knowledge, possible shift to new fields, and, with the passage of time, acquisition of serene wisdom. For many years, one of USFQ’s three founders shared with students at their graduation the thought, attributed variously to Albert Einstein, Edouard Herriot, B.F. Skinner and others that what the University considers most important is what is left in their minds after they have forgotten everything that they ever learned. What is that? Among other important things, having learned to learn, and having acquired joy in learning and in the acquisition of deep understanding.

This valuable effect on students’ willingness and ability to continue to learn is obviously of particular importance for those who go on to graduate study. Most of the many who have done so have pursued advanced degrees in first-line U.S. and European universities, and USFQ’s authorities have over the years received literally hundreds of letters from graduates that express profound gratitude to USFQ and its faculty for having prepared them superbly well.

A substantial number of those USFQ graduates who went on to pursue advanced degrees abroad have returned to Ecuador, and more than two hundred of them have joined the USFQ faculty. As members thereof, they have contributed significantly both to preserving the spirit of the liberal arts and to the University’s having become a highly respected research institution in all fields of knowledge including the arts, the social sciences, and especially in biology and related sciences, taking full advantage of the fact that, as noted in their days by La Condamine, Darwin and von Humboldt, Ecuador is one of the best natural laboratories in the world. Worthy of particular note is the contribution made by one of the three founders, Doctor Bruce Hoeneisen to the completion of the standard model of particle physics (Hoeneisen, 2013). Through all of this, the role of USFQ evolved from only knowledge dissemination to knowledge creation as well.

Another very critical impact on the University’s students is the development of a fundamental shift in the understanding of the nature, the limits, and the proper *versus* improper exercise of authority that is especially important in a traditional society like Ecuador’s in which submission to authority, even if capricious or abusive, is frequently regarded as a virtue. A profound reexamination of traditional deference before and submission to power and authority clearly results from many of the practices that are common in USFQ—asking what students think on matters at hand, respectful acceptance of their thoughts and eventual disagreements, strict observance of the honor code—noted above. Perhaps the single most effective, and certainly the simplest way to encourage a less reverential attitude toward authority and, conversely, greater trust by students in their own reasoning and conclusions, is the fact that faculty and students address one another on a first-name basis. The very hierarchical forms of mutual address that are traditional not alone in Ecuador’s older universities but in universities the world over, were discarded at USFQ from the outset.

The leveling between professors and students that results from this simple change in traditional ways makes an extraordinary difference not only in their purely academic interaction—greater willingness on the students' part to challenge, disagree, insist on inquiring when something is unclear, pose other ways of seeing and understanding—but, of course, in those students' sense of themselves, their potential, their worth.

Yet another very critical impact on thousands of USFQ's students is the access that it has provided to both outbound and inbound study-abroad programs. From USFQ's earliest days, contacts were made with colleges and universities, first in the United States and, over time, all around the world, on the basis of which USFQ currently has some 120 formal student-exchange agreements with universities in all five continents. Until the 2020 pandemic interrupted them, these programs brought an average of some 1000 international exchange students to the USFQ campus each academic year, and allowed some 300 USFQ students to spend a semester or a year abroad. Both the presence of a significant number of international students in Quito and the experience of a semester away from Ecuador for those who went abroad provide USFQ's students with enormous expansion of their horizons and great opportunities for personal, intellectual, and cultural growth.

Finally, USFQ has had a very important impact on a broad segment of its student population who have had access to the socioeconomic mobility and opening up of limitless opportunities provided by a world-class university education right in their native Ecuador, not abroad that they and/or their families would never have been able to afford had it not been for the University's scholarship and financial assistance program, of which close to 40% of all USFQ students have been the beneficiaries.

6.3.2 Impacts on Ecuador's Educational System

USFQ has also had many and varied impacts on several parts of Ecuador's educational system, including higher education, primary and secondary education, and official educational policies and practices.

At the university level, USFQ has been seen as an example to emulate, in various ways. First, several other private universities—Universidad Internacional del Ecuador, Universidad Internacional SEK Ecuador, Universidad de las Américas, Universidad Espíritu Santo—were founded in Quito and other Ecuadorean cities in the 1990s, once the USFQ experiment was seen to have been successful. Second, USFQ radically changed the system of faculty employment and remuneration: traditionally, the vast majority of faculty members in Ecuadorean universities were not full-time academics; they were, rather, professionals in their respective fields who, in addition, taught one or more university courses, for teaching which they received either very modest financial remuneration, or none at all. USFQ introduced the concept of full-time, well-paid faculty that has also been widely emulated. USFQ also introduced the practices that have also been widely emulated,

of aptitude-based entrance exams, continuing professional development of faculty, community-outreach programs, among others.

On the primary and secondary school level, USFQ has had two important impacts: first, as a stimulus to higher academic standards that can enhance school students' chances of admission to USFQ, by far the university of choice for high school graduates in the country; and second, significant training of primary and secondary school teachers carried out as a part of USFQ's community-outreach programs.

On the level of public educational policy, the long, drawn-out struggle that after nearly 15 years ultimately concluded in the official recognition of USFQ as a university in 1995, fueled a debate that led to the establishment of a system of accreditation based on academic considerations and of periodic reviews that have allowed for the introduction of ever stricter standards and significant improvements in the overall quality of the country's university system.

Finally, on the macro-level of education in Ecuador, USFQ, its faculty, its graduates have over the years introduced concepts that were never before present in Ecuador's educational conversation, including the essence and values of a liberal education and the liberal arts, the critical value of private educational institutions, questioning of traditional rote-learning and of Paulo Freire's "banking" system, the importance of parental involvement in their children's education, and the very meaning of a "good" education. Testimonials by two prominent USFQ graduates clearly illustrate these developments. First, a comment made in a speech to alumni by Ana Dolores Román, B.A. 1995, MBA 2001, who is Pfizer's General Manager for Colombia, Perú and Ecuador:

At USFQ, I learned to grow as an integral human being and to think critically, buttressed by a robust education that aimed at excellence and ethical principles. USFQ's education, based on the liberal arts, contributed significantly to opening my mind, developing my skills, helping me to understand that knowledge goes far beyond the technical, that abilities must be adapted to their surroundings and to changing dynamics, that effective communication and networking are important, and that resilience is key to professional success.

And a comment, in a personal letter to Dr. Carlos Montufar by David Cotacachi, a 2003 graduate who went on to a Master's Degree in Conservation Ecology at the Odum School of Ecology at the University of Georgia on a Fulbright Scholarship, and is the only high-ranking indigenous Latin American executive at the Inter-American Development Bank:

In the 1990s, it was difficult for an indigenous person to enter a public university, and entering a private one was at best a remote possibility. In 1998, USFQ gave me a scholarship and financial aid that covered 95% of my tuition, and an opportunity that I have tried to seize to the extent possible. The University gave me not only great professors, but true mentors and models to imitate. They, who *are* USFQ, taught me, beyond the sciences and the arts, to discover and develop all the potential that I did not know was there, but was in fact present. They taught me to trust in my abilities, but also to be self-critical. The University gave me the tools to face the challenges of my personal and professional life and to tear down the mental barriers that I had created. Some 20 years ago, I dreamt of a meaningful personal and professional life, and USFQ gave me the impetus to achieve that dream.

6.3.3 *Impacts on Ecuadorean Society at Large*

USFQ has also had a great variety of impacts on Ecuadorean society at large.

The approximately 20,000 USFQ graduates who live, work, and participate in myriad ways in Ecuadorean society, and the members of the USFQ faculty who are recognized public figures and act as public lecturers, authors of books, op-ed writers in the traditional press, guests on television and radio programs, constitute if not yet a decisive critical mass, a significant one that is constantly changing the ways of Ecuadorean society in thousands of ways—employment and management practices that are neither abusive nor authoritarian, the practice of the legal profession in a manner less adversarial and more open than before to the resolution of conflicts, a greater openness to fair trade, a shift away from the traditional authoritarian and patriarchal systems of child-rearing and from the abusive relations between men and women, an openness that in previous generations was simply non-existent to diversity in religious beliefs and sexual orientation. In sum, USFQ has exerted and continues to exert a clear influence in favor of the general liberalization of Ecuadorean society.

A number of USFQ graduates have become significant actors in official spheres. Outstanding among them are Salvador Quishpe, Deputy in Ecuador's Congress from 2003 to 2007, Prefect of the Province of Zamora Chinchipe from 2009 to 2019, and currently a member of Ecuador's National Assembly; Javier Córdova, Minister of Mines from 2015 to 2018; María Paula Romo, Minister of the Interior from 2018 to 2020; Juan Sebastián Roldán Chief of Staff to President Lenin Moreno from 2018 to 2021; Juan Carlos Holguín, Minister of Foreign Relations since January 2022; Ana Belén Cordero and Luis Fernando Torres, both current members of Ecuador's National Assembly; Karla Andrade and Daniela Salazar, who upon completion of their graduate studies became members of the USFQ Law School Faculty, and in 2019 were appointed to be two of the nine Justices on Ecuador's Constitutional Court. Many other USFQ graduates have been appointed to high-ranking positions in provincial and municipal governments, the diplomatic service and international organizations including the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank.

Hundreds of USFQ graduates have gone on to become successful entrepreneurs and leaders in their fields, blazed new trails in multiple sectors, created thousands of new employment opportunities, and expanded the country's international trade and visibility in ways that have earned prestigious awards both for themselves and for USFQ. A few examples: José Antonio Ponce, a 2008 graduate in Finance, is CEO of Consorcio NOBIS in Guayaquil, Ecuador's largest corporate group. Beliza Coro, a 2013 honors graduate of the USFQ Law School, is Corporate Counsel at Telefónica in Madrid, Spain. Mauricio Alarcón, who graduated in 1995, is an internationally renowned creative director based in New York who in 2001 became the first Ecuadorean ever to receive a Cannes Lion at the Cannes International Creativity Festival. Bernarda Viteri, M.D., a 2009 graduate of the USFQ Medical School is a distinguished pediatric nephrologist at Children's Hospital in Philadelphia who is doing research in pediatric renal transplant imagery on a grant from the U.S. National Institute of Health, NIH. Christain Wiese, a 1995 graduate in Architecture, won the

Gold Medal in the 2009 Miami Biennial with his design of the Urban Plaza building. María Elisa Galárraga, D.D.S. Ph.D., a Summa Cum Laude USFQ graduate in 2014 and currently a researcher at Goethe University in Frankfurt, Germany, won the 2018 Research Award granted by the Osteology Foundation in Lucerne, Switzerland.

In addition to the content of USFQ's dominant educational paradigms, the University has impacted Ecuadorean society with something else: it is a remarkably visible example of how an idea that many, many people scoffed at and considered impossible to accomplish can in fact be brought to successful reality. Many members of the USFQ community have over the years remarked on instances in which, faced with skepticism regarding a daring new idea, were well served by referring to USFQ as a clear example of how supposedly mad ideas are in fact well worth the effort to make them come true. USFQ is known throughout Ecuador as the very embodiment of the belief that constructive change is possible.

6.4 The Keys to USFQ's Success

6.4.1 The Liberal Arts as a Vital Reality

The first and foremost key to USFQ's remarkable success is its total and unbridled commitment to the liberal arts in all their dimensions: over-riding philosophy, curricular structure, faculty, and what goes on in the classroom, and even a profound aesthetic sense.

6.4.1.1 The Philosophical Basis

The philosophic basis is most critical. From the earliest days that the Founders and the small cohort of friends that they had gathered around them began to develop the academic dimensions of the project, the objective, that so clearly anticipated Emilio Lledó's recent comments in Madrid quoted above, was defined as not merely to train young men and women for the traditional job market, but, much more importantly, to contribute significantly to the overall development of mature, secure, responsible adults, intellectually and emotionally liberated from the severe conditioning of Ecuador's traditionally racist, class-tiered, intolerant, authoritarian and patriarchal society, willing and able to think for themselves, resolve moral dilemmas constructively, and contribute to changing Ecuadorean society for the better, depending, to do so, less on the political system and more on the vigor of civil society. The anticipation, that has proven remarkably true, was that USFQ's graduates, both men and women, would become drivers of social and economic change as entrepreneurs, academics, artists, researchers, inventors, innovators in medicine, engineering and the law.

6.4.1.2 Liberal Arts Curriculum

The initial curricular structure, at first on only the undergraduate level, excluded the subject areas of the traditional fields subject to professional licensing—law, medicine, engineering—because USFQ was at the outset, as noted above, not an officially recognized university under Ecuadorean law. The curriculum was therefore an extremely pure expression of the traditional liberal arts: the humanities and arts, philosophy, the social sciences, mathematics, the natural sciences, foreign languages, and business administration. While able to choose the specifics (which social sciences, which natural sciences, etc.), students were required from the outset, and continue to be required to this day, to delve into all of these areas, and to concentrate on a major field of study only after completing this broad general studies curriculum. In their choice of courses, they have always been encouraged to view learning as a lifelong adventure, not as vocational training. A wonderful example is that of a founding student, son of a founding professor, who was asked by his father why he had chosen to study Chinese. He replied, “So I can learn Japanese.”

In the years since 1995, when USFQ was officially recognized as a university under Ecuadorean law, the curriculum has broadened to include all major academic fields, including those that are subject to professional licensing, and USFQ graduate programs now offer masters’ degrees in biology, business administration, clinical psychology, economics, environmental sciences, food sciences, various specialized areas in law and medicine, nanoelectronics, physics, and various engineering fields. The most recent addition is a Ph.D. program in microbiology. None of these programs has altered the essential curricular commitment to the liberal arts: on the contrary, all graduate and professional programs, regardless of specific area, necessarily include at least some elements of the humanities.

6.4.1.3 Faculty

Conditions proved very favorable for the USFQ project when it came to its starting faculty, another key element of its adherence to the liberal arts. In addition to the three founders, the faculty’s initial members included a number of Ecuadoreans and permanent foreign residents with advanced degrees granted by some of the world’s most prestigious universities, including Columbia, Cornell, Harvard and Yale, at which they had acquired in-depth experience with and a profound commitment to all that the liberal arts represent, so that they needed neither to be taught about nor indoctrinated into the liberal arts. They all saw the USFQ project as a unique and most valuable opportunity that they gladly seized upon, to bring this ancient and liberating philosophy back into Ecuadorean education and society. Over the years, USFQ’s faculty has naturally grown manifold, incorporating graduates of many other highly respected universities, the majority in Europe and the United States. Most significantly, approximately 40% of USFQ’s faculty is today composed of its own graduates, who went on to obtain advanced degrees in highly accredited universities

abroad and have returned to maintain and continue deepening the University's values and traditions.

Critical to that spirit, from the University's earliest days, is the general approach taken by the faculty to what goes on in the classroom that is best illustrated with a pair of anecdotes.

A longtime professor tells the story of the young freshman who some 25 years ago, in a course titled "Introduction to the Social Sciences", had come up to him after the first two or three weeks of classes and somewhat aggressively, said, "My father pays you to teach me, not to ask me what I think!" The professor had replied that, first, it was not the student's father but the University that paid him, and second that asking what his students thought was *exactly* what he, the professor, was there for. This exchange had led to several conversations with the entire class on matters such as the nature of a good education, and the difference between a professor's pretending to "teach" his students, and his trying to help them to "learn". The initially defiant freshman had come to appreciate how valuable it was for him and his classmates not to be taught what to think but to be encouraged to reach their own conclusions. He established a lifelong friendship with the professor, whom he recently visited with one of his daughters, who in turn had just entered USFQ. Much of the conversation among them centered on memories of her father's positive experiences with the liberal arts.

Another illustrative anecdote is told by a professor who had made a statement in class—over the years he has even forgotten what it was that he had said—in response to which a student had immediately raised his hand and remarked that that was exactly contrary to what another professor had told him that very morning. "Excellent!" the professor had replied. "You now have a perfect opportunity to discover what a good education is about. Please explore the matter, talk to my colleague and friend, come and talk with me if you like ... I can even lend you some books you could read, although my father always used to say that there are two kinds of fools, those who borrow and those who return books ... and please let me know, once you have reached a conclusion, with which of us you are in agreement." The student had done as he had been asked, and had eventually reached a conclusion: he agreed with the other professor, but was afraid to tell the one who had issued the challenge. When he admitted so, the professor laughingly told him that he had still not fully understood: it was not just that the student should reach his own conclusions, but that he should also not be afraid to disagree with his professors.

6.4.1.4 The Socratic Seminars

In this same spirit, USFQ created the highly innovative Socratic Seminars program that is a general studies requirement for all undergraduates. The first of the three seminars, called "Being" (*Ser* in Spanish) invites students to reflect on the question "Who am I?" from the perspectives of both the oriental and the western cultural traditions. The second, "Cosmos" aims to awaken curiosity about our natural environment. The third, "Being and Cosmos" attempts to connect the first two through

an exploration of both rational and emotional human interaction. These seminars are not courses in which materials are taught: true to the term “Socratic”, they stimulate the students’ reflections on questions, problems, dilemmas, and issues that constitute what Bronowski describes as “the majestic mechanisms of the Universe” (Bronowski, 1971). Many USFQ graduates fondly recall the Socratic Seminars as the most important part of their undergraduate experiences.

The spirit of the liberal arts has deeply infused all aspects of USFQ’s life. In its Aristotelian encouragement of the contemplative mind that spirit is undoubtedly a major stimulus to the energy and constancy with which faculty members do research and publish scholarly books and papers on a vast array of topics.

That spirit has also fostered a deep sense of freedom—freedom to think, to interact in new and constructive ways, to challenge entrenched paradigms, to encourage the multiple freedoms of all members of the USFQ community and of all of Ecuadorean society in its extremely rich diversity that the USFQ community embodies and celebrates.

The liberal arts as stimuli to an aesthetic sense are also embodied in USFQ’s campus in Cumbayá, a lovely residential district outside Quito. The campus is a welcoming and visually stimulating environment that is an essential part of the educational process and the positive daily experience of the entire USFQ community.

The spirit of the liberal arts has in addition been a major part of the history of two extraordinary developments, the Tiputini Biodiversity Station, TBS, and the Galápagos Academic Institute for the Arts and Sciences, GAIAS, details of which are presented in the next section, as they are wonderful manifestations of the entrepreneurial spirit that is another key to USFQ’s success.

6.4.2 The Entrepreneurial Spirit

USFQ would not have been possible in the absence of a most vigorous entrepreneurial spirit, the conviction that the idea being pursued is valid, a total unwillingness to be defeated by difficulties and setbacks, and the corresponding willingness to go ahead against major odds and in the face of the risk of possible failure.

It is firmly believed within USFQ that the entrepreneurial spirit that was critical to its own start and success is closely linked to a liberal arts education because the latter encourages creative thought, a bold and resolute attitude in the face of problems and challenges, and an independent spirit that is willing to act outside of the constraints of a highly tradition-bound society. The links between the liberal arts and the entrepreneurial spirit are highlighted in the minds of USFQ’s students in several ways: the university’s history is often recounted, they are frequently invited to think of becoming entrepreneurs, not employees, not only if they study business administration and related fields, but regardless of their fields of study; and an annual fair is held on campus for the presentation of students’ entrepreneurial projects.

Evidence of that spirit has already been mentioned in the descriptions above of the founders’ very decision to found what in fact became Ecuador’s first truly private

university; of when they decided to pursue the idea without attempting to raise a large amount of initial capital; and of when they and their associates decided to go ahead with the start of classes in 1988 despite the fact that the University had not been officially approved. Three other valuable examples of that continuous, constructive entrepreneurial drive are important parts of the USFQ story.

The first is the Tiputini Biodiversity Station, TBS, developed jointly with Boston University beginning in the early 1990s on several hundred acres of virgin rainforest on the banks of the Tiputini River, one of hundreds of tributaries of the Amazon, deep in the heart of Ecuadorean Amazonia, close to the border with Peru. The station has become a highly renowned scientific site, where many of the world's leading entomologists, botanists, herpetologists, primatologists, and other scientists from very distinguished institutions carry out multiple research projects, have discovered thousands of new living species, and are generally advancing our understanding of life on our planet in one of the world's richest biodiversity hotspots. Journalist Virginia Morrell, who had visited a number of places around the world studying various aspects of global biodiversity, described the Tiputini Biodiversity Station as "the most remarkable place she visited" (National Geographic Magazine, 1999).

The second example is the story of the Galápagos Academic Institute for the Arts and Sciences, GAIAS, a USFQ teaching center located on San Cristóbal, one of the inhabited Galápagos Islands. Ecuadorean and international exchange students enrolled at USFQ can spend a semester at GAIAS studying marine ecology, evolution, conservation, and environmental policy in one of the most extraordinary locations possible for such studies, the islands where Charles Darwin first began to develop the theory of evolution presented in his *The Origin of Species*. A number of major international scientific conferences, that have been described as "world summits", have been held on USFQ's Galápagos campus in fields including biology, physics, and, in particular, evolution, in commemoration of the fact that the campus is a few hundred meters from the place where Darwin first landed in the Islands. These gatherings have brought together many of the world's leading scientists, including a number of Nobel Laureates. In an article published in *Scientific American* after the World Summit on Evolution held at GAIAS in June, 2005 with support from, among others, the U.S. National Science Foundation, Michael Shermer wrote that "many veteran scientists, who have attended dozens of such gatherings in their careers, proclaimed this to be the finest conference they had ever seen. One even called it 'the Woodstock of evolution'" (Shermer, 2005).

In addition, USFQ and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill have developed a research institution, Galápagos Science Center, GSC that also operates on USFQ's Galápagos campus. This collaborative effort between two leading institutions in their respective countries has led to the realization by growing numbers of Ecuadorean students and scientists of their own potential to pursue meaningful research and knowledge creation locally. The trickle-down effect of this realization is stimulating a sense of intellectual independence, creativity and innovation in Ecuador's academic and scientific communities and in the country's population as a whole.

Tiputini Biodiversity Station, GAIAS, and GSC are indicative of the drive that has characterized the entire USFQ adventure, to offer extraordinary educational and cultural opportunities not only to Ecuadorean university students but to people of all sorts from all over the world. Those opportunities are centered to a considerable degree on Ecuador's unique biodiversity that USFQ presents not as an opportunity for tourism, but rather in academic and scientific terms, on a financially self-sustaining basis, and not just through the creation of specific programs, but also through the development of the institutional frameworks and partnerships that ensure their long-term sustainability.

6.4.3 A Global View

The third main source of USFQ's success has clearly been its permanent connection to educational and other institutions outside of Ecuador.

As the founders began seriously to entertain their idea turned dream, they sought the support of international foundations and began contacts with major U.S. colleges and universities that, when USFQ began classes some years later, were the bases for to its earliest student-exchange programs.

As those programs expanded, USFQ became known and recognized in the world of international education. As a result, it was invited to become a member of the Global Liberal Arts Alliance in 2018, and the Hemispheric University Consortium, HUC in 2019. In that same year, USFQ received the distinction of being invited by the President of UCLA to become, by exception, the 51st member of the Association of Pacific Rim Universities, APRU.

6.5 Continued Challenges and Moving Forward: Four Main Pillars

As was to be expected, the University's growth and expansion beyond its initial curricular structure have meant an inevitable decline in the proportion of its faculty who, as was the case with most of its founding members, had been educated and steeped in the traditions of the liberal arts. New faculty members recruited in the country are mostly unfamiliar with the liberal arts because, as pointed out earlier, they had traditionally not been present in Ecuadorean education until USFQ brought them back. This is true even despite the fact that, as noted above, an important percentage of USFQ's faculty is made up of its own graduates.

In addition, as the University has evolved toward greater knowledge creation, the challenge is clear to preserve, within this reality, the original spirit of the liberal arts that above all else emphasizes the classroom and relations with students. The high-level scientific research in multiple fields that is today an increasingly important

aspect of USFQ's life carries with it the possibility of more faculty members who are more inclined to devoting their time and efforts to research and/or field work than to teaching.

Keeping the liberal arts alive in USFQ as the founding generation moves on is no easy task. It involves at least four main pillars that a few of the earliest faculty members have begun to address as they have become the elders of the tribe. Those pillars are, respectively: provision of knowledge of and an understanding of what the liberal arts are and mean; instilling a commitment to them in all aspects of the University's life, beyond a purely cognitive understanding of their content and meaning; identification of failures to adhere to the philosophy and spirit of the liberal arts; and timely correction of those failures.

Making the conceptual content, history, evolution, and current state of the liberal arts in Ecuador, Latin America, and the world known within the USFQ community is probably the easiest to accomplish of these essential activities. It involves the establishment of a well-chosen library of printed and audiovisual materials that are in ample existence in the contemporary world, and the execution of a consistent and systematic program for their dissemination among all current and future members of the faculty, the administration, and the student body. Current plans call for developing a strategy that, to the extent possible, will cause these dissemination activities to be, though mandatory, attractive enough to draw enthusiastic participation.

The instillment of a true commitment to the liberal arts is more difficult, as has been experienced and reported by some faculty members whose commitment to them arose through the actual experience of living them, studying under their precepts, enjoying the intellectual stimuli and freedoms that they offer, and who then encountered difficulties with transmitting the joys and benefits of those experiences to some of their faculty colleagues and their students. In this area, great possibilities exist for exploring joint efforts among several institutions dedicated to the liberal arts, in which USFQ could participate.

It is clear that the identification of failures to adhere to the philosophy and spirit of the liberal arts and timely correction of those failures must be carried out with strict adherence to that very philosophy and spirit. This means careful avoidance of anything that would even vaguely resemble an inquisitorial or police-state. That said, the challenge is not new to USFQ: gross evidence of non-adherence to the philosophy and the spirit of the liberal arts and, more broadly, of essentially decent human relations, such as for example, disrespect or harassment of any member of the community by another, is fully contemplated in the USFQ Honor Code and is not tolerated within the institution. What must be guarded against with respect to the specific objective of keeping the liberal arts alive is that they do not slip into becoming a mere slogan that is neither properly understood in its full depth nor appreciated in how it makes an academic institution fundamentally different from one that is not guided by them.

6.6 Conclusion

The USFQ experience points clearly in the direction that the entire educational system should take in Latin America and beyond, especially at the university level. Having stayed completely away from the frequent politicization of higher education in the region, USFQ is contributing in various significant ways, as has been shown above, to the creation of social capital in Ecuador, and thereby, to the solution of the many social, economic, and political problems that the country, the region, and many other countries in the world are struggling to solve.

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Chapter 7

Liberal Arts Education in Law: The Case of Handong Global University in South Korea



Kukwoon Lee

Abstract This chapter reflects on the reality and prospects of a liberal arts education in law in Korean society, focusing on the case of Handong Global University (HGU). As a full-time professor who has been engaging in legal education at HGU for the past 24 years, the author attempts to critically analyze HGU's efforts and achievements based on his personal reflections and experiences. To this end, the chapter will begin with a brief introduction of the unique historical-institutional context in which the agenda of a liberal arts education in law has been formed in Korean society. It will then introduce Amherst College's attempt on legal education as a reference to HGU's effort and further discuss HGU's liberal arts education in law in detail. The chapter will conclude with lessons learned from HGU's case.

Keywords Legal education · Liberal arts education · Law as liberal art · Handong Global University · Amherst College

7.1 Introduction

Korean society experienced fundamental changes in legal education and in its lawyer-licensing system in 2009 when the 25 new law schools were established following the American law school model, and began to recruit new students under a new curriculum (e.g., Kim, 2012). As a result of these changes, the current lawyer-licensing system in Korea started to follow the process where graduates of various undergraduate majors enter a three-year professional graduate school; receive a professional master's degree in law; pass the bar exam; and complete practical apprenticeship. In the previous system, a person who majored in law in an undergraduate course at a university passed the judicial examination and completed a two-year practical course at the Judicial Research and Training Institute set up in

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the Supreme Court to attain licensure. Such a person was given not only the qualifications of a lawyer but also the qualifications for a judge and prosecutor. This old system eventually disappeared after a few years of transition.

Prior to the launch of the graduate law school system, there were numerous criticisms about the form and nature of legal education and the lawyer-licensing system in Korea. The most notable was that legal education in universities focused mainly on the preparation for the judicial examination, as the government increased the number of passers of the judicial examination and university education became universal in the 1980s. Accordingly, the number of college of law (undergraduate law departments) and students majoring in law soared, resulting in a commensurate rapid increase in the number of the law professors. The master of law and Ph.D. in law academic programs in graduate schools that train legal researchers also began to be operated, and as a result, the number of law professors rapidly expanded in size in the 1990s. Amid the trend of the examination-focused legal education, several law professors attempted to normalize the university legal education and bring back the so-called basic legal science, such as jurisprudence, legal history, sociology of law, economics of law, comparative law, and various “specified laws,” including international law and human rights law, within the curriculum of university legal education and thus move the focus of legal education from the interpretation of major positive laws which were the essential subjects of the judicial examination to a deeper and wider scope of legal science. A six-year university legal education system consisting of two years of general education and four years of majoring in legal education was recommended. Unfortunately, this recommendation was not accepted, because there was a fear that the extension of the period of university legal education would further aggravate the examination-focused tendency and eventually turn the entire campus into a cram school of law. Instead, the American-style law school system as an alternative gained widespread support from academics, university members, media, civil society, business circles, bureaucrats, including the Ministry of Education, and politicians and in 2007, an agreement on a Korean-style law school system was promulgated in the law. As a result, since 2009, Korean society was introduced to fundamental changes in legal education and the lawyer-licensing system. More details on the introduction of the law school system in Korea can be found in several studies including Kim (2012) and Lee (2019a, 2019b).

Unsurprisingly, the new law school and bar exam system triggered a fundamental change in university legal education. In the process of introducing the new system, those selected 25 universities where law schools were established could not have any legal education unit at the undergraduate level. While those 25 universities were forced to abolish their undergraduate law curriculum and instead establish a three-year professional graduate law school, other remaining colleges of law and law departments transformed themselves into pre-law programs for law school entrance or specialized in various areas such as public law, police administration, business law, political education, civic movement, information security, and the legal technology. During this process, the legal education reform which advocated the introduction of basic legal science, specified law, and critical approaches to law was rapidly diminished and the law schools immediately succeeded in meeting the occupational

interest of legal practitioners. As of 2022, fifteen years have passed since the launch of the law school system. While the examination-focused tendency aiming to pass the bar exam has become stronger than ever across all of the law schools, discussion on liberal arts education in law has also emerged in Korean society.

Amid this historical-institutional context, though HGU was not given an opportunity to establish a law school, it has tried to introduce a liberal arts education in law at the undergraduate level. HGU offers a rare and unique experiment for law faculty and liberal arts educators. Of course, it may not be possible to fully revive the educational impetus toward basic legal science, specified law, and critical approaches to law in Korean society as HGU's efforts are still ongoing. However, HGU's effort to establish a liberal arts education in law will definitely help identify weaknesses in the current system of legal education under the law school model and explore possible ways for improvement. The key features of HGU's undergraduate education are an example the possible improvements that can be made in Korean legal education.

7.2 An Overview of HGU's Undergraduate Education and Law Curriculum

To view the case of HGU's liberal arts education in law, it is necessary to first look at the educational characteristics of HGU itself. HGU was opened in Pohang, a coastal city in the southeastern area of Korea in March 1995 and is a relatively new university that has been building a 27-year history as of 2022. Until now, HGU has attracted attention as a model that has achieved success by presenting a new direction for university education despite the difficult environment of being located within a non-metropolitan area. More details on HGU's history and its liberal arts education can be found in Ka (2016), Han (2003) and Kim (2006). The following summarizes three main characteristics of HGU.

First, as a private university, the educational approach of HGU is a commitment to Christ-centered understanding of academic disciplines and to reflect a Christian spirit on campus. Unlike most private Christian universities in Korea, HGU was established as an alternative Christian university led by Protestant intellectuals in Korean society based on the sense of crisis that other schools that were started by Christians had already lost the essence of their Christian values in their education in the face of "secularization" or were likely to lose it. The location of the Handong campus which is reminiscent of a monastery is located far from the Seoul metropolitan area as well as the city center of Pohang. HGU's representative slogan is "Why Not Change the World?", with the composition of Protestant professors, and the unique Christian character of education, that includes a chapel, team guidance teaching system, community leadership training, and community service program in the undergraduate curriculum.

Second, HGU is an undergraduate-centered liberal arts college that has been a leader in the innovation of university education in Korea. Since its beginning, HGU

has attempted to reform the ranking structure between departments at the undergraduate level, which originated from college entrance examination scores. HGU's educational policies such as selecting all new students with undeclared majors; not-requiring affiliation to any department in the freshmen year; providing foreign language and computer education as compulsory in addition to Christian character education; obligating the completion of two or more majors each of which consists of 33 credits; and guaranteeing students the right to choose a major without limitation were very radical educational policies for Korea in the mid-1990s. This experimental innovation, presented from a student perspective, and from the position of universities or professors, foreshadowed the fundamental change in direction of the undergraduate education reform that the Korean government has taken over the next 20 years.

Third, HGU is a global university that has consistently pursued globalization in all areas since its establishment. Although it is located in the remote outskirts of a small city in a remote part of Korea, HGU has been conscious of an international audience and global market in all aspects of its operations. This global nature and attitude is present in the faculty composition, the form of liberal arts and majors, the proportion of first-year students, the scope of non-subject activities, and the direction of careers after graduation. It goes without question that most of the so-called Korean diaspora scattered around the world are connected by a community of Protestant churches and a missionary network. Since 2010, HGU's global infrastructure has been closely linked to various developing country support programs at home and abroad.

In light of the above three characteristics, HGU's initiation of a law major deserves to be considered as an unusual attempt. Until then, the law major was regarded as the most secular and domestic academic field that was the farthest from Christianity in Korean society. Though law major has always been at the top among undergraduate majors, it was considered unrelated to globalization. However, when HGU established its School of Law in the first semester of 1998 and began a law major at the undergraduate level, it completely ignored the common perception of law majors in Korean society by integrating the above-discussed three characteristics of HGU explicitly and offering a two-track law program.

Unlike the other over 200 colleges and departments of law that are mostly devoted to preparation for licensing exams such as the bar examination and the civil service examination, HGU's undergraduate law curriculum offers a two-track legal education: a Korean law program and US and International Law (UIL) program. HGU's School of Law began with three Korean legal scholars majoring in Korean law, and two Korean-American attorneys majoring in US law. These members taught and provided guidance together to about 40 Korean students per school year enrolled in the Korean law and UIL programs. The Korean law course was taught in Korean, and the UIL course was taught in English.

Many interesting observations could be made as Korean law, American law, Korean language classes, and English classes were held simultaneously for the same students at this small new undergraduate school. Because most students at HGU had not yet been exposed to an examination-focused curriculum, in each class, fundamental questions about the legitimacy and grounds of the law were raised rather than

a systematic understanding of the positive law. Moreover, these questions were often expanded in the direction of appealing for an answer from Christianity, the educational foundation of HGU. They were questions on the vision and the Christian identity of the legal education at HGU.

Throughout 1999, full-time professors of the School of Law repeatedly discussed and contemplated presenting such a vision or Christian identity. As a result, it was confirmed that a very unique vision of “lawyers without borders” was already identified from the composition, organization, and reality of the legal education at HGU. By the end of the fall semester of 1999, they completed a plan of establishing a Graduate Professional Law School as important part of the development plan for HGU’s legal education. After presenting this vision and plan to the university leadership, this project suddenly became a much larger than expected because Kim Young-Gil, the first president of the HGU, upgraded it to the Handong International Law School (HILS) Project, which was a plan to establish an American-style law school that teaches American law outside US territory and to train students to become licensed American lawyers for global practice.

In the fall of 2000, the HILS Project was approved by the educational authorities of the Kim Dae-Jung administration, which was promoting the “post-bachelor legal education system” in terms of university education reform. However, due to a lack of time to form the faculty, the opening of HILS was delayed for one year. At last, Lynn Buzzard, a professor at Campbell University Law School, who had long served as a leader of the Christian Legal Society movement in the USA, was invited as the charter dean and HILS finally opened in the first semester of 2002. More details on HILS’s history and the situation of Protestant legal scholarship in Korea can be found in Lee (2016).

As the establishment of HILS neared, Christian American lawyers with various career backgrounds joined HGU, in addition to the aforementioned Korean legal scholars and Korean–American attorneys of the School of Law at HGU. By 2005, when HILS produced its first batch of US attorneys, it had 15 Christian law professors consisting of American lawyers, Korean legal scholars and Korean–American attorneys, each group accounting for about a third. This unprecedented composition of the law faculty forced an innovation in legal education both at the undergraduate and graduate levels at HGU. Above all, the Korean law faculty had to be shy away from excessive examination-focused tendencies and the American law faculty needed to understand Korean culture to communicate with their students who were mostly Korean nationals. In particular, the burden of teaching Korean students together on the same campus made both groups continue to explore the fundamental dimensions of law beyond the education of positive law in a narrow sense.

However, crossing multiple boundaries and moving toward a united educational community of law was never easy. Difficulties arising from language and cultural differences were natural. Moreover, Korean legal scholars focusing on academic research and American lawyers emphasizing the importance of actual practice differed from each other even in their basic attitude toward law. It was difficult to establish a universal dimension of legal education that encompasses the Civil

law tradition and the Common law tradition without having a comprehensive understanding of both. Fortunately, there was a deep consensus in regards to the core doctrinal positions of Christianity among the faculty, especially within the context of the Protestant faith. However, linking it to legal education and research was a totally different matter.

Under these circumstances, HGU's legal education was exposed to fundamental concerns. In 2003, the second year of HILS's existence, students raised the question, "Is it actually possible to become a licensed US lawyer after graduation?" On the surface, this was a question about the link between HILS graduation and eligibility for US bar exams which was soon resolved by obtaining permission from several US states through a petition for students to sit for the bar exams. However, at the heart of this question, there was an undeniable reality that in professional legal education, students had no choice but to demand a resolution of their occupational interests as a top priority. While different in form, this demand was almost same as the examination-focused tendency which dominated legal education in Korea for long period of time until then. Therefore, it would be difficult for HGU's legal education to achieve its goal if it could not effectively cope with the issue of the occupational interests of students.

In legal education, a student's attitude toward law can be largely distinguished between (1) an attitude of theoretical interest, that is, questioning "what is the law", and (2) an attitude of practical interest, that is, questioning "how to realize the law." The latter interest is again linked to (3) an attitude of ethical interest, that is, questioning "why the realization of law is right?" The former interest is also linked to (4) an attitude of academic interest, that is, questioning "what is the ground for the law?" Ideally, legal education should be conducted in a way that combines all four of these attitudes to law (see Lee, 2004). However, returning to reality, especially in professional legal education, (5) an attitude of occupational interest, that is, questioning "how can I live with the law?" is bound to be overwhelming. This is a natural phenomenon, but the problem is that the occupational interest completely paralyzes theoretical-practical-ethical-academic interests. In that case, a proper legal education itself may become impossible.

Whether at the undergraduate or graduate level, legal education is about teaching law, not just teaching how to become a lawyer. The institutional essence of legal education is "law schooling", not "cram schooling for the bar exam." For a proper legal education, students must be reasonably separated from their own occupational interests. By employing a case method or so-called Socratic method using major legal precedents and strictly requiring it in the first-year law school curriculum the American legal education can equip law students with legal mind effectively and help them escape from mere occupational interests at least for the first year. This kind of legal education adds another attitude toward law, (6) an attitude of critical interest, questioning "what is the purpose of the law?" in the process of legal education.

Looking back, it was the biggest crisis in the history of legal education at HGU when Korean society decided to introduce the American-style law school system. Despite this crisis however, HGU quickly came up with measures to respond to the new system. At the undergraduate level, HGU rearranged the goal and character of

the Korean law and UIL curriculum to the direction of a liberal arts education in law. This was a measure to realize “the vision of lawyers without borders” within the new law school system of South Korea as well as provide an alternative that harmonized the theoretical–practical–ethical–academic–critical interests with the occupational interest. In this regard, the well-known experience of the “Law, Jurisprudence and Social Thought” department of Amherst College (hereinafter referred to as LJST), which was operated under the leadership of Professor Austin D. Sarat, became a very important reference to HGU. Before introducing HGU’s experience with liberal arts education in law, a brief glance LJST department at Amherst College is necessary to see how it affected HGU’s legal education.

7.3 Amherst College’s LJST as a Reference

From the end of October to the beginning of November 2004, as head of the School of Law at HGU, I visited Amherst College, known as one of the best liberal arts colleges in the USA. The purpose of the visit was to examine the LJST department as a reference to reorganize HGU’s undergraduate law courses in the direction of liberal arts education in law. For this purpose, I interviewed Professor Austin D. Sarat, the founder of LJST, and surveyed the LJST curriculum that has the motto of “Law as Liberal Art.” More details of the results and effects of this academic visit were published in a short paper entitled “The Road to Amherst” more than a decade ago (see Lee, 2011). The following section briefly summarizes the case of LJST based on that paper.

According to the department’s internal document “Law, Jurisprudence & Social Thought: A Program Statement” that was prepared by the faculty of LJST in March, 2001, the LJST department was launched as the 29th department of Amherst College in November 1992 through a full vote of the faculty. Prior to that, it was a pilot program called “Law and Social Order” from 1985, and from 1990 to 1993, it operated as a non-major program with the support of several foundations. After becoming an independent department, LJST was successful. As of 2001, it had 70 student majors and more than 700 students per year enrolled in LJST classes, which made it the most preferred program in light of the number of professors at Amherst College. The faculty of the LJST department in the early years were full professors from the departments of political science and philosophy, assisted by four to five associate or assistant professors. Interestingly, most of the faculty members had Ph.D.’s in humanities or social sciences along with law degree.

The LJST department intended to teach law as liberal art. The document mentioned above demonstrated how the LJST department could contribute to the humanities and liberal arts education of Amherst College with two focuses: (1) the law is a platform that can fairly accommodate various academic approaches to life, so fundamental questions of humanities and liberal arts can be deepened through the study of law, and (2) because of that, legal education can provide essential help through thorough

reading of the texts, which is the basis of humanities and liberal arts; detailed interpretation of culture; and the cultivation of practical wisdom. Based on these arguments, the LJST department determined that the purpose of teaching law within the humanities and liberal arts could never be achieved by merely combining law related subjects in political science, philosophy, psychology, etc., and creating a curriculum such as a “Law & Justice Program,” for example. Instead, the LJST major composed its curriculum with several courses across four areas: legal theory, interpretation practice, institutions of law, and historical-comparative cultural perspective. To major in LJST, nine courses had to be completed, and two of them were “Social Organization of Law” and “The Image of Law in Social and Political Thought” taught by two full professors. The LJST department thoroughly distinguished itself from other pre-law programs established in many American universities and emphasized that the department should teach law as the core subject of the humanities and liberal arts as a desirable way to prepare for the study of law in a professional law school. The LJST department intended to teach law as liberal arts that contained all the fundamental problems of politics, economy, religion, and culture by attempting an integrated and interdisciplinary approach to law “from the beginning to the end.” In gist, “the law is too important to leave it to the lawyers” was the idea leading LJST.

In fact, the LJST department, led by Prof. Sarat, was already a radical concept in the American academic society as of 2004. An academic flow called the Amherst School was formed around the areas of philosophy of law, sociology of law, and law and cultural studies. During the visit, I conducted an interview with Prof. Sarat in his office for about an hour and a half, and I still clearly remember the impression of the conversation we had at that time. Prof. Sarat had a very unusual career. After earning a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Wisconsin in the early 1970s, he taught in the Department of Political Science of Amherst College, writing mainly in the fields of politics of law. Then, in the mid-1980s, he entered into Yale Law School as a student in order to try a truly integrated academic approach to the law; acquired J.D.; and returned to Amherst College and started LJST.

During the interview, I asked why he returned to Amherst after finishing Yale Law School even though he had many invitations from several top law schools, and shared my worries about heightened occupational interest under the American-style law school system and my interest in “Law as Liberal Art.” What Prof. Sarat answered still lingers in my ears.

When I returned from Yale Law School to Amherst College and started the LJST Department, the most important thing I thought was the freedom of academics. The reason I didn’t go to a law school was, above all, that the academic approach to law is likely to be restricted in the framework of occupational education. I don’t know anything about the situation in Korea, so I can’t give you any specific advice. But go as far as you can to enjoy academic freedom. That is the right path for those who take law; the object of learning to choose.

7.4 Liberal Arts Education in Law at HGU

My academic visit to Amherst College in 2004 was of great help in creating and promoting the liberal arts education within HGU's law curriculum. Referring to the case of Amherst College, HGU's law faculty members thought about where they should stand as legal scholars who value the synergy of the integration of basic legal science, specified law and critical approaches to law. In my own view, there were four possible positions: (1) to provide a strong foundation for the law school system by offering core courses or learning activities; (2) to reproduce the legitimacy of the law school system by focusing on research activities linked to positive law and follow a path of top law school such as Yale Law School; (3) to revise or recreate the law school system by focusing on legislative and policy activities in law school associations, bar associations, lawyers' guilds, or the related research units of courts and governments; or (4) to consider indirect contribution to the law school system by combining a liberal arts education in law with a focus on integrating basic legal science, understanding specific laws, and critical approaches to law in an undergraduate program. Each of the four positions has its own pros and cons, but as to the occupational interest, which is the fundamental driving force of the law school system and thus cannot be ignored, (1) is the most optimal, while (2), (3), and (4) are less so.

After a lengthy discussion, the faculty members of the School of Law at HGU eventually reached the decision to follow the option (4) and reform its legal education curriculum at the undergraduate level in the direction of a liberal arts education in law. Without any external pressure, the faculty members determined that it would be best to move in a rather unfamiliar direction of pursuing a liberal arts education in law. Given the unique character of HGU, this decision was considered to be consistent with HGU's educational orientation, that is, an education based on Christianity, undergraduate-centered, and bold effort toward globalization to implement the "vision of lawyers without borders."

However, it was not easy to reconstruct the entire curriculum of the School of Law under the motto of "Law as Liberal Arts." After a long process of deliberation, the faculty members of the School of Law agreed that the teaching of positive law would be limited to the fields of basic laws such as constitutional, civil law, and criminal law, and the specialized areas of law such as dispute resolution, judicial reform, law and technology, and Korean reunification would be emphasized differently depending on the situation of the faculty. Education in the field of basic legal science was strengthened and new courses such as legal classics were added along with existing subjects such as jurisprudence, sociology of law, law and politics. The other important decision was to replace comparative law, international law, legal history in Korean with the similar courses in the UIL program. In terms of teaching methodology, the examination-focused pedagogy was avoided and project-based learning focusing on fundamental issues was suggested. From the perspective of a liberal art education, the importance of reading broadly, thinking deeply, and writing clearly was repeatedly emphasized.

In addition, the faculty members of the School of Law examined ways to maximize the coexistence of the Korean law and the UIL programs to realize the vision of lawyers without borders. For this purpose, a common area between those two programs was created to encourage students to major in both programs. Even though this double major in law is quite difficult, it would guarantee better language skills, a reflective understanding of legal norms and institutions with an ambidextrous preparation for career building. Students who majored in both Korean law and UIL were the targets for the liberal arts education in law at HGU.

The most difficult matter in reorganizing the curriculum around the idea of a liberal arts education in law was to set educational goals in relation to the students' career development. In a situation where practically almost all students want to advance to a law school such as HILS, it is not easy to ignore the possibility that students may spend their undergraduate years in preparing for law school entrance exams such as the Legal Education Eligibility Test or LSAT. To reasonably separate students from this strong occupational interest, the faculty members of the School of Law deliberately aimed at "cultivating basic knowledge to become a good lawyer" rather than just acquiring the qualifications to become a lawyer. For example, instead of being a litigation lawyer in a narrow sense, various policy lawyers, including higher court judges, legal experts in specialized fields, and lawyer-statesmen, were actively presented as role models. Furthermore, various academic activities like workshops, seminars, conferences, team projects, research visits were added to ensure the theoretical, practical, ethical, academic, and critical interest in law.

The School of Law of HGU finalized its new curriculum in the fall semester of 2007 which commenced in the spring semester of 2008. The Korean law major and UIL major each required 33 credits and expanded the students' choices by having a minimum number of required subjects that allowed students to take courses taught in other languages up to 12 credits as electives. Students generally took major courses from the first semester of their second year, and for first-year students who had yet to declare a major, an introduction to law was provided as a major foundation course. Courses were assigned in one of four areas: (1) foundational courses in positive law both in Korean law and UIL; (2) courses in basic legal science; (3) courses in specific legal subjects and related topics; and (4) courses for capacity building. As mentioned above, double majors were promoted, and the bilingual approach was always encouraged. From 2008 to 2022, there were some adjustments to the curriculum. In 2012, Contract, Torts, Bill of Rights, Criminal Law and Procedure, and Legal Research & Writing were re-opened due to the need for positive law education in the UIL major, and some more courses in specific legal subjects were added to accommodate changes in the faculty composition. In 2018, the School of Law accepted students' request to prepare for public officer examinations and began to provide related courses in the Korean Law curriculum. Since 2012, the faculty members of the School of Law have attempted to establish the philosophy, politics, economics, and law major (so-called PPEL) in collaboration with other departments of HGU. Unfortunately, this attempt has not been realized until now due to a lack of professors.

The most important factor in the implementation of the liberal arts education in law is to recruit and develop competent law professors. When the new curriculum began in 2008, the number of full-time professors in the School of Law was only three and as a result, it was difficult to offer courses for a liberal arts education in law. As the number of full-time faculty increased to eight and a few adjuncts were added in 2022, almost all the instructors in the departments possessed a Ph.D. in law or a degree in other fields, and about a half of them had experience as legal practitioners. As a result, the liberal arts education in law is now settled at the undergraduate level. In addition, some of the UIL courses are taught by HILS professors to meet the need of the students who wish to be lawyers in Anglo-American world.

7.5 Achievements and Prospects of Liberal Arts Education in Law

HGU's liberal arts education in law, which began in 2008, has produced remarkable achievements. First, as a direct result of legal education reform, the School of Law has developed into an undergraduate major with the third-largest number of students among liberal art courses at HGU. As mentioned earlier, HGU adopts a system in which freshmen need not declare a major and have no affiliation to any department until their second year. Therefore, how students choose majors tends to be an indicator of each major's competitiveness. In this regard, the increase in the enrollment of students is evidence of the stability and success of the liberal arts education in law within HGU.

Furthermore, as an external achievement, the number of those who entered law school may be cited. Over the past decade or so, HGU's School of Law has become an undergraduate educational institution that has produced a significant number of graduate law school students. According to a survey of law school admissions from 2009 to 2019, HGU produced the 18th highest number of law school students with 134 students, most of whom were Korean law or UIL majors in the School of Law (Lee, 2019b). In addition, about 10–15 out of 50 students majoring in law went to HILS every year, and the number of graduates who went to law schools in the USA or other English-speaking countries also reached about 30 in the same period of time. In Korea, where university education is unimaginably concentrated in the Seoul metropolitan area, the achievement of a small university in a small city far from Seoul is quite remarkable.

As mentioned earlier, HGU's liberal arts education in law aims to foster Christian lawyers without borders. It is far beyond just having students gain admission to law school or passing the bar exam. In this respect, HGU's liberal arts education in law can be evaluated as having successfully created a bridge with the graduate law school system. On top of that, the number of US attorneys produced by HILS has exceeded a total of 550 since 2005, and 12 graduates of Korean law courses, which had been in operation for only 10 years from 1998 to 2007, have passed the judicial examination.

Although the plan of a Christian law school that exclusively teaches Korean law is still a hope, HGU is already in the process of training “lawyers without borders.”

Along with these achievements in legal education, it is noteworthy that there has been great progress made in legal research. In 2015, the General Graduate School of HGU started its own department of law and opened a master of law course, and the following year, it immediately began a Ph.D. in law course. Then very surprisingly, a flood of applicants who were willing to study law based on Christianity came forward. There were graduates of the School of Law, HILS, other Korean law schools, and the Judicial Research and Training Institute. Some were foreign lawyers.

Though it is small in size with about six to seven graduate students enrolled in the master of laws and Ph.D. in law program per year, the Department of Law of the General Graduate School is a valuable base for legal research based on Christianity. Whenever each graduate student is reviewed for his or her thesis every semester, it is as if the Department of Law of the General Graduate School itself is being tested for entire academic competence of the entire department. From the fall semester of 2020, the Department of Law of the General Graduate School of HGU began to support qualified full-time students with governmental research grants. As of 2022, it has produced four Ph.D. in law and nine masters of law graduates.

7.6 Conclusion: Lessons Learned from HGU

In conclusion, HGU has been relatively successful in implementing its liberal arts education in law since 2008. Although there is still the risk of the program degenerating into an ordinary pre-law program, the consensus of the professors in regards to “law as a liberal art” effectively maintains it. The uniqueness of HGU’s education, based on Christianity, undergraduate-centered, and emphasizing globalization amplifies the effects of this liberal arts education in law. Then, what are the lessons we have learned from the HGU case for policy makers and other legal educators in liberal arts institutions around the world?

- First, as seen from the case of HGU, it is clear that a liberal arts education in law has a unique value in the context of extending undergraduate legal education under a professional graduate law school system.
- Furthermore, there is a possibility of reviving an academic approach to law through the integration of basic legal science, specific legal subjects, and critical approaches to law in the curriculum. To do that, a group of competent faculty members who are devoted to the reform of legal education need to play a key role. In case of HGU, a group of law professors in the School of Law had been formed before the launch of the law school system and had developed group competencies via continuous discussions and negotiations to carry out this reform of legal education.
- To implement a liberal arts education in law more successfully, a systematic approach to creating an integrated legal education major such as PPEL is needed

in the future. It is hoped that the case of HGU's liberal arts education in law offers a reference point for liberal arts educators to develop an appropriate approach to legal education reform to promote the depth and breadth of learning for legal professionals.

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Chapter 8

The Call for Deepening Regional Collaboration: A Review of the Alliance of Asian Liberal Arts Universities and Implications for Inter-University Collaboration



Ka Ho Mok

Abstract The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic since the late 2019 has adversely disrupted global cooperation and collaboration across different university systems. Well before the COVID-19 crisis, internationalization of higher education had become one of the major development trends shaping inter-university collaboration not only in student exchange but also in research and other forms of collaboration and cooperation. However, the unprecedented global health crisis resulting from the outbreak of the COVID-19 has significantly changed the ways and approaches that universities engage in collaboration. This chapter sets out against the broader political economy context, especially during the COVID-19 crisis, to critically review the Alliance of Asian Liberal Arts Universities (AALAU), particularly examining its role in promoting inter-university cooperation and collaboration for co-promoting liberal arts education in Asia. The chapter also discusses the implications when the regionalization of higher education through engagements in inter-university collaborative platform like AALAU is further deepened for future higher education development.

Keywords Quality education · Inclusive education · Internationalization · Higher education · Research and knowledge transfer · Student learning experience

8.1 Introduction: Contesting Globalization and Internationalization of Higher Education

Our contemporary society has been adversely hit by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic since 2020. One of the significant impacts resulting from the COVID-19 crisis is the disruption of international student mobility, which has inevitably affected the extent and effectiveness of international learning (Farnell et al., 2021; Mok & Zhang, 2021). Well before the emergence of the COVID-19 public health crisis, the

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© The Author(s), under exclusive license to Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2023
I. Jung and K. H. Mok (eds.), *The Reinvention of Liberal Learning around the Globe*,
Crossing Cultures: Liberal Learning for a World in Flux,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-8265-1_8

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value and benefits of international education was questioned by people coming from different socio-economic backgrounds. Critics of the internationalization of education argue that international student mobility or more generally international higher education only favors the elites in society but has disadvantaged for those from the less fortunate socio-economic backgrounds (Montacute & Holt-White, 2020). The call for internationalization of higher education and deeper collaboration across higher education is also questioned for benefitting the institutions with sufficient resources to make international collaboration possible (Altbach & de Wit, 2020). Nonetheless, there has been growing concerns about the widening gap between institutions in the global north and the global south, especially when institutions in the global south must rely on “international aids” in support of collaborations (Baker, 2020; Fry et al., 2020; IAU, 2020).

Ulrich Teichler, Professor at the International Centre for Higher Education Research and the Department for Social Sciences of the University of Kassel, Germany, has recently conducted a critical review of internationalization of higher education, highlighting the importance of “zation” as an ongoing process. His argument implies that we should not come to any definite conclusions on how internationalization of higher education should look like. Most importantly of all, we must be sensitive of the contexts in which internationalization of higher education is operated. Reflecting upon the future of internationalization of higher education, Teichler (2021) argues there may have three different development pathways, namely (1) globalization with emphasis placed on the quest for world-class university status; (2) regionalization with more frequent interactions and mobility within the region sharing similar cultures and development experiences; (3) glocalization stressing local relevance when driving for internationalization, paying more attention to the specific contexts when internationalizing higher education. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, together with the new geopolitics emerging from the resurgence of nationalism across different parts criticizing the negative consequences of the globalization, has extended to the debates regarding the internationalization of higher education (Marginson & Xu, 2021; Mok, 2022).

In his recent keynote speech presented at an international conference focusing on Chinese higher education co-organized by Lingnan University (Lingnan), Hong Kong, and the University of Manchester, UK, Simon Marginson, Professor of Higher Education at the University of Oxford and Director of the ESRC/OFSRE Centre for Global Higher Education, points out how the new geopolitics has created negative impact on international higher education and research collaboration. Being the global leader in higher education and research, some countries in the West, particularly the USA, have difficulty to see the monocultural global pool of knowledge being challenged by the rise of China and other countries. According to Marginson (2021), 5% of the world’s population are L1 English speakers, 10% are L2 speakers. Nonetheless, English is now the sole universal language of global science. There are no translation protocols especially when 95% of Web of Science papers and 93% of Scopus papers are in English (Marginson, 2021). Nonetheless, the new geopolitics emerged in the last few years has inevitably shaped the international discourse presenting the negative image of the rise of China. To contain China, the USA and

its allies have made attempts not only through trade war but also decoupling China from Science because of the latter's continued success in scientific research and international publications (Marginson, 2021). Similarly, Postiglione (2021) also argued universities have entered the age of strategic competition against the broader context of worsening Sino-US relations.

One of the trends of internationalization of higher education as Teichler (2021) indicated is the quest for global university status; hence, more universities from the non-traditional institutions primarily from the West have tried very hard to benchmark with the "global standard" by publishing in the venues recognized by the West, further making English the universal language of global science. With serious efforts and hard work, some countries in the East like China, Singapore, Turkey, and India have been successful in publishing their research findings in the venues commonly accepted by the university systems in the West. According to the Shanghai ARWU ranking, the top ranked universities are no longer dominated by the traditional key players in the West though they remain the very top. China and Japan have demonstrated their research strengths as ranked top ten in terms of having Top 100 universities across the globe (Lo & Liu, 2021; Mok & Kang, 2021). For example, the most recent Research Assessment Exercise 2020 conducted by the University Grants Committee in Hong Kong through inviting international leading scholars to assess research outputs published by scholars in Hong Kong has clearly suggested the eight public universities in Hong Kong, China, has commended international recognition as around 70% of the assessed research works are deemed "world leading (4 star)" or "international excellence (3 star)" (UGC, 2021). Recent studies also suggest the rise of Chinese and Turkish scholars in producing high-quality international outputs (Oldac & Yang, 2021; Patamadilok, 2019); the concerted efforts being put together by other economies in East Asia for enhancing research and knowledge transfer have created a world of closer convergence with plural power and cultural difference (Marginson, 2021; Mok, 2022).

It is against this broader political economy context that regional collaboration has become increasing popular not only in research but also in other forms of collaboration like the launch of the Alliance of Asian Liberal Arts Universities (AALAU). Now let us examine how liberal arts universities in Southeast and East Asia have deepened research collaboration with enhanced partnerships not only in the Asian region but also working closely with UK institutions.

8.2 Research Collaboration in Asia: Trends and Issues

In the last few decades, we have witnessed deeper collaborations among higher education institutions in Asia, particularly when universities realize the strategic importance of how regional cooperation would enhance their global competitiveness. A recent research project (PEER Project, 2021) examining the trends and patterns of collaborations across Asia and the UK has revealed a significant increase not only in

bilateral collaboration but also trilateral cooperation in terms of research and publication among the institutions in the UK with a few major Asian countries and regions. When mapping UK-Asia research and innovation partnerships, the research team led by Dr. QueAnh Deng at Coventry University in the UK reports around 263,920 pieces of publications co-authored by UK and East Asia scholars on Scopus from 2010–2020. During the same period, around 56,414 UK and ASEAN co-authored research publications were published by Scopus. Closely scrutinizing these publications, the research team has also discovered the top UK-East Asia trilateral authorships are collaborations across (1) UK, Brunei, and Malaysia, (2) UK, Cambodia, and Thailand, (3) UK, Laos, and Thailand, (4) UK, Myanmar, and Thailand, and (5) UK, China, and Japan. Equally important, the research team also finds China has played an increasingly important role engaging in research collaboration with a few ASEAN countries such as Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines, together with the UK (PEER Project, 2021). Figure 8.1 clearly indicates the trends of research collaboration and resulting publications.

Regarding the UK-ASEAN top disciplines of research co-authorships, the research team also finds most of the research and publications are closely related to STEM disciplines rather than non-STEM areas. More specifically, medicine, engineering, agricultural and biological sciences, biochemistry, genetics and molecular biology, physics and astronomy are the major areas of research collaboration. Further analysis of UK + ASEAN and three top disciplines of research co-authorships has

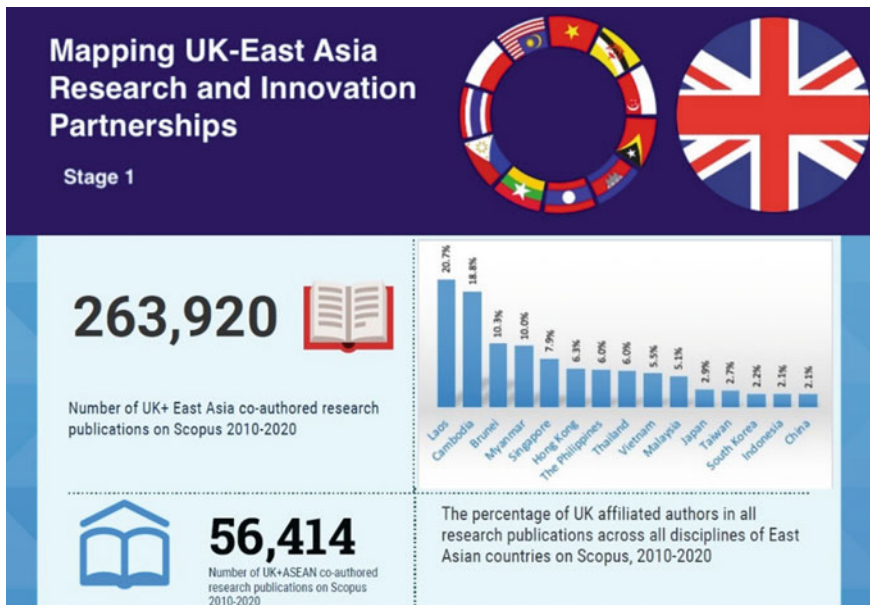


Fig. 8.1 Mapping UK-East Asia research and innovation partnerships (PEER Project, 2021, p. 1)

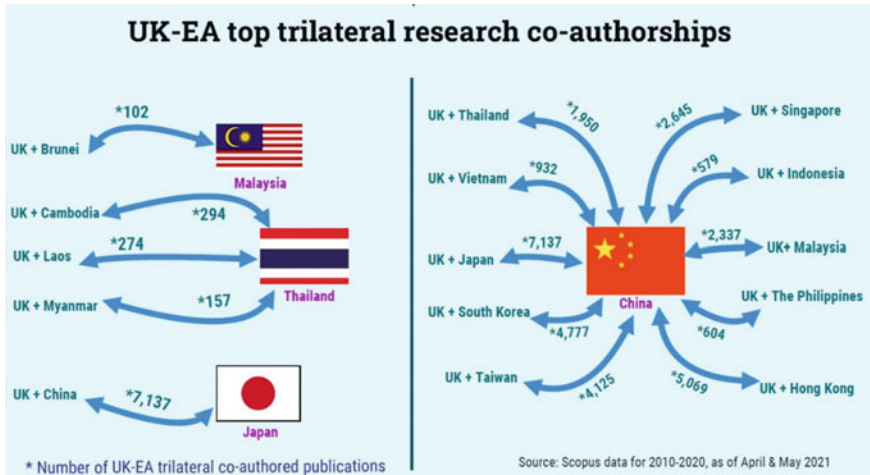


Fig. 8.2 UK-EA top trilateral research co-authorships (PEER Project, 2021, p. 2)

shown that China has worked closely with the UK and ASEAN institutions in engineering and computer science, Japan focuses more on physical astronomy, medicine, biochemistry, genetics, and molecular biology, and Taiwan collaborates more in the areas of physical and astronomy, medicine, and engineering. Like Taiwan, scholars in South Korea and Hong Kong also work closely with their UK and ASEAN counterparts in the similar disciplines (see Fig. 8.2). Analyzing the collaborative research and publications in the light of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is obvious that the most prominent aspects that these publications resulting from research collaboration have covered the SDGs related to more to hard sciences. Obviously, less attention has been given to non-STEM SDGs like poverty reduction, quality education, and gender equality-related SDGs (PEER Project, 2021).

8.3 The Call for Regional Collaboration: Partnerships for Promoting Liberal Arts Education in Asia

8.3.1 Growing Partnerships of the Alliance of Asian Liberal Arts Universities

Our above discussion has clearly indicated the growing popularity of research and publication collaborations among universities in Asia. In view of the growing emphasis being attached to international and regional collaboration in research and publication, Lingnan University, being a leading liberal arts university in Asia, has actively called for deepening collaboration among universities in Asia to co-promote liberal arts education as nurturing leaders with high-quality education is equally

important. In 2017, Lingnan invited 15 institutions in Asia with similar vision to promote high-quality education through liberal arts approach to join the Alliance of Asian Liberal Arts Universities (AALAU) (see Table 8.1).

In November 2017, the inaugural conference of the Alliance of Asian Liberal Arts Universities was held successfully at Lingnan. The participating institutions in the inaugural even primarily came from China Mainland, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan discussed the areas of collaboration, ranging from setting

Table 8.1 List of AALAU Members as of November 2021

Country	University
Hong Kong	1. Lingnan University*
Mainland China	2. Duke Kunshan University*
	3. East China Normal University*
	4. Northeast Normal University
	5. NYU Shanghai
	6. University of Nottingham Ningbo China*
	7. Yuanpei College, Peking University*
	Taiwan
	9. National Chengchi University*
	10. Tunghai University*
Japan	11. International Christian University*
	12. Kyushu University
	13. Rikkyo University
	14. Sophia University*
	15. The College of Arts and Sciences, The University of Tokyo*
	16. Waseda University*
South Korea	17. Dongguk University
	18. Ewha Womans University
	19. Kyung Hee University*
	20. Seoul National University*
	21. University of Seoul
	22. Yeungnam University
	23. Yonsei University*
India	24. Ahmedabad University
	25. Symbiosis School for Liberal Arts
Thailand	26. Faculty of Humanities, Chiang Mai University
	27. Mahidol University International College

* Founding members

up closer links for promoting student and faculty exchange to research collaboration, co-developing more regional collaboration for students and faculty to engage in internship and entrepreneurship. Motivating students to join regional service learning and engaging students in entrepreneurship was also advocated during the inaugural conference. Since the launch of the Alliance, partnerships have expanded from the major four regions in Asia to other countries like Thailand and India. By November 2021, there were 27 partnering institutions joining the Alliance across six countries/regions in Asia (see Table 8.1). After presenting the background for the establishment of the AALAU and its membership, the following focuses on discussing the major activities that member institutions have worked together since its official launch in 2017 (AALAU, 2020a, 2020b).

8.3.2 *Annual Conference Cum Presidents' Forum*

Since its official launch, the AALAU has organized five Presidents' Forum having the senior management of partnering institutions to discuss deep collaboration. Table 8.2 highlights the key areas of discussion during the Launch Conference successfully held at Lingnan in 2017.

After the successful launch, the second annual conference cum President's Forum was also held in 2018 at Lingnan, with increase in members joining the Alliance, together with extended scope of areas for cooperation among membership institutions. Table 8.3 shows the key areas of collaboration being discussed and agreed in the second conference held in 2018.

In 2019, Lingnan also hosted the annual event with expanded scope of collaboration being discussed and agreed during the meeting. Universities of the Alliance

Table 8.2 Key areas for discussion in the 2017 conference

Key areas for discussion in the 2017 conference
Liberal arts education in Asia: A dialogue among graduates and educators
Promotion of liberal arts education: The US experience
Promoting liberal arts education in Asia and exploring the establishment of a separate league table for ranking liberal arts institutions in the region
Liberal arts education in the age of STEM
Interactive session about setting up a separate league table for ranking liberal arts institutions in the region
Areas of deep collaboration under the framework in entrepreneurship, internships, civic engagement, academic/research collaborations
How liberal arts education in the East and West best prepares future leaders
Global engagement as part of liberal arts education
Pedagogy, technology, and innovation in liberal arts education
Transforming liberal arts education for the twenty-first century

Table 8.3 Key areas for discussion in the 2018 conference

Key areas for discussion in the 2018 conference
Alliance priorities
Program development
Entrepreneurship
Research collaboration
Civic engagement

also shared with their peers' new developments of their institutions, all participating institutions had agreed to work closer to co-promote liberal arts education though institutional differences are easily observed during the dialogues in the annual meeting. But all participants considered the strategic importance of student learning offered through the adoption of liberal arts educational approach. Acknowledging the different roles being performed by liberal arts colleges or universities among the members of the Alliance, one common concern shared by all member institutions is the importance attached to preparing our young generations for the uncertain futures with more emphasis on whole person development (AALAU, 2020a, 2020b). Table 8.4 highlights the key aspects being discussed in the 2019 conference.

After Lingnan hosting the annual meeting cum Presidents' Forum since the Alliance's launch in 2017, partnering institutions reached an agreement to rotate the host of the annual event. In 2020, East China Normal University became the host of the Alliance's annual event and Presidents' Forum in Shanghai. However, the 2020 annual event was hit by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the event was successfully organized through a hybrid mode. Institutions in China Mainland joined the event at the East China Normal University, while other partners from different jurisdictions in Asia participated via zoom meeting. It is worth noting that the 2020 event had attracted not only the core partners of the Alliance but also institutions in China Mainland shared with strong liberal arts education orientation and belief.

Table 8.4 Key areas for discussion in the 2019 conference

Key areas for discussion in the 2019 conference
Program development
Entrepreneurship and innovation
Research collaboration
Civic engagement
Liberal arts education in an aging society
A new paradigm in liberal arts education in Asia under recent economic changes: underwood international college and challenges of liberal arts education in Asia
Education of liberal arts and sciences using Jigsaw type of collaborative learning: toward the effective solutions for UN sustainable development goals
Promoting gerontechnology and productive aging: research and learning strategies at Lingnan University

Table 8.5 Key areas for discussion in the 2020 conference

Key areas for discussion in the 2020 conference
Innovation of education pattern, the innovation approaches, and experience in liberal arts education pattern
Curriculum development, the innovation, and collaboration possibilities in the curriculum development and double degree program
Innovation and entrepreneurship, the successful experience, and collaboration possibilities in the education of innovation and entrepreneurship
Brain science, learning science, and liberal arts education

The 2020 Conference chose the theme of *Constructing the Liberal Arts Education for the Future: Challenges and the Opportunities*. More than 25 institutions joining in the captioned event (AALAU, 2020a). Although the institutions from Mainland China have not been the formal members of the Alliance, their active participation has clearly indicated the growing interest and prominence of liberal arts education in China. With strong conviction to transform its higher education system to cater for changing educational needs of the Chinese young people prepared for the highly competitive world, the Chinese government has begun attaching weight to general education, hoping to nurture leaders with global vision through the adoption of whole person development. Although the Chinese approach to liberal arts education is different from the dominant form of liberal arts education based in the USA, the intension to prepare young people to master the 21st learning skills and appropriate knowledge sets are common across the institutions in China and the USA, as well as other parts of the world, especially in Asia (Chai, 2016; Cheng & Wei, 2021). Table 8.5 shows the core topics being discussed in the 2020 event.

Amidst the COVID-19 crisis, the 2021 Annual Conference cum Presidents' Forum of the Alliance was held in North China with the host of North China Normal University, one of the top universities with strong humanities and social sciences tradition. Like the 2020 event, the 2021 Annual Conference was joined by participants through a hybrid mode. The 2021 Conference adopted the theme of *Liberal Arts Education-Mission of the Times and Implementation Path*, discussion focused on teacher preparation, nurturing talent with interdisciplinary approach, and curriculum change and reform in teaching. Despite the global health crisis, participants were keenly presented how their institutions had attempted in addressing the changing teaching and student learning needs during the COVID-19 crisis, partnering institutions also showed their eagerness to engage in deeper and closer collaborations. The COVID-19 pandemic, indeed, has humbled many leaders in universities and more attention should be given to transnational collaboration in producing better learning for students (Yu et al., 2021).

8.3.3 *Other Collaborative Projects Among Member Institutions*

Having collaboration and discussion for two years since its launch in 2017, the Alliance has grown with more collaboration across the institutions. Not only having annual meeting, Lingnan also organized a separate workshop for member institutions to engage in exploring deep collaboration in research. In 2019, colleagues from different partnering institutions identified research collaboration in selected areas like conducting comparative studies regarding social change and social policy, cross-cultural understanding and language studies, as well as research in biodiversity and environmental science. The pictures presented below (Figs. 8.3 and 8.4) show the successful workshop having organized at Lingnan in summer of 2019.

In addition to the annual events and research workshop outlined above, Lingnan and National Chengchi University (NCCU) in Taiwan, two core members of the Alliance, has kept co-organizing regional research workshop in higher education, engaging postgraduate students, and faculty members to discuss issues related to higher education development, policy, and governance since 2018. The captioned regional event has rotated the host and both Lingnan and NCCU take up the role as host in alternate year. In November 2021, the regional research workshop was successfully held with speakers not only from Hong Kong and Taiwan but also from Japan, Malaysia, Mainland China, and the USA. Despite the negative impact of the



Fig. 8.3 AALAU research collaboration workshop held at Lingnan University



Fig. 8.4 Faculty from AALAU @ research workshop discussion

new geopolitics particularly against the context of the challenging international relations between the USA and China, the regional event co-organized by NCCU and Lingnan was able to bring scholars and students from China and the USA, as well other Asian institutions to join the discussions of how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected university teaching/student learning, research, student mobility, and university governance. The series of regional research workshop being hosted by Lingnan and NCCU has indeed promoted people-to-people relationship, offering collaborative opportunities for the partnering institutions to develop closer cooperation. Over the last few years, partnering institutions of the Alliance have also worked together for joint publications and special issues have been published after the research events successfully held (see Table 8.6 showing different special issues related to regional research workshops held before being published by major journals).

Table 8.6 Journal special issues published after major regional research events held

Journal special issues published after major regional research events held
Special issue on globalization and resurgent nationalism in higher education, published by <i>Higher Education Policy</i> in September 2020
Special issue on challenges to research systems, academic research, and knowledge production in East Asia, published by <i>Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management</i> in April 2020
Special issue on remaking higher education for the post-COVID-19 Era: critical reflections on marketization, internationalization and graduate employment, published by <i>Higher Education Quarterly</i> in June 2021

8.3.4 Faculty Exchange, Scholar-In-Residence and Summer Institute

8.3.4.1 Faculty Exchange

In addition to the above activities organized under the banner of AALAU, partnering institutions have also worked closely under the theme of *Comparative Asian Studies* to facilitate faculty exchange and research collaborations. When the national borders were open before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, faculty exchanges among the partner institutions were frequent. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the regular faculty exchange, nonetheless dialogue has continued with the technology-enabled platforms being adopted as means for communication. Amidst the crisis, Lingnan continues exploring collaboration with faculty from the AALAU. For example, Lingnan and Kyung Hee University in South Korea reached the agreement to develop academic collaboration in East Asian studies, providing master students overseas learning experience through semester-long exchange, summer school, and online seminar. Faculty from Lingnan and Kyung Hee will co-organize webinar focusing on East Asian studies.

8.3.4.2 Scholar-In-Residence

Prof. Stephen Yong-Seung Park, Director of Institute for Peace through Commerce and Professor of Human Resource Management of Kyung Hee University in South Korea, visited Lingnan in Term 1, 2020/21 despite the pandemic and travel restrictions associated. Prof. Park taught courses in both undergraduate and postgraduate levels around his expertise and served as a consultant to provide cross-cultural perspectives on curriculum and program development. He also conducted online seminars for faculty members and students, participated in activities contributing to internationalizing the campus, curriculum, and communities, and attended meetings with LU faculty members to explore collaboration opportunities between Kyung Hee University and LU.

8.3.4.3 Lingnan Summer Institute

Since the summer of 2018, a few partners of the AALAU began co-organizing Summer Institute at Lingnan University. 24 students from Dongguk University, East China Normal University, Ewha Womans University, International Christian University, Seoul National University, Tunghai University, University of Seoul, Yeungnam University, Sophia University, and Symbiosis School for Liberal Arts participated in the Summer Institute 2018 in Hong Kong. In Summer 2019, 22 students from Duke Kunshan University, East China Normal University, Ewha Womans University, Fu Jen Catholic University, International Christian University, Northeast Normal

University, NYU Shanghai, University of Seoul, and Symbiosis School of Liberal Arts joined the Summer Institute again in Hong Kong. Even during the COVID-19 crisis, online Summer Institute was organized though the participating institutions and students had decreased in number (10 students). From 2018 to 2021, there were altogether 63 students and faculty members benefitted from participating in the Summer Institute organized by the AALAU. With strong determination to continue the partnerships, the Summer Institute has indeed created ample opportunities for promoting student and faculty exchange under the banner of AALAU across the Asian region.

8.3.5 Co-developing Double Degrees for Student Learning Enhancement

Putting the above activities together, it is obvious that the AALAU has provided a productive platform for fostering deeper collaboration among higher education institutions in Asia. Before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, different kinds of programs with emphasis on student learning enhancement, research and entrepreneurship from comparative perspectives, and faculty mobility were gradually developed. However, the activities and collaboration across the AALAU partnering institutions have been adversely affected by the outbreak of the COVID-19 crisis though annual events were continued through a mixed mode having physical and online participation. Leaders of AALAU institutions consider deeper collaboration is earnestly needed and they must look for creative ways to enhance collaborations. For example, serious discussion was conducted between Lingnan and Kyung Hee University in South Korea to develop double degree at the master level to co-promote East Asian studies in March 2021, co-creating courses through the online platform to engage students from the two campuses to enjoy dialogue and share learning experiences through the adopting of multi-media enabled platform for co-developing better understating of East Asia.

During the difficult time against the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, Lingnan and NCCU successfully reached the agreement to co-develop a double doctoral degree with a 2 + 2 model to engage doctoral students recruited from the two campuses to enhance their research training experience through a double doctoral degree. Students can obtain the Doctor of Policy Studies offered by Lingnan and a Doctor of Philosophy from NCCU. After signing the agreement in 2019, the first cohort of students have begun their learning journey across these two campuses to enjoy joint supervision from Lingnan and NCCU. Figure 8.5 shows the signing ceremony of agreement of the double doctoral degree with media report of the collaboration between Lingnan and NCCU (AALAU, 2020a).



Fig. 8.5 The signing ceremony of double doctoral degrees between Lingnan and NCCU

8.4 Critical Reflections on the Regionalization of Higher Education via AALAU

Our above discussions have clearly highlighted the major activities organized after the launch of the AALAU since 2017. In the last few years, the AALAU has become one of the regional collaborative platforms constituted by key liberal arts universities or universities with strong liberal arts orientation. One major achievement of the AALAU is putting a growing number of institutions in East and Southeast Asia together for exploring deep collaboration in teaching / student learning, research and entrepreneurship and wider engagements. Judging from the growing number of member institutions, together with the significant increase of institutions from Chinese Mainland in participating in the AALAU annual event, we believe more serious attention for liberal arts education has been developed across institutions in Asia though they may not fully gear toward the conventional liberal arts college tradition in the US university system. Based upon the continued support not only from the member institutions but also the enhanced interests from Chinese Mainland institutions as host institution for the AALAU annual events in the last few years during the COVID-19 period, it is obvious that university leaders in Asia consider the strategic importance of engaging in regional collaboration through the AALAU.

The discussions above have also highlighted the growing interest in liberal arts education in the Asian region, especially when the partnering institutions have grown since the launch of the AALAU. For instance, with high motivation to position China as a strong nation in higher education research, the Chinese government has

actively reached out to ASEAN for promoting more regional collaboration. The tension between China and the West will further drive the institutions in the mainland to explore and develop closer collaboration within the Asian region. Taking Hong Kong as an example, the national government in Beijing has rolled out the Greater Bay Area (GBA) Development Blueprint in 2020, outlining the national strategy to develop the Bay economy in Guangdong, China with strategic emphasis on inter-university collaboration and cooperation in the GBA (Huang, 2021; Mok, 2021). Learning from the other Bay economies like Tokyo, Florida, and Boston Bay areas that success of economic development heavily relying on critical mass of high-quality universities driving for innovation through research and knowledge transfer activities, the Chinese government strongly encourages universities in Hong Kong with international recognition to work closely with higher education institutions in the GBA (Douglas, 2021; Nelson, 2021).

In addition, various activities of the AALAU have clearly shown the importance of individual partners of the AALAU taking additional mileage to reach out to partners for deepening collaboration. The cases presented above clearly indicate deep collaboration could be further expanded from student and faculty exchange to research collaboration, extending to double degree and serious joint-international publications. Although we cannot over claim the success of the AALAU in support of regionalization of higher education, the above evidence shows the potential and possibility when people with similar interests could work closely and creatively in co-promoting liberal arts education in Asia. Indeed, the present book project co-edited by scholars from Japan and Hong Kong, together with contributors from different regions, is a case in point showing collaboration can bear fruits like joint publications.

Moving beyond trade and economic development across the ASEAN countries with the big three in East Asia, i.e., China, Japan, and Korea, a recent review of regional student mobility among different higher education systems in Asia has suggested the success of ASEAN International Mobility for Students (AIMS) program in promoting student mobility across different Asian countries. Between globalization and a decoupled, COVID-19 world, regional student mobility has become and will become even more popular among Asian students, particularly when the unprecedented global health crisis has indeed locked down many university systems in the West. The COVID-19 pandemic has limited choices for Asian students when planning for overseas learning, especially when many traditional destinations for overseas studies are facing challenges in combatting the global health crisis (Yeong, 2020). Nomura (2020) analyzed the recent student mobility across the Asian region and found success in establishing a sustainable student mobility platform between Japan and Southeast Asia, with a steady increase in student exchanges. Similarly, Seo and Kim (2020) analyzed the recent development trend of student mobility between South Korea and ASEAN countries. They argued that “cooperation with diverse countries has led to the valuable opportunity to learn good practices of foreign education systems as well as to share ours (Korean education) with other countries (p. 11).” The cultural exchange between Korea and the ASEAN counterparts has indeed enhanced Korea’s “soft power” specifically when the existing curriculum combines with “Korea’s attractive pop culture.”

Capturing the opportunity for regional cooperation, “countries within a region as culturally diverse as ASEAN stand to benefit greatly from student mobility programs, such as AIMS, which provide a potentially powerful platform for bridging these cultures” (Gopinathan et al., 2020, p. 29). With the recent RCEP agreement being signed between China and the ASEAN countries, and New Zealand and Australia, China is anticipated by international observers to seriously make use of the regional cooperation framework to strengthen its relationships with the member countries for promoting not only trade and economy but also cultural and education exchange. A recent QS Report also indicated the growth of interests of Asian students choosing major universities in the region for academic exchange or international learning (Nott, 2020). More specifically, the QS, 2019 Report showed the top study destination for Asian students, namely, Australia, UK, USA, Canada, New Zealand, Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong, and China, suggesting that Asian students are increasingly likely to study in Asia (QS, 2019). Similarly, Chinese students begin to increasingly favor destinations in Asia, such as Japan, Singapore, and Hong Kong (Fig. 8.6).

Such moves would certainly break the difficulty for global student exchange when many national borders in the West remain close because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Deepening regionalization more seriously, the recent surveys conducted by the research team at Lingnan repeatedly show growing interests of students from

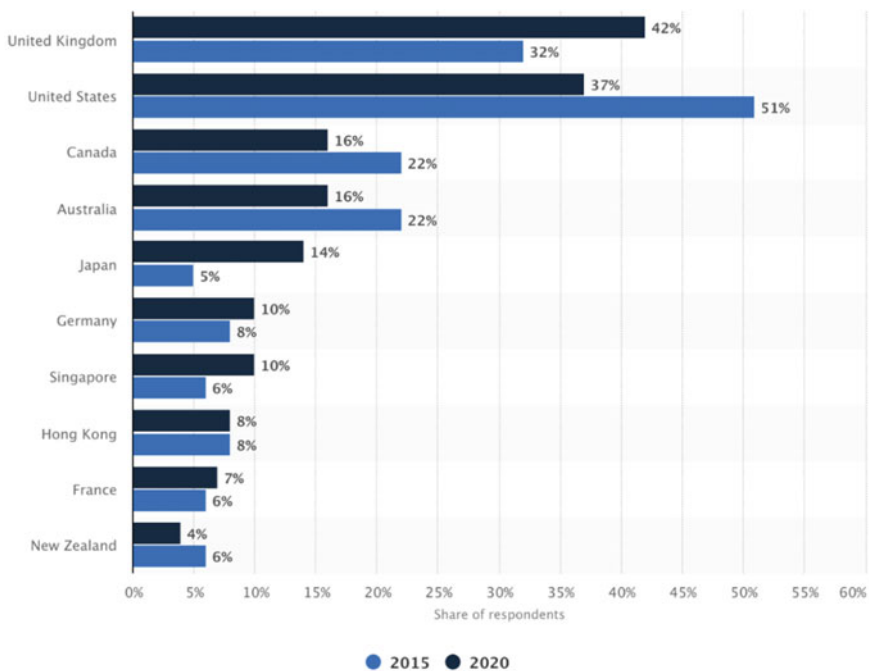


Fig. 8.6 Top study destinations of students from selected countries in 2015 and 2020 (Statista, 2020)

Asia to choose destinations within the region for further studies. Against the context of COVID-19 pandemic crisis, the Lingnan research team conducted two waves of online surveys examining how students in Hong Kong and China Mainland perceive overseas learning and how the unprecedented global health crisis would have affected their overseas learning desires and motivations. One survey was completed in May 2020 and another one was conducted in October 2021. Both surveys show students' interests in overseas learning remain positive though their desire and motivation for studying abroad during the time when the world was hit by the COVID-19 crisis was negatively affected. For those who maintain their interests to study abroad, the two surveys have indicated most respondents would choose the study venues located in the traditional university systems in the West like the USA, UK, Europe, and Australia if the health conditions were stable in these countries and regions. However, the two surveys also report an increase of interests among the respondents for choosing universities based in Hong Kong and Singapore as their preferred destinations (Mok et al., 2020, 2021).

Taking Lingnan as an example, the university has been able to attract more students from Asia during the last two years. When the whole university sector in Hong Kong had predicted poor intakes of students when Hong Kong experienced the social movement and riots in 2019 and hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, Lingnan has indeed admitted more students from different parts of the globe from 2019 to 2021. In 2021 Lingnan has nearly doubled the applications for master and PhD programs (see Chap. 9 in this volume). After serious academic assessments of all applications, Lingnan admitted 40% more students leading master's degrees. When asking why students choosing Hong Kong as their further education venue, most respondents highlight the importance of personal safety, health and security, higher education quality, and global university rankings are their major criteria for overseas learning choices. As Lingnan was rated by the University Impact Rankings as a global leader of "Quality Education" (Top 2 in 2020 and Top 3 in the world, respectively), the international reputation of liberal arts education also accounts for the increase of non-local/international students (Mok et al., 2021). As Hong Kong has demonstrated high impact research and world-class standing in research outputs as reported by the international review of the eight public universities' research performances, higher education institutions in Hong Kong are therefore able to attract more international and mainland students (Mok, 2021).

In short, the research regarding Chinese students' preferred destinations for overseas learning reported by the Lingnan research team has clearly suggested a growing number of Chinese students opting for studies in Hong Kong, Singapore, or other countries in the Asian region. With serious public health concerns, together with the anxiety of being discriminated when studying abroad simply because of different perceptions and coping behaviors when combatting the COVID-19 pandemic, it is not difficult to anticipate more students would choose the study destinations with better risk management related to proper public health measures (Mok et al., 2021; Xu, 2021). If the anticipated trends would happen, the future for theregionalization of higher education could be further enhanced, such developments may shape the internationalization of higher education pathway in future with deepening regional

collaboration across universities in the Asian region that the research discussed at the beginning of the chapter with focus on UK-ASEAN inter-university research collaborations. The significant role that each country in Asia including the BIG Three, China, Korea, and Japan and ASEAN members in forging regional research collaboration would become even more prominent when the paradigm shift from working with the traditional universities in the West to those upcoming and rising star research institutions based in Asia.

8.5 Conclusion: The Role of AALAU in Promotion of Regional Cooperation

In view of the importance of regional collaboration, together with the unprecedented adverse impacts resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, we have witnessed more productive collaboration within the Asian region with growing interest of students from the region choosing overseas learning within Asia. Our above analysis has presented the growing interests of inter-university research collaboration across East and Southeast Asia. If institutions move away from the new geopolitics when conceiving collaborative plans, together with the great potential generated from the Greater Bay Area development context, the AALAU can play an increasingly important role to bridge the partnering institutions to develop deep collaboration/cooperation for cobranding Asian scholarship with emphasis attached to cross-cultural understanding as Asia is already very diverse in cultures, politics, and economics. The AALAU can act as a productive platform for promoting institutions to adopt innovative methods including the creative adoption of online platforms for deepening collaboration across institutions in the region benefiting student learning, research, and community development.

Analyzing the rise of regional cooperation among universities in East and Southeast Asia from the theoretical lens of “higher education regionalism”, the frequent interactions and anticipated increases in regional collaboration and cooperation would contribute to the expanded common higher education “areas” and “spaces” in Asia and Europe (Chou & Ravinet, 2017; Huisman et al., 2012; Vogtle & Martens, 2014). Based upon the diversity of collaborative projects ranging from regional student and faculty mobility to degree recognition and joint research and publications, the AALAU could play a more proactive role to foster deeper regional cooperation in the post-COVID-19 era. Realizing the complexity of inter-university cooperation in the region, the AALAU could serve the coordination role for facilitating the rise of higher education regionalism characterized by the multi-level, beyond the nation state with regional dynamics of higher education collaboration. Addressing the tension resulted from the new geopolitics which could create adverse impact on productive regional higher education cooperation, the AALAU could play an instrumental role to bridge institutions to work together beyond geopolitical and ideological influences.

As universities are indeed mirrors revealing how unique individual countries' histories and cultures as Charles W. Eliot has rightly pointed out, any type of university is the product of heredity and environment (Ashby, 1967). With strong conviction to promote cross-cultural and regional collaboration, the AALAU can further its role in facilitating partnering institutions to engage in collaboration and cooperation with shared vision. Collaboration should go beyond conventional student and faculty exchange but explore different forms of collaboration which could enhance student learning, research bringing with positive change to society and wider engagements for co-creating a better world. The unprecedented global health crisis currently posing tremendous challenges to the humankind certainly calls for collaboration to find solutions for the common problems facing us.

Nonetheless, we should not underestimate the challenges confronting the regionalization of higher education through the AALAU. As higher education institutions in Asia, like other universities across different parts of the globe, are still confronted with the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic crisis, how far the cross-border exchanges, research, and academic activities will fully resume are still subject to the successful control of the pandemic. How the partnering institutions of the AALAU could search for approaches appropriate to facilitate more collaborations among the members would determine the future and success of the Alliance. Against the COVID-19 context, it would require the AALAU members to creatively adopt technology-enabled platforms to productively promote cross-border and inter-university collaborations.

Acknowledgements The author wants to thank Gavin Ngai and Prudence Lee for assistance during the process of drafting the present chapter.

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Chapter 9

Liberal Education for Women in the Middle East: The Case of Effat University



Haifa Jamal Al-Lail

Abstract Liberal education is in a state of flux across the globe. The fourth industrial revolution, technological innovations, and lately, COVID-19 are reshaping the dynamics of liberal education by shifting higher education platforms; amplifying the awareness and expectations of students; faculty behaviours, employers' demands and government strategies; and dictating how higher educational institutions tackle design and delivery models around the world. Effat University (Effat), like all other educational ecosystems, is racing to assimilate these changes and create the 'new normal'. As a change agent, Effat's advantage lies in four significant factors: adapting new trends in liberal education, introducing non-traditional majors to females, integrating technology in the learning environments, and finally, introducing co-ed education in its graduate programmes. This chapter will provide an overview of the state of liberal education in the Middle East region and explain how different forms of liberal education advance female empowerment in the Middle East, particularly Saudi Arabia, by taking Effat University, which is working to enhance women's participation in the workplace to meet the national transformation plan target of 25% by 2030, as a case study.

Keywords Change agent · Female empowerment · Female liberal education · Internationalisation · Women leadership

9.1 Introduction

The global COVID-19 pandemic has created significant problems in all aspects of human life, and its long-lasting effect on people of all ages and backgrounds remains to be seen.

The Global COVID-19 Gender Response Tracker of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reveals that the impact of the pandemic is

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I. Jung and K. H. Mok (eds.), *The Reinvention of Liberal Learning around the Globe*,
Crossing Cultures: Liberal Learning for a World in Flux,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-8265-1_9

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not gender-neutral. The tracker analyses government measures with a gender lens in three areas: measures that tackle violence against women and girls, support unpaid care and strengthen women's economic security. Findings show that most of the world's nations are not doing enough to protect women and girls from the economic and social fallout caused by the COVID-19 crisis. Only 25 countries—12% of the world—have introduced measures that cover all three areas (UN Women, 2020). Considering this figure, we need a gender lens that amplifies women's empowerment during and after COVID-19 by exploring different qualities of education, such as digital literacy, creative thinking, financial literacy, business thinking and leadership skills. Together with liberal arts education, these components are essential for building women's capacities and helping them find work in a dynamic environment.

This chapter will first review how universities in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region have played an essential role in advancing women into positions of leadership and responsibility. It will then focus on Saudi Arabia's Effat University (Effat), a liberal arts college that has played a crucial role in the female empowerment efforts of the country.

9.2 The State of Female Liberal Education in the Middle East: A Review

9.2.1 *Early Development of Higher Education*

The first American Protestant missionary higher education institution in the Middle East was Robert College, which was founded in Istanbul in 1863 by American Protestant educators and philanthropists (Council on Foreign Relations, 2007). In 1866, the American University of Beirut opened, and in 1919, the American University in Cairo was founded. These universities opened their doors to women in the 1920s, decades before the Ivy League universities in the USA did (Badran, 2018), and they continue to be some of the most important higher education and research institutions in the Middle East.

Most prominent Middle Eastern public universities have a solid liberal educational core and provide professional degrees. However, only 30% of public and private universities in the Middle East offer liberal education degrees, 14% lower than the percentage granted by American higher education. In comparison, liberal arts degrees account for 44% of all degrees offered at the five 'American Universities' in the region. This figure is consistent with the *Journal of Higher Education* study's findings that selective and prestigious schools provide a disproportionately higher level of liberal education (Guessoum, 2018). Most major public universities in the Middle East, when first founded, had a strong liberal educational core but subsequently added professional degrees. In 1977, for example, the only professional degree offered at Qatar University was education and then the schools of engineering, business and economics were founded in 1985 while that of pharmacy was added

in 2008. King Saud University began in 1957 with a college of arts then added the departments of business and pharmacy (1960), agriculture (1966) and computer and information sciences (1984). Similarly, Alexandria University began only with the colleges of arts and law then added the departments of nursing (1954), pharmacy (1956), education (1969), veterinary medicine (1974) and tourism and hotel studies (1983). Therefore, Middle Eastern universities have probably gone farther than their American counterparts in embracing the professions and departing from the old liberal education core (Noori, 2017; Reilly, 2010).

9.2.2 Recent Development: Widened Opportunities for Women

The liberal arts philosophy of higher education in the Middle East regained its prominence in the early days of the twenty-first century due to two significant developments: (1) the opening of several new 'American' universities (by name and/or educational system) and (2) the growing debates about the urgency of reforming the higher education system(s) of the Arab world. Currently, many universities follow the American tradition of incorporating liberal arts into the curriculum, Effat University being one. Guessoum (2018) reports that the liberal arts educational system is not only being adopted in populous countries like Egypt, but Gulf countries like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and the Emirates have likewise begun to incorporate this system into their institutions and emphasise the development of critical thinking in both state and private institutions.

The Middle East's emphasis on liberal arts education has also benefited women's education and their quest for better life opportunities by promoting the rise of co-ed education in traditional societies and female-focused campuses across the region. In particular, liberal arts education for women in the Middle East has increased female employment and empowerment opportunities. Tolmacheva (2008) argues that a strong correlation exists between the establishment of American-style universities and the empowerment of women, as shown by the increase of graduates from these institutions holding leadership positions. Women now are routinely being appointed to high-level government and private sector positions as well as senior policy-making positions (Mansour, 2018).

Women in the Middle East are beginning to shape international higher education experiences and communities and playing an essential role in internationalisation development. Options are increasing and constraints are falling. They can now study full time at universities located either in the region or abroad without the need for a guardian. Women can also learn on international campuses in the region without having to travel. If a woman wishes to balance her family life and career opportunities, these campuses enable her to gain international experience while remaining at home. As Mansour (2018) states, this option is increasingly becoming a matter of personal taste rather than a concession to any perceived gender issue.

There is evidence of progress in women's participation in public life in various areas, including gender equality, voting rights, actual participation in elections, the number of women holding ministerial and legislative seats, representation in local councils and municipalities, affiliation with political parties, involvement in the judiciary system, appointment to high-ranking and official posts, role in the media and participation in civil society through non-governmental organisations and other organisations. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA, 2006) presents a precise situational analysis and guidelines as an essential step towards building a supportive and enabling environment for women in leadership positions.

The pandemic has given many students who would have usually gone abroad to study the strong impression that staying in their home countries and seeking Western-quality programmes locally is safer than travelling and studying abroad. This has increased demand within Middle Eastern universities while decreasing enrolment numbers for Gulf nationals in Western universities (Coffman, 2003). Furthermore, the advancement of digital education has provided more opportunities for both males and females to seek knowledge and enrol in various degree-granting institutions in the Middle East or elsewhere in the world while remaining in their home countries. On this basis, liberal arts institutions in the Middle East and abroad have started to debate the balance they should offer between the promise of liberal arts education and the digital learning acquired by twenty-first-century learners, which can lead to significant female empowerment in future.

9.2.3 Higher Education System in Saudi Arabia

Since the Kingdom's founding in the 1930s, Saudi leaders have emphasised their commitment to education: an effective education system was regarded as critical to the development of Saudi Arabia and the well-being of its people. As a result, there has been a 250% increase in literacy and a more than 2500% increase in enrolment in Saudi universities and colleges over the last 80 years (Bruno, 1971).

Riyadh University was the first university to open its doors in 1957. It was established to address the shortage of skilled workers required for the development plans of the Kingdom. The higher education system of Saudi Arabia now includes 29 public universities and 14 private universities. There are also various junior colleges or community colleges, the majority of which are governed by the government. Many of these colleges are affiliated with public universities and offer two-year diplomas and associate degree programmes as well as articulation pathways to university bachelor's degree programmes (AllahMorad & Zreik, 2020). The first public, exclusive women's university is Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University, which was established in 2008, nearly 10 years after Effat (Jabaji, 2008; Jamal, 2021).

Depending on the institution, Saudi public and private universities and colleges award undergraduate and graduate degrees. Almost all public universities are gender-segregated, with separate campuses for women or affiliated women's colleges. Saudi

students can attend large multi-faculty research universities for free. On the other hand, private universities are typically smaller, more specialised providers that teach in English and charge high tuition fees, as discussed in Hamdan (2005).

Saudi Arabia aims to increase female labour force participation from 17 to 25% by 2030 and develop national skills and leadership qualities in both males and females. Effat, like all other educational ecosystems, is rushing to adapt to change and establish the ‘new normal’. Its emphasis is on making Saudi national aspirations a reality. Resources are being pooled to provide a thriving, relevant liberal arts curriculum in line with Saudi Arabia’s 2030 Vision. Effat is a catalyst for change, and its competitive advantage stems from its innovative and creative approach to women’s education. It is unique in three ways: it offers females non-traditional majors such as engineering, architecture and entrepreneurship; it integrates technology in learner-centred environments; and finally, it introduces co-ed education in its graduate programmes.

In conclusion, female liberal arts education in the Middle East is experiencing a quantum leap in terms of government support, internationalisation and content development to realise the region’s aspirations, women empowerment, and public–private participation. Now that the Middle East is feeling the effects of the fourth industrial revolution, liberal arts education is expected to change how it is offered and designed. Effat, for example, recognises the importance of being nimble and agile to address the global impact of the fourth industrial revolution and create the appropriate content required to realise national socioeconomic and political strategies while elevating the role of women.

9.3 Liberal Education for Women in Saudi Arabia: The Case of Effat University

9.3.1 Establishment of Effat as the First Female University

Effat was established in 1999 as the first female private non-profit university. According to Vassar Encyclopedia (2007), it was modelled after the Seven Sisters Colleges in the USA, namely Barnard, Bryn Mawr, Mount Holyoke, Smith, Radcliffe, Vassar and Wellesley, with a focus on offering liberal arts education to women while remaining grounded in Islamic teaching and learning philosophy. Despite challenges, Effat University introduced the liberal arts through the general education programme at its inception. This was at a time when the liberal arts were considered as conflicting with culture and tradition despite seeking knowledge being a major pillar in Islamic philosophy. This contradiction necessitated changing some wordings to make them acceptable. Thus, the general education programme replaced liberal arts; and theories, thinkers and scientists replaced philosophies and philosophers (Kaj-Itani & Khalid, 2019). Effat also followed another strategy, integrating other aspects of liberal arts education under the co-curricular and extracurricular programmes and activities. For example, arts and performing arts, speakers of the month and so forth,

all helped the students build their freedom of thought and expression. Undergraduate research seminars and conferences over the years helped the students develop their critical thinking and advocacy for different matters (Grant, 2013).

The value proposition of Effat is that it expands the learning and educational opportunities of women in higher education. Effat's liberal arts programmes are vital and accredited, giving the university a competitive edge in the Middle Eastern women's educational scene. Effat has grown to be a centre of academic excellence, offering various academic programmes taught in English to broaden the horizons of Saudi women and raise their educational level to prepare them for the job market and increase their employability.

In January 2009, Effat was granted university status, which included the establishment of four colleges, each of which housed three departments offering 12 majors. Effat introduced its first graduate programme, the Masters in Islamic Financial Management in 2011. It was also the first to offer women engineering majors, political science programmes and architecture programmes in 2012. The Ministry of Education granted Effat permission to admit males to all its graduate programmes beginning in the spring of 2019. This was done following new developments in Saudi Arabia that allow men and women to be educated equally in the same higher educational institutions. This occurrence is regarded as a further step towards realising the empowerment and integration of women into society, particularly in education.

Effat's educational approach focuses on developing knowledge in individuals through the most effective method found to date: individual engagement in learning. This does not happen through memorisation or by students sitting quietly and listening to the professor's lecture. Instead, through a direct intellectual relationship between professor and student, the professor knows what each student understands and can advance each student's thinking in a very personalised manner. Students are respected for what they know, and professors see their limitations as opportunities to expand their knowledge rather than deficits.

Numerous years of experience have established that collaborative approaches to learning—students working together or with the professor to solve problems—are the most effective and have a long-term impact on learning. Effat students are described as being on a mission of continuous learning, critical and analytical thinkers who add value to a wide range of essential human activities. They are also portrayed as innovative and open to new, creative problem-solving approaches and thinking outside the box to solve new challenges. They are driven to serve humanity in everything they do.

9.3.2 Effat's Liberal Arts Educational Model

The success of the Effat liberal arts educational model is built on four major strategies. The first is the integration of Liberal Arts and Islamic Philosophy core values and the four characteristics of Effat graduates as an overarching assessment strategy, the second is opening career opportunities for females that were not available 20 years

ago, the third is its diversity and internationalisation strategy and the fourth is its early adoption of digital technologies in all academic and administrative communications.

9.3.2.1 First Strategy: Merging the Liberal Arts and Islamic Philosophy

IQRA Core Values (Jamalallail, 2004). Knowledge is fundamental in Islam because it leads to the ultimate truth of life and creation; this emphasis on learning can be traced back to the earliest teachings of Islam. In Muhammad's first revelation, the archangel Gabriel appeared to him in a cave and said, 'Iqra!' or 'Read!' The four core values of Effat are embedded in the acronym IQRA: *Ibath* (research), *Qiyam* (ethical and moral values), *Riyada* (responsible leadership) and *Al-Tawasul* (service and effective communication).

Tarbawyyat EFFAT (Jamalallail, 2008). The pillars that comprise the Effat University Code of Ethical Conduct are known as 'Tarbawyyat'. *Tarbawyyat* is an Arabic word that means to educate human beings to a standard of manners and provide them with the necessary knowledge and skills to play a successful role in the communities in which they live. Inspired by this all-encompassing holistic word, Effat incorporated the eight fundamental pillars listed below into what it refers to as *Tarbawyyat Effat*: (1) piety, (2) knowledge, manners and outreach; (3) nurturing; (4) collaboration and cooperation; (5) tolerance and moderation; (6) modesty and ease; (7) ethics and integrity and (8) guidance. These eight pillars serve as the framework for all Effat activities.

Based on its mission of empowering responsible Saudi women through education to become leaders of positive change in society through the implementation of its core values, Effat graduates are expected to acquire and demonstrate a set of characteristics directly related to the IQRA Core Values listed above.

9.3.2.2 Second Strategy: Opening Career Possibilities for Females

Since its inception, Effat's objective has been to empower women to make significant contributions to national development. 'Educate a girl and you educate a generation' is not just a catchphrase. Women cannot take their rightful and deserved place in developing the Kingdom's economy unless they receive an appropriate education.

Effat was the first to offer females many majors previously available only to Saudi male students. It launched the first engineering programme for women, quickly followed by the first architecture school and then entrepreneurship. Effat also established a school of cinematic arts in 2011, long before the first cinemas opened. It faced a lot of opposition from society at first, but it persisted. Now, as part of the Kingdom's Vision 2030 reform, women's empowerment is at the forefront of its programmes. As a result, many other universities and colleges followed Effat's lead and offered similar innovative programmes. Women have established their presence in various fields of work and risen to higher positions both locally and internationally

after demonstrating their skill and expertise and obtaining advanced qualifications in specialised fields.

9.3.2.3 Third Strategy: Developing International Partnerships

Effat has continued to develop international partnerships by co-teaching courses and/or forming alliances with liberal arts institutions around the world. It has a national and international reputation for excellence. It was in the first batch of universities to receive Saudi national accreditation, both institutionally and for all its programmes. In addition, its engineering programmes are fully accredited by the American Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, and the architecture programme is accredited by the American National Architectural Accreditation Board. Most recently, the College of Business was accredited by the International Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business.

9.3.2.4 Fourth Strategy: Early Adoption of Digital Technologies

Although digital learning and technology adoption are more critical now to student success than ever before, Effat's early adoption in 2002 of digital educational technologies, such as Banner and Blackboard, gave it the resilience, flexibility and agility to switch to online teaching and learning as COVID-19 erupted in March 2020. The emphasis on continuous improvement of digital literacy and use among various stakeholders, including students, faculty and staff, also aided greatly when instruction was moved online.

9.4 Challenges Ahead

The higher education landscape is currently one of great uncertainty. As indicated in Hilbun (2013) and Gleason (2018), costs have continued to increase and technology has changed the way higher education institutions operate and educate. Demographic shifts have been observed, meaning that colleges will increasingly serve students with different educational needs from those of previous generations. The public has also become increasingly sceptical of the value, direction and integrity of the higher education system. Moner et al. (2020) mention that the dominant enrolment trends are towards large, public, non-residential—including for-profit and online—institutions with multidimensional missions, including pre-professional, vocational, applied, community-based and adult education, all of which pose a challenge to liberal arts institutions. However, the great challenge before us is not one of these situations but rather recognising that this time of change in higher education is also an opportunity. In our time, we must build on what we have achieved and what we believe in order to strengthen our institution and serve our mission more effectively.

Liberal arts colleges need to identify and implement strategies for diversifying their faculty and curriculum to better reflect the increasing diversity of the student population. Similarly, they need to identify the appropriate role of technology in the context of the close faculty–student relationships that define the liberal arts college experience. Each of these requires institutional commitment and change, which present the third significant challenge facing liberal arts colleges, that is, how to be agile as institutions despite operational and governance structures that some regard as impeding their ability to innovate. Indeed, operational agility may be the most important condition precedent to long-term relevance and sustainability in the face of these substantive challenges. Only those who close the gap in these areas will have long-term relevance and sustainability (Volk & Benedix, 2020).

9.5 The Way Forward

The current and future state of liberal education models and institutions in the MENA region is similar to the status of its Western counterparts. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed education delivery models and curriculum design. Dependence and reliance on technology in education have become the new normal and will remain even after the pandemic is over. These changes have augmented women’s education and increased their participation in social, academic and work environments. The increased collaboration among educational institutions around the world has added value and quality to the education, accessibility and participation in the labour force of Middle Eastern women. It has brought women’s education in the Middle East to the forefront of discourse among nations and educators.

The section that follows reflects the author’s thoughts on what we can deduce as beneficial to the new education normal in the Middle East region following the pandemic. It further urges that women’s liberal arts education in the Middle East requires proper planning to ensure the sustainability of quality education and continuous female contribution to the development of their futures as well as the futures of their respective nations. It is important to acknowledge that these lessons learned are a few among many others, but this research considers them as central to the development of liberal arts education, especially female education, in the Middle East.

9.5.1 *Hybrid Learning to Complement Liberal Education*

Despite the gap between the limitations of online learning’s capabilities and the essential interactive character and core aims of liberal arts education, the COVID-19 pandemic showed us that online learning could play a significant, albeit restricted, role in all types of higher education, including liberal arts education (Beatty, 2019).

The quick move online during the pandemic taught us the importance of being open to online and digital learning modalities. Hybrid forms help mitigate the potentially damaging, isolating or disembodied characteristics of online learning, and they will and should remain a basic pedagogy of liberal arts education. Simultaneously, intelligent course design can optimise the advantages of both face-to-face and online modes (Dziuban et al., 2018).

Hybrid learning can mix experiences of solitude with the embodied community in ways that foster lasting interactions while maximising the benefits of various learning venues and tools. It can preserve the essential nature and purpose of liberal arts education while also appealing to Middle Eastern cultures and norms pertaining to women. For example, it allows women to easier combine their roles as homemakers and students. Hybrid learning is a step forward against segregating women in the learning environment while also increasing the confidence of female learners in dealing with change in the learning environment.

9.5.2 Digitalisation of Liberal Education

Only a few liberal educational institutions promoted online learning prior to COVID-19. The extent to which online education is offered is determined by how important it is to the strategic planning of an institution. This condition has changed and will continue to change in future, thereby allowing female liberal arts education to expand.

Institutional leaders recognise that online education is more than just a potential source of new revenue. Instead, online education is recognised as core to the institutional strategic plan, leading to their resilience and academic continuity. This post-pandemic perspective will spur online techniques by improving how educational institutions prepare for, manage and fund online education. As a result, we predict a revolution in online delivery models and material that will become an intrinsic element of learning management, academic leadership, structures and processes.

Digital technologies are meant to supplement, not replace, the closeness and immediacy of face-to-face learning. In addition, digital platforms can benefit both students at risk and gifted students by allowing them to access content at any time and from any location that is convenient for them.

9.5.3 Utilisation of MOOCs and Instructional Design

During the pandemic, most higher education institutions partnered with one of the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) platforms or hired instructional designers to improve their teaching and learning capacities. Both were excellent enablers for managing the transition to remote teaching and learning in an effective manner. The use of asynchronous and synchronous platforms for teaching and learning will

offer considerable benefits when these approaches are incorporated into face-to-face training or made available for supplementary assignments (Scholz, 2013).

Some liberal arts institutions can use MOOCs to support the multidisciplinary and autonomous learning nature of liberal arts education by implementing a curriculum programme that instils these skills and knowledge in all students. Effat has adopted this route with some face-to-face classes to customise the online curriculum.

9.5.4 *Futuristic Vision*

An educational model inspired by the concept of man as God’s steward and trustee on earth and the principles it advocates to be relevant and meaningful to different traditions and cultures of the world is a most attractive proposition. Thus, higher education in the twenty-first century must aim at promoting and adopting this concept.

In proposing a globally acceptable foundation for twenty-first-century education—for the development of individuals, organisations and communities that share mutually beneficial goals—we must consider how people from different parts of the world will accept, adopt, develop and react. Being part of both Muslim and Middle Eastern communities allows me to foresee how this model is relevant and meaningful not only to this region but also internationally. By placing global stewardship at the centre of a holistic educational model, it becomes universally relevant because the design of the model addresses the fundamental needs and aspirations of all cultures seeking to prepare every human being to become a responsible global citizen and a key player in universal stewardship. The aim is not merely to develop young people who are technically competent in their chosen fields for the job market but to ensure that they are fully aware of their role in their communities from the very beginning and fully prepared to meet challenges of positive engagement in a wider context with confidence, energy, understanding and initiative. Our model places responsibility for change and development on everyone, not just a select few, and stresses the need to analyse correctly by taking others into account while responding to human aspirations. In my own religious tradition, the Prophet Mohammad said, ‘Each of you is a steward, and each of you is responsible for his or her stewardship’. This concept of individual accountability and responsibility is common to all major faiths and is a major tool for positive change. In the light of current events in the Middle East, including the rise of youth voices, I believe placing the concept of stewardship at the centre of education will equip youths with the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed to bring about positive transformation from within the systems, communities and institutions to which they belong, all while seeking harmonious, responsible change for society rather than disruption for its own sake. Relevance and meaning demand balance in educational curricula. Scientific understanding must be balanced by a wide cultural understanding of global and communal social issues. Equally, liberal studies, which appeal to the inner self, must include an understanding of key scientific principles. Communication skills are essential for all as well. This approach is vital to students in higher education and equally vital in the vocational sphere. An

understanding of the long-term purpose and context of the study and role one should play in society is fundamentally important to the holistic development of individuals and the benefit of society as a whole. In my opinion, the combination of these elements is what makes the model truly holistic, special and viable (Bennett et al., 2012; Grant, 2013).

9.6 Concluding Remarks

The author argues that educators who are invested in liberal arts education should approach digital technology and online learning with cautious optimism rather than dread and strategically adapt technologies to suit their environment and socio-economic conditions. This is to ensure that the potential for online learning does not diminish the long-held and valuable elements of liberal arts education while potentially expanding female participation in education.

Online and hybrid learning may be integrated into ways consistent with the essential nature and core aims of liberal arts education. Indeed, hybrid courses and programmes may be the most practical strategy to deliver liberal arts education in new forms for a new normal while retaining its core distinguishing features.

From a pedagogical standpoint, online learning environments can open doors to new possibilities while face-to-face settings can anchor important features of liberal education. By combining these alternatives, students can gain the knowledge and abilities that have always been essential for effective citizenship.

In the MENA region, the higher education community has become more cohesive, improving collaboration for everyone's benefit. Liberal arts education can reshape post-pandemic higher education in the region and around the world, and this must be considered in future planning. Post-pandemic MENA liberal arts education, its impact on female empowerment and the lessons learned are the subject of these reflections.

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Chapter 10

Graduate Education Within a Liberal Arts College Context: A Case of Lingnan University, Hong Kong



Weiyan Xiong

Abstract This chapter discusses the development and role of graduate education within a liberal arts college context by examining the case of Lingnan University, Hong Kong. With a student-centered focus, Lingnan University applies evidence-informed teaching and experiential learning to integrate liberal arts education, graduate programs, and research to enhance students' learning experiences and maintain the core of whole-person education. Lingnan University's efforts demonstrate the potential of developing graduate education in the liberal arts context, which can serve as implications for other liberal arts higher education institutions.

Keywords Liberal arts education · Graduate education · Evidence-informed teaching · Experiential learning · Lingnan University

10.1 Introduction

Liberal arts education has experienced dramatic changes since its origin in Europe and rapid development in the US (Baker & Baldwin, 2015). These changes occur in various areas, including the modifications of institutional mission and vision, the re-design of curriculum, the introduction of new academic and vocational orientations, and the adoption of technologies and extra-curricular learning as a supplement to the traditional classrooms (Freeland, 2009). The change and development of liberal arts colleges, like other types of higher education institutions, are seen as necessary to adapt to the rapidly changing and dynamic external circumstances for higher education, including market demands, financial pressures, students' interests, technological development, and more (Baker & Baldwin, 2015; Logan & Curry, 2015).

Among these changes, one topic that keeps attracting the attention and discussion is the conflict or tension between the research and professional orientation of graduate education and the aim of liberal arts education to equip students with skills and attitudes to be life-long learners, engaged citizens, and responsible leaders

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(Humphreys & Kelly, 2014). Graduate education has been increasingly developed at liberal arts colleges globally. For instance, among the 30 member institutions of the Global Liberal Arts Alliance (GLAA) from 18 countries and regions, 17 institutions have integrated graduate programs into their education systems (GLAA, 2022). The question to ask now has changed from “should liberal arts colleges offer graduate education?” to “how should liberal arts colleges integrate graduate education to meet their institutional core missions?” Under this background, this chapter discusses the development and role of graduate education within a liberal arts college context by examining the case of Lingnan University in Hong Kong.

This chapter first introduces the graduate education at Lingnan University within the broad background of the Hong Kong higher education sector. Lingnan University’s responses to the challenges in developing graduate education are then examined, followed by a discussion of insights derived from Lingnan University’s efforts. This chapter ends with the conclusion and implications for developing graduate education in a liberal arts college context.

10.2 Hong Kong Higher Education and Lingnan University

Hong Kong higher education is public university dominated. Eight public universities, including Lingnan University, are funded by the University Grants Committee (UGC). Benefiting from the buffering role of UGC between universities and the Hong Kong government, eight institutions enjoy high-level autonomy in their development (UGC, 2017). The Hong Kong government also encourages all universities to emphasize their uniqueness and strengths and promotes diversity in terms of institutional types, including comprehensive research universities (the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the University of Hong Kong), research universities with focused areas (Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, and the City University of Hong Kong), teacher education-focused university (Education University of Hong Kong), and liberal arts universities (Hong Kong Baptist University and Lingnan University).

Among the eight UGC-funded institutions, Lingnan University has the longest history, with its establishment in 1888 in Guangdong Province, China. After a 15-year closure from 1952 due to the higher education restructuring in mainland China, the university was re-established as Lingnan College in Hong Kong in 1967, and it was renamed Lingnan University in 1999. Lingnan University is featured for its high-quality liberal arts education, which has been recognized worldwide (Forbes, 2015). Choosing to be small in scale, Lingnan University aims to create a close relationship between faculty and students to secure their high-quality educational experiences. Up to September 30, 2021, Lingnan University has 833 staff members, among which 231 are academic staff. A total of 4488 undergraduate and graduate students are studying in the areas of arts, business, and social sciences (Lingnan University, 2021a, 2021b).

Despite giving eight universities high institutional autonomy and freedom, UGC applies several quality assurance schemes to facilitate institutions to reach excellent performance. In specific, eight universities signed the University Accountability Agreement (UAA) with the UGC. The UAA covers five areas, namely student experience of teaching and learning, research performance and research-postgraduate experience, knowledge transfer and social engagement, internationalization, and financial health and institutional sustainability (UGC, 2021). Research performance and graduate education experience are a key area. More importantly, research performance in the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) organized by UGC directly determines the funding allocation to eight institutions.

The Hong Kong higher education context has exerted a complex impact on Lingnan University's liberal arts education. On the one hand, the high-level institutional autonomy provides Lingnan University with the freedom to develop its academic programs. On the other hand, UGC's high standards for quality assurance of research and teaching create a highly competitive circumstance for its funded universities. Lingnan University has managed to become a leading liberal arts university in Asia and achieved high-quality teaching and student learning. Even though such is the case, Lingnan University must follow the same performance measures of RAE and play the research-oriented game to ensure its funding source from UGC. Owing to the narrow focus on humanities and social sciences with the emphasis on undergraduate study, Lingnan University has difficulties securing a competitive position in the major league table of university rankings that put a high value on research performance. Same as other liberal arts colleges in Asia, Lingnan University must perform equally well in research for rankings because Asian parents and students have taken university rankings seriously (Jung et al., 2016; Ka, 2016). Considering this situation, Lingnan University determined to expand its graduate education and enhance its research performance.

10.3 Graduate Education at Lingnan University

All eight Hong Kong public universities provide two types of graduate programs. One is the research-postgraduate (RPg) program, and the other is the taught-postgraduate (TPg) program. RPg programs aim to provide students with research training and award them the Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.). Differently, TPg programs do not require students to complete an academic thesis for graduation but only focus on completing course works. The degrees granted by the TPg programs vary across disciplines and programs, including the Master of Arts (M.A.), Master of Science (M.Sc.), and Master of Social Sciences (M.Soc.Sc.). Usually, the RPg students are financially supported by the UGC; therefore, the quota of RPg students for each university is determined by UGC. Hong Kong universities have much flexibility in offering TPg programs.

The development of graduate education at Lingnan University can be traced back to 1995 when its campus moved to the current location in Tuen Mun of the New Territories. The offer of M.Phil. programs was a step toward future university expansion. Owing to its teaching focus of the liberal arts education tradition and weak research orientation, Lingnan University was in a disadvantageous position compared with other research-intensive universities for the RAE and its sequential funding allocation. For the RAE in 2014, Lingnan University's unsatisfactory research performance resulted in a considerable funding loss from the UGC. Therefore, in 2016, Lingnan University began to facilitate the comprehensive development of graduate education to promote research and set up self-financed TPg programs to make up the financial gap. In specific, the Division of Graduate Studies was established in 2016 and expanded to the School of Graduate Studies in 2019 to oversee Lingnan University's graduate education in terms of academic and administrative affairs.

Given the small scale, Lingnan University receives a very limited quota of RPg students from the UGC. In the academic year 2021–2022, only 96 students were enrolled in the RPg programs (Lingnan University, 2021b). Consequently, Lingnan University focuses on the self-financed TPg programs. The university's choice of this path to developing graduate education is embedded in the unique governance style of Hong Kong higher education. Lingnan University made the development of graduate education a strategic focus and set "Expanding Postgraduate Education" as one of the key strategic areas and initiatives in the strategic plan of 2019–2025 (Lingnan University, 2019). In the latest strategic plan 2022–2028, Lingnan University aims at "Augmenting Postgraduate Studies" (Lingnan University, 2022). Specifically, the university focuses on the self-financed TPg programs and possesses total flexibility to determine the program content and student number. Accordingly, research-track faculty positions are increased to support the research and teach graduate-level courses for TPg programs.

By the academic year 2021–2022, Lingnan University has established 33 TPg programs housed by the School of Graduate Studies, Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Business, and Faculty of Social Sciences (Lingnan University School of Graduate Studies, 2022a). For the RPg programs, Lingnan University offered 13 UGC-funded M.Phil. and Ph.D. programs in four areas: arts, business, social sciences, and environmental science (Lingnan University School of Graduate Studies, 2022b). In addition, more than 60 new academic staff joined Lingnan University in 2021, which was the highest recruiting record of academic staff ever.

With the rapid expansion of TPg programs, Lingnan University strictly follows the quality assurance practices regulated and recommended by UGC to ensure the quality of program delivery and, more importantly, students' learning experiences. First, the newly developed TPg programs are under the UAA and quality assurance review. The Quality Assurance Council (QAC) of UGC conducts the audit for eight public universities every six years. Second, TPg programs seek quality review through the External Academic Advisors (EAA) scheme and the benchmarking process. In the EAA scheme, the senior scholars from the fields relevant to the TPg programs are invited to serve as advisors to provide feedback and suggestions to the development of the entire program and specific courses. The benchmarking practice allows the

TPg programs to review and learn from the good practices of similar programs in other higher education systems.

10.4 Challenges and Responses

10.4.1 *Challenges to Lingnan University in Developing Graduate Education*

Lingnan University has faced three major challenges when developing and expanding its graduate education: the undergraduate-centered focus of liberal arts education, the relatively weak research orientation, and the uncertain funding for TPg programs.

First, the traditional undergraduate-centered focus in liberal arts education has become a barrier. This challenge is demonstrated by the unbalanced distribution of resources between undergraduate and graduate programs. As the QAC report of 2016 stated, Lingnan University faced the challenge of integrating liberal arts education into graduate programs, especially the expanding TPg programs (QAC, 2016). Integrated learning program (ILP) is a co-curricular program for undergraduate students to enhance their skills, knowledge, and attitudes in six domains (i.e., civic education and leadership development, intellectual and entrepreneurship development, physical fitness and well-being, social and emotional well-being, esthetic development, and residential education). In the featured ILP activities, undergraduate students need to obtain sufficient ILP credits to meet the graduation requirements (Lingnan University, 2021a). As a critical component of whole-personal education and experience at Lingnan University, the ILP activities primarily target undergraduate students (Lingnan University, 2021c).

The second challenge of Lingnan University to develop graduate education is the relatively weak research orientation. Owing to the tradition of liberal arts education in students' learning, Lingnan University has attached significance to the faculty's teaching. However, with the increasing trend of evidence-informed practices in Hong Kong higher education, research has been recognized as substantial evidence for faculty members to inform and improve their teaching, especially at the graduate level. Given the rapid expansion of the TPg programs, Lingnan University needs to create a research environment to develop graduate education.

The third challenge is the uncertain funding sources for the TPg programs. Given the self-financed status, the operation of TPg programs relies on student tuition. The student enrollment number determines whether the program can have a sustainable future. This challenge is greatly influenced by external contexts, such as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and related border control regulations.

10.4.2 *Lingnan University's Responses*

Facing the above-discussed challenges, Lingnan University has made great efforts as responses. These efforts are based on the review and application of the opportunities identified in the local, regional, and global higher education contexts. The first and fundamental advantage of Lingnan University is the high-level institutional autonomy, which guarantees the freedom to develop graduate education. Second, as mainland China has become the most prominent source of international students, the proximity between Hong Kong and the mainland provides sufficient graduate student applicants. In the current COVID-19 pandemic, Hong Kong has become a popular destination for mainland students when considering safety and health (Mok et al., 2021). Third, Hong Kong's high reputation in higher education with its international metropolitan status has become a feature for Lingnan University to attract graduate students and, more importantly, international faculty members to support the development of graduate education.

Exploiting these opportunities, Lingnan University has taken specific actions to respond to the challenges in developing its graduate education in a liberal arts education context. These actions include shifting resources and integrating liberal arts education into graduate programs, strategically recruiting research staff and promoting social impact, and striving for high-quality learning with appropriate market positioning to attract sufficient TPg students.

10.4.2.1 *Shifting Resources and Integrating Liberal Arts Education into Graduate Programs*

With the rapid development of TPg programs, Lingnan University has intentionally shifted resources to these programs and, more importantly, aimed to integrate liberal arts elements into graduate students' learning experiences. For example, as residential education is a significant component of liberal arts education, the university has allocated on-campus hostel quotas to TPg programs in addition to the small amount of RPg students who can live in the hostel at the beginning. Moreover, some liberal arts education activities have become available to graduate students. The ILP activities previously mentioned have been opened to graduate students. However, the ILP activities are not credit-bearing for graduate students.

Considering the different focus of graduate education, which is more research-related, the School of Graduate Studies has launched the Learning Enhancement Activities Plan (LEAP) to "enrich the student learning experience and to promote the development of Lingnan University graduate attributes in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitude" (Lingnan University, 2021d). LEAP activities include four areas to help graduate students gain fulfilling learning experiences at Lingnan University (Table 10.1).

Table 10.1 LEAP activity areas and purposes

Areas	Purposes
Orientations	To provide essential information on studying and living at Lingnan University
New experiences	To provide culture- and language-related activities for connecting to the new learning and living environment
Community engagement	To promote civic awareness and understanding the societal issues of Hong Kong To explore local internship and volunteer opportunities for students to strengthen their bond with the local community
Personal growth series	To provide skill enhancement for personal, academic, and career development through continuing and professional studies

10.4.2.2 Strategically Recruiting Research Staff and Promoting Social Impact

Facing the challenges derived from the relatively weak research orientation, Lingnan University has turned research enhancement into an institutional strategic priority. Guided by this priority, Lingnan University has increased its recruitment of research-track staff under the self-financed TPg programs, which would not be limited by the quota of UGC. All research-track staff members, from postdoc fellows to professors, have made significant contributions to the university's research performance. In the latest round of RAE in 2020 (covering the period of 2014–2020), Lingnan University made impressive progress, especially compared with its performance in the previous round. In specific, among 431 research items submitted by 119 staff members in four panels (Business and Economics; Social Sciences; Humanities; and Creative Arts, Performing Arts, and Design), more than half received 4-Star (World Leading) or 3-Star (Internationally Excellent) ratings. In addition, in Sociology and Anthropology, Lingnan University had the highest percentage of 4-Star research (Lingnan University, 2021e).

More importantly, Lingnan University does not develop its research only for the sake of research. Research has been integrated into Lingnan University's pursuit of quality liberal arts education, which is demonstrated in its teaching and social impact efforts. Research is a significant means for Lingnan University to exert a positive social impact. Lingnan University clearly states its "strong commitment to developing successful interdisciplinary research, forging international collaborations and partnerships, and ensuring that our research effectively informs teaching and knowledge transfer besides contributing to academia" (Lingnan University, 2020a). In summary, Lingnan University aims to impact with "CARE," which stands for "committing to society, advancing entrepreneurship, revitalizing heritage, and embracing sustainability." Impact with CARE has encapsulated the research efforts and been inspiring researchers at Lingnan University (Lingnan University, 2020b).

10.4.2.3 Striving for High-Quality Learning and Appropriate Market Positioning

Responding to the challenge derived from uncertain funding for TPg programs, Lingnan University strives to provide a high-quality learning experience as the key strategy to attract TPg students and secure a stable funding source. Rooted in the liberal arts and whole-person education tradition, Lingnan University believes a high-quality learning experience which is essential in establishing the reputation for the university and the individual programs. In addition to integrating liberal arts elements into its TPg programs, Lingnan University promotes and facilitates evidence-informed teaching and experiential learning to enhance students' educational experiences in the graduate programs.

Evidence-informed teaching refers to instructors' practices of applying the evidence and knowledge derived from their research data or findings to teaching (Mok & Xiong, 2022). Lingnan University encourages faculty members to apply their latest research as teaching materials to improve their teaching instead of merely relying on textbooks. In this way, instructors can keep course content relevant to the frontier of research areas, and students can catch up with the development of the research topics in their classes (Mok & Xiong, 2022). For example, in the course titled *Managing Talents and Finance in Education Institutions*, the instructor applied his research findings on professional development centers at various universities globally to help students understand the significance and exemplary practices of faculty's professional development in higher education (i.e., Jacob et al., 2015, 2018). Moreover, as a course assignment, the instructor followed the research framework in his study and required students to work as a team to conduct a case study of a professional development center at a selected university. In the data collection process, students were encouraged to contact the staff members of the case centers in a professional manner. After the course, the instructor encouraged the groups with satisfactory performance to turn their report into their master's thesis or present it at some international conferences. Through this assignment, students can obtain up-to-date information and research experience on professional development in higher education while practicing their teamwork and communication skills, which are significant components of the whole-person education at Lingnan University.

As to experiential learning, Lingnan University emphasizes that graduate students should learn from experiencing the actual academic and social environments instead of merely listening to lectures in the classroom. Therefore, faculty members are encouraged to open their research projects as a platform for graduate students to gain first-hand experiences in real research projects and academic events. In 2017, the School of Graduate Studies launched the Student Research Enhancement Scheme to support graduate students to join these projects as paid research assistants each semester (Lingnan University, 2020b). Moreover, to promote experiential learning, some graduate programs integrate exchange opportunities and international academic conferences into their curricula. Students are required to attend these activities to gain credits and meet the graduation requirements. Among the nine compulsory courses for the program of Master of Arts in International Higher Education and

Management (IHEM), three are experiential learning courses based on three annual international conferences of different scales and topics. For instance, students of the course *Internationalization and Quality Management in Higher Education* attend a symposium of the same title every year, and they are also encouraged to present their research works in addition to joining as audiences.

Besides ensuring high-quality learning experiences as the key strategy to attract students, TPg programs of Lingnan University are trying to take up the niche market. Specifically, to differentiate the TPg programs from the traditional RPg programs in Hong Kong, Lingnan University has set up many interdisciplinary programs to cultivate students with multiple dimensions of skills needed in the job market. For example, under the School of Graduate Studies, the IHEM program and the Master of Social Sciences in Organizational Psychology and Education Management (OPEM) combine international education and management as well as psychology and education management. IHEM and OPEM have become the flagship TPg programs for Lingnan University. On top of meeting the market needs of local, mainland China, and international students in pursuing their graduate degrees, Lingnan University has set up TPg programs relevant to Hong Kong's strategic development priorities. For instance, the Master of Cities and Governance program aims to cultivate talents for developing Hong Kong into an international smart city.

Lingnan University's TPg programs have gained considerable development. In terms of enrollment, the number of TPg students has reached 1436 for the academic year of 2021–2022, doubling the figure of that in 2018–2019, even during the COVID-19 pandemic (Lingnan University, 2021b). Meanwhile, some TPg programs were recognized by the UGC and included in its Targeted TPg Program Fellowship Scheme, which aimed to attract local students to study in the TPg programs relevant to the priorities in Hong Kong's development (UGC, 2022).

10.5 Discussion

After reviewing the responses of Lingnan University to the challenges in developing graduate education within its liberal arts context, Lingnan University is on the right track, especially applying evidence-informed teaching and experiential learning to integrate its liberal arts and whole-person education into all graduate programs (Mok & Xiong, 2022). Lingnan University has also achieved impressive research progress, which is, in turn, facilitating graduate education (Lingnan University, 2021e).

Lingnan University's efforts to develop graduate education and address the conflict between research and the teaching focus of liberal arts education provide some insights into the roles of graduate education in promoting liberal arts education. First, graduate education can contribute to liberal arts education by applying evidence-informed teaching and experiential learning. Research in the liberal arts context should be applied as a valuable platform for students to gain first-hand research experiences and understand the frontier topics of a research area. By converting

research into necessary evidence for instructors' teaching, research can be integrated as a valuable component in liberal arts education. Moreover, research-related activities, such as conferences and symposiums, can provide students in a liberal arts context with a platform to gain first-hand academic experiences and practice their communication skills in social networking. Lingnan University has promoted these strategies to develop and promote self-financed TPg programs while highlighting its liberal arts traditions.

However, Lingnan University still has a long way to go to comprehensively integrate graduate education and liberal arts education. Even though the senior administrators have made strategic and practical efforts in shifting the institutional resources to graduate students, especially those from the self-financed TPg programs, the primary focus remains on the undergraduate students and programs. In addition, the one-year time of TPg programs is too short for students to sufficiently experience the liberal arts education. On the teaching side, despite having identified evidence-informed teaching and experiential learning as the approach to integrating research and teaching in the liberal arts context, Lingnan University should give time for faculty members to change their teaching style and re-design their courses accordingly. The high standards of both teaching and research also bring heavy burdens for new staff members of these TPg programs. At the institutional level, Lingnan University continues exploring the appropriate human resource management structure that can support the rapid development of graduate education and TPg programs.

Notwithstanding these barriers, Lingnan University as a liberal arts institution keeps students' learning experiences at the central point of developing graduate education. Lingnan University clearly understands that the key to the success of graduate education is paying attention to graduate students' particular needs regarding their study and future development. Given Lingnan University's experiences, the development of graduate education can well support liberal arts education.

10.6 Conclusion: Implications for Other Liberal Arts Colleges

As a leading liberal arts university in Hong Kong and Asia, Lingnan University has increasingly emphasized research and graduate education. Its efforts in improving research and graduate programs are closely connected to its liberal arts traditions. Through evidence-informed teaching and experiential learning, research development has facilitated the integration of liberal arts education and graduate education. However, Lingnan University's case in improving graduate education is deeply embedded in Hong Kong's higher education system, which is featured by high institutional autonomy and fierce quality-based competition. Lingnan University can freely take the "bottom-up" approach to develop graduate education. When other liberal arts colleges want to refer to Lingnan University's case, they need to understand the impact of the Hong Kong higher education system on Lingnan University's

efforts and carefully evaluate their own context to determine an appropriate way of developing graduate education.

With Lingnan University's case in developing graduate education, the following student-centered implications are proposed for other liberal arts colleges.

First, the pursuit of research enhancement should be connected to students' learning. Evidence-informed teaching and experiential learning can be applied to convert research into useful liberal arts learning platform for students. In this sense, higher education institutions should develop necessary professional development programs to help faculty members balance their focus on research and teaching and adapt to the changes in teaching styles and contents.

Second, the development of graduate education in the liberal arts context should combine the advantages of liberal arts education and the job market's needs to help students cultivate the necessary skills to stand out among college graduates. Lingnan University's case highlights the trending development of interdisciplinary programs that can address the human resource needs in local, national, and international development.

The final and the most important implication is to keep the core tradition of liberal arts education, which is to help students become a "whole person" with the necessary knowledge and inquiry methods to explore the world and the life meaning, the skills and wisdom to work and live with other people, and finally, the attitude to serve the society for the human's well-being. The development of graduate education should support the realization of the whole-person education purpose instead of becoming a barrier. Each liberal arts college or university should explore its proper way, and Lingnan University has set an example.

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Chapter 11

The European Consortium of Liberal Arts and Sciences' Manifesto for the Reform of Undergraduate Education in Europe



Samuel Abrahám

Abstract The conversation after the pandemic should concern the role of higher education in dealing with the social, political and environmental challenges facing Europe and the world. Universities are confronted not only by the challenges of 21st century—and AI in the classroom seems like most urgent—but also are inflexible to respond to changes due to its inherent conservative nature and bureaucratic inertia. The question thus stands: should the ‘ivory tower’, faced with the problems of the outside world, turn itself into a fortress, oblivious to the peril outside, as has often occurred in the past? Or should it open up and actively generate analyses and instigate action? In this respect, it is important to reform the structure, function and differentiation of universities’ undergraduate and graduate programs. Unfortunately, European politicians and administrators have so far failed to reflect or act upon the unique function and potential of the bachelor’s degree, which represents a critical aspect of higher education. Currently, undergraduate study in Europe mostly comprises narrowly focused programs, taught in large classes via the lecture-exam model. The world’s top universities offer bachelor’s degrees that focus on general academic disciplines and intellectual or soft skills, with students choosing their major during their studies. Narrowly focused specialization and vocational professional education should remain the domain of postgraduate and doctoral programs. This chapter critically reviews liberal arts education in Europe and discusses the ECOLAS *Manifesto*, arguing for the importance of embracing the full potential of undergraduate education.

Keywords Undergraduate education · ECOLAS *Manifesto* · Europe · Liberal arts · Bologna Declaration 1999

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11.1 Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic and the costs of its associated lockdowns have marked the political, social and cultural life of Europe and the wider world. Despite relief, thanks to vaccines and the coordinated financial strategy of the EU, the outlook for recovery remains uncertain. The education sector has been particularly hard-hit. Online teaching has caused a decline in the quality of education and had a negative mental and cognitive impact on students. It has demonstrated the importance of human interaction and socialization. The European Consortium of Liberal Arts and Sciences (ECOLAS) proclaimed in its *Manifesto* that online learning should serve only “as a supplement to the kind of education that will allow students to attain intellectual agility, flexibility and critical thinking” (The Editorial Board, 2021, p. 4).

There are three basic problems of traditional undergraduate education in Europe that deserve attention. First, high school students are forced to choose a single discipline from hundreds of programs. There is a high chance that students will choose subjects of study that are wrong for them, and transferring or dropping out as a result is costly to students both psychologically and financially. Student dropout also carries a financial cost to society, since most European countries provide free or heavily subsidized university education. Furthermore, state subsidies to universities are largely determined by the numbers that enroll, rather than how education is actually delivered. There is therefore little pressure to really improve undergraduate education. Finally, the large classes at universities, which often have tens of thousands of undergraduates, lead neither to growth in knowledge nor the formation of moral character among students. The growth of extremism and populism, and the spread of fake news and algorithm-driven partisanship on social media requires, more than ever, a critical mindset among young people. As Derek Bok pointed out decades ago: “A critical mind, free of dogma but nourished by humane values, may be the most important product of education in a changing, fragmented society” (Bok, 1986, p. 47). ‘The critical mind’ is not the priority of undergraduate education in most universities in Europe.

This chapter will argue that the most suitable model for improving and reforming the bachelor’s degree is that of liberal arts education. This old European concept—*Artes Liberales*—has returned after an absence of more than a century and resumed in a few countries in Europe. It was facilitated by the division of university studies into bachelor’s and master’s degrees established by the Bologna Declaration, signed in 1999. The first part of the chapter will describe the return of liberal arts to Europe at the turn of the twenty-first century. The next will outline the three existing models of liberal arts programs and the aim and purpose of the European Consortium of Liberal Arts and Sciences (ECOLAS). The reasons for the crisis of current mass undergraduate education in Europe will then be examined. Finally, the chapter will analyze the ECOLAS *Manifesto*, published in 2022, which defines the crisis of the bachelor’s degree in Europe and outlines the need for change following the Covid pandemic. It seems, however, that despite the great potential of liberal arts for improving the quality of undergraduate education, this model is unlikely to spread widely in the

near future. What we might see after the pandemic is, at best, the incorporation of some parts of that model (Dekker, 2021, p. 24). Yet it is clear that reform is needed to prepare students for the challenges of the twenty-first century.

11.2 The Return of Liberal Arts to Europe

It is commonly stated that the liberal arts were introduced or returned to Europe due to the Bologna Declaration. That agreement, initiated by the European Commission and signed by European ministers of education in 1999, provided the necessary structural change by enforcing bachelor's degrees throughout Europe—the format necessary for liberal arts programs. However, it has a diverse prehistory. Even before the Bologna Declaration, there were numerous liberal arts colleges in Europe, among them the American Universities in Paris, Greece and Bulgaria as well as Franklin College in Switzerland and John Cabot College in Rome. These are mostly private, and accredited in the United States, but they have been disconnected from the European educational system. There are, of course, the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, two famous and prestigious institutions in the UK that offer undergraduate programs that are basically liberal arts studies in all but name. In fact, the division of these two old universities into colleges inspired the structure and format of United States liberal arts colleges. Before 1999, there were also two other initiatives that independently introduced the concept of liberal arts in Europe, one in the Netherlands and the other in central Europe. Initially, the concept had, naturally, a very limited scope of operation because without the existence of the bachelor's degree structure, except in the UK, liberal arts could not be implemented into the five-year-long studies typical in continental Europe.

In the Netherlands, liberal arts studies were introduced by Professor of Sociology Hans Adriaansens, who in the early 1980s was a visiting scholar at Smith College in the United States, where he had first-hand experience of residential liberal arts education. He was impressed with the quality and intensity of such undergraduate studies and wished to build a similar institution in his native Netherlands. Thanks to his considerable determination and perseverance, and despite many hurdles and resistance—more so from his colleagues than from politicians—he founded the first liberal arts college, known as University College Utrecht, in 1998, being the part of Utrecht University. Within a few years, and thank to the creation of bachelor studies after the Bologna Declaration, almost all other Dutch universities founded new university colleges. This model has a great benefit because it emerged from within existing administrative and academic structures, drawing on the faculty, resources and facilities of the home university. The key component was generous funding from the Dutch government—not common elsewhere in Europe. By and large, the university colleges have enjoyed relative autonomy from their home universities, although there has always been potential for friction, considering the higher costs per students and more space required for residences and seminar rooms within a university college.

Currently, there are ten of them in the Netherlands and they regularly compete among themselves for recognition as best bachelor program in The Netherlands.

Liberal arts education was introduced in central Europe by an American foundation, the Educational Leadership Program (ELP). It initiated a series of conferences, the first in Budapest in 1996, and then in Warsaw, at which several United States college presidents and deans met over a hundred invited rectors, deans and educators from around central and eastern Europe. The conversation was mainly about education in post-communist societies but the United States participants also outlined the benefits of liberal arts education as an educational model suitable for the devastated educational landscape of post-communist countries. They argued that, besides soft skills, a liberal arts education stresses moral development and inculcation of democratic values. Out of this initiative, in 1997 there emerged a network called *Artes Liberales* of several educators from central Europe who, together with ELP colleagues, promoted liberal arts in the region (Kontowski, 2020). The *Artes Liberales* initiative ceased after several years but, eventually, thanks to the emergence by the early 2000s of bachelor's degrees, several liberal arts programs also emerged in central Europe.

It was the meeting of three representatives of Dutch, German and Slovak liberal arts colleges that led to the foundation of the ECOLAS. Initially, their wish was to connect a variety of liberal arts programs that were often unaware of each other's existence. They compared their different educational models and relationships to their own academic environment. Besides connecting a variety of liberal arts programs around Europe, they extend cooperation to schools that wish to start a liberal arts program. They were hoping that European universities, which by 2006 were required to divide their previously five-year-long studies into bachelor's and master's elements, would embrace this unique new model, which is well-suited for undergraduate studies. Yet, despite some initial positive responses, and numerous conferences and workshops organized for representatives of universities from around Europe, the number of new liberal arts programs has remained low. The only exception, as already mentioned, was among universities in the Netherlands and, after some delay, in the UK. The key to success there was, besides individual initiatives that are crucial for the emergence of any new program, also the support of government and accreditation agencies in those two countries. The experience of liberal arts programs in the Netherlands and the UK contrasts sharply with their sister institutions elsewhere in Europe. Germany, for example, initially seemed likely to be the next country to experience growth in the number of liberal arts programs, but no major increase took place. In fact, several programs around Europe had to roll back their activities. In other countries, not only do governments not support such programs financially—as they do in the Netherlands and the UK—but, often, accreditation agencies refuse, as is the case, for example, in Slovakia, or are reluctant, as in the case of Germany, to put “liberal arts” on the list of accredited programs in their countries. Considering that the accreditation of universities is the domain of individual states and not a Europe-wide policy, each country has different policies towards and financing of liberal arts programs, schools or colleges.

11.3 Three Liberal Arts Models in Europe

There are many definitions of liberal arts, but none of them covers the whole spectrum of this perennial and noble human endeavor and aspiration, both ancient and modern. There is one that encompasses the scope of good education in quite a poignant way, devoid of the direct moral dimension that is invariably stressed. The late Czech philosopher, educator and politician Jan Sokol, once questioned by a curious audience about what liberal arts education is, responded with characteristic bluntness: "Our goal is to teach students how to write and read". Of course, he did not mean this literally. In any case, one has the feeling that to teach someone to write well is almost beyond our capacity. It is an endeavor, it is a hardship, and a lifelong challenge. And when we read the best, it seems that this goal is beyond our reach. And how about reading? We all are able to read, but what he meant was to read critically, effectively, selectively, even quickly, in order to attain an assigned task or achieve a goal or differentiate essential texts from trivial ones, profound ones from trash, objective treatises from biased and slanted propaganda or hoaxes—especially since the latter are currently inundating the internet and social media. If writing and reading means mastering these essential skills, it is a great task for any educator to achieve, and demands much effort from students. Now we see that Sokol's ambition was neither easy nor simple. Especially when we observe today that a great number of people are not able to "read and write" in Sokol's meaning (Sokol, 2021, p. 103).

Before we discuss the reluctance, even resistance to introducing liberal arts programs in Europe, let us describe the nature and operation of existing types of liberal arts programs. Some are small-scale and independent while the others are larger, integrated within large universities. There are three models of liberal arts programs operating in Europe at the undergraduate level—*independent colleges*, *university colleges* and something that could be called a *hybrid scheme of medium-sized universities* incorporating into their structure some aspects of liberal arts. Despite their different institutional set up, liberal arts programs aim to tackle some of the evident shortcomings of traditional bachelor studies in Europe. They allow student to choose a major after coming to college, usually in the second year of study. The diversity of courses allows students to explore a variety of subjects and subsequently to choose from a variety of majors most suitable for each one. Another difference and innovation is student-based learning, where classes are mostly conducted in small seminar settings and there is ample space for discussion and argumentation. Finally, close interaction, frequent written assignments and feedback are essential to acquire soft skills, including critical thinking. This can be attained only through regular meetings between students and teachers and among students themselves in an intensive, fruitful, even exciting environment. The final aim of a liberal arts education is to aspire, through critical thinking, debating, ample extracurricular activities, and reading primary texts and literature, to shape the moral and ethical profile of the student. The latter cannot be guaranteed by any educational system, but liberal arts education is in the best position, as if by osmosis, to inculcate and build the moral fortitude of students (Newman, 2018, p. 99).

11.3.1 The Independent College Model

The first liberal arts institutions in Europe were independent colleges, similar to the small colleges in the United States. They are, however, rare and the main reason is that in Europe, where university is either free or fees are nominal, it is impossible to demand the high fees that those in the United States can charge. The various United States-accredited colleges in Europe that charge relatively high fees have very few European students but instead tend to attract students from outside Europe, or offer United States-accredited business or law degrees that are attractive to some European students. Also, there is no tradition of private sponsors, as is the case in the United States, nor the tradition that alumni donate funds to their alma mater. There are three colleges that do not charge high fees, are integrated fully into so-called European Educational Area, and are accredited in the countries where they are located. They all have close United States connections, contacts and support. One is the Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts (BISLA), based in Slovakia. It was founded in 2006, and since 2007 has been the headquarters of the ECOLAS network. The other is the European Humanities University based in Vilnius, Lithuania, which is a Belarusian liberal arts college in exile, employing exiled Belarusian scholars and providing education for students from Belarus. The third independent college was founded as ECLA in Berlin. It started in 1999 as a summer school for students from former communist-bloc countries and gradually became a two-year-long liberal arts program.

11.3.2 The University College Model

The most common liberal arts program in Europe is the university college (UC) model that started in the Netherlands. It exists as a unit within a major university, with its own faculty and its own residences. It is an intensive academic program for up to 600 students with core courses, a unique curriculum and seminar-type classes. Naturally, the UC model is more costly but the retention rate is also much higher than for single-discipline programs. One study shows that the graduate studies and employment prospects of a UC graduate with a major in a certain subject is comparable to that of a graduate who has studied for a single-discipline bachelor's degree (Kovačević, 2022), the difference being that UC graduates can apply to a wide variety of graduate schools, depending on the major they choose, whereas the graduate school options for narrow-discipline specialists are limited.

11.3.3 The Hybrid Model

The third model is perhaps the most potentially acceptable for regular bachelor studies. It aims to improve quality while not employing a full-fledged liberal arts model. It could be called a hybrid liberal arts model, because it borrows from or blends both models. It introduces some elements of liberal arts into the curriculum at regular, medium-sized universities. The goal is to preserve the original, departmental structure but offer certain core courses common in liberal arts settings, and alter the course approach by introducing, for example, problem-based learning in contrast to the traditional lecture-exam model. Students are also encouraged to select courses from different departments in order to experience diversity across their curriculum. However, class sizes can still be larger than in a traditional liberal arts model. There are some other models for such hybrid studies. For example, at the School for Liberal Arts and Sciences at Utrecht University, students from narrow-discipline departments are offered the opportunity to apply to a special program at the university and can then shape their study programs by selecting a variety of courses offered by the whole university. Social interaction, supervision and advice is offered by the program itself but otherwise it acts as an 'invisible college' within a large university. The results are impressive, judging from the accreditation assessment.

There are many advantages and disadvantages of this hybrid model. The greatest benefit is that it can be implemented at any university quickly, and without great structural changes and financial strains, because it remodels the existing academic institution. The obvious problem is that teachers from various departments may not share a commitment to liberal arts pedagogy. (Bali, 2017, p. 32) However, this can be remedied by implementing teaching and learning centers for improving the pedagogical skills of the faculty. In fact, that is another important liberal arts addition to traditional universities, where lecturers are usually not required to pass any courses in pedagogy.

11.4 The Value of a Liberal Arts Education

11.4.1 Long-Term Societal and Financial Benefits

Universities today encompass the best minds and are responsible for education and research as well as the prospects of the younger generation. As in the past, not unlike the monasteries of the Middle Ages, universities should provide protection and a calm environment for individuals and groups to work and study together. Over a thousand disciplines exist at thousands of universities and jointly preserve the past and generate new knowledge. This is a crucial and unique role that no other institutions can perform. In the long term, the future of our societies depends on them because they also preserve knowledge. Yet, a university is only one of many institutions that define and determine the shape and nature of every society. For an individual,

education is “only one port of call along the lifelong voyage of self-discovery and self-realization” (Kidd, 2021, p. 74). It is a base but there are many other inputs leading to the formation of one’s character and personality. Education should not be an end in itself, but rather a foundation upon which one’s past experiences and future reflections can be anchored.

The problem is that the usefulness or value of universities differs when viewed from a short- or a long-term perspective. And politicians, driven by opinion polls and media attention, often pay only lip-service to the long-term issues in general, and to the state of education in particular. Besides, in a world driven by financial markets, investments tend to demand ever more immediate returns. In such a world of instant gratification, a university education, especially in the social sciences and humanities, does not offer immediate benefits. Academics also do not have much political influence and are not directly involved in the immediate treatment of the ills of our societies. Thus, while higher education is costly and demands more and more funds from a limited state budget, politicians prioritize other, often more urgent, needs. As a result, the education sector is constantly under pressure, even when conditions are stable and societies prosperous.

The response by all prestigious universities to the problem of short-term legitimacy or utility and limited resources is to focus primarily on research, publications, and grants. The reason is that these are the factors that provide precious points in the Shanghai Ranking Index, the Holy Grail of all big research universities focused on rankings. Under such conditions, prominent scientists, and postgraduate as well as doctoral students, naturally get priority. By contrast, undergraduates are often viewed as a necessary burden, their teaching a tedious repetition of basic material that is far from the cutting-edge knowledge discussed at prestigious conferences and published in research journals. It intrudes even into academic language, where scholars talk about ‘research opportunities’ and ‘teaching loads’ (Boyer, 1996, p. 151). Besides, the Shanghai Ranking cares little about what and how undergraduates learn. This is not because it is unimportant, but because it is very difficult to measure and monitor. And there is little incentive to focus on undergraduates because almost none of the grants or research projects obtained by universities depend on the quality of teaching or the well-being of their undergraduates.

By contrast, those same 18–21 year-olds are the focus of the liberal arts model. The reason is that this is one short period in life when an individual, under proper guidance, is able to make the right choices about his or her future path or profession. Also, it is the most formative age of an individual when they should be provided with the maximum attention and assistance. And it is a paradox, unappreciated by politicians and traditional universities administrators, that although the costs of the liberal arts model are higher in the short term, in the long term the financial and societal benefits are substantial and confirmed by numerous studies (Adriaansens, 2021, pp. 31–32). Liberal arts graduates, thanks to their skills, breadth and depth of knowledge, as well as specialization in one or two subjects, are ready not only for graduate studies but also for the job market. Many global companies and international agencies highly value the soft skills, critical thinking and flexibility of those who have studied liberal arts (Farnham & Yarmolinsky, 1996, p. 134).

11.4.2 Student-Centered and Learning-Oriented

If we ask in the simplest terms what is the main difference between liberal arts and non-liberal arts education, the answer can be reframed in the following question: is the education student- or teacher-oriented? The answer, at least in theory, is that the focus should be on both. However, when analyzing the structure of undergraduate education in Europe, theory and practice differ dramatically. Today, when the quality and prestige of every university is measured by the number of publications, research and ranking, the students' role—especially undergraduate students who are the great majority—is secondary because they *are* secondary in the key factors defining the standing of the university. The philosophy of liberal arts education stands in sharp contrast to this predominant *status quo* in Europe because the education of students comes before teachers' scholarly pursuits or administrators' pursuit of rankings. That is also one of the reasons why liberal arts education faces resistance and slow growth.

However, the absence of liberal arts programs in Europe has more causes. Some of these derive from the nature and focus of educational systems that are grounded in a single-discipline departmental structure. Others are simply due to the difficulties of establishing and sustaining a liberal arts program. Indeed, such a program is more time-consuming and expensive to maintain than the lecture-exam models of the mass bachelor program. In the end, however, it is about the priorities of the universities, what societies know and expect, and what governments allow and support. There is also a complacency factor. Universities are the most ubiquitous institutions globally and their position, support and growth are assured in the future in every country, rich or poor. Universities have become rather conservative institutions, resisting major reform or change. As Stanley Katz maintains: "The current departmental structure has outlived the rapid increase in information and knowledge ... [T]he departmental structure of today's research universities is largely an artifact of branches of knowledge that seemed distinct at the turn of the [20th] century but have remained distinct only for reasons of academic and administrative convenience" (Katz, 1996, p. 84). This was amply demonstrated after the introduction of the bachelor-master division following the Bologna Declaration, where it was hailed with scorn and resistance by a great number of universities throughout Europe. It is still viewed in many countries as an unwelcome imposition of the EU and there is even intermittent discussion of returning to the old model. Hence, little attention is focused on improving bachelor studies. Debate on these topics is crucial for the survival of these institutions in the future, yet complacency, defensiveness, and resistance to change prevails.

It is a paradox that the larger and more prestigious a university is, the more students apply to conduct their bachelor studies there—and yet their focus is elsewhere. Their priorities are research grants, academic publications, attending international conferences, well-funded Ph.D. programs and, above all, prominent professors, preferably of Nobel Prize caliber. That is all laudable: research results represent a common good and enhances global prestige. That in turn elevates an institution's ranking and brings more funding. Yet, undergraduate education is left out of this admirable loop. So, why do these universities have such large bachelor programs when their focus

lies elsewhere? For one, most countries pay universities by the number of students admitted and hence the result is large admissions, resulting in large classes. The second reason is the enormous expansion of university education starting after World War II. In itself, this is a positive development. For progressive, industrial societies—as well as functioning democracies—to work, they need an educated population. Yet, because of the obsession with rankings, bachelor studies, irrelevant in that respect, are of secondary importance. Undergraduate teaching is generally designed so that it does not over-tax teachers, who view themselves primarily as publishing academics and researchers and not as pedagogues who need to care about the education of young students. The result are lectures often for hundreds of students in combination with mid-term and final tests or papers. In addition, students are forced to select a single subject to study and are allocated to narrow-discipline departments. It is not surprising that such study methods, resembling industrial production, could be switched easily to online mode during the Covid pandemic. In a way, the online experience was not that different to what students were experiencing before. Not surprisingly, many universities are eager to continue, at least partially, with online education. The result is alarming. Students are disoriented, depressed and the quality of undergraduate learning has inevitably declined further.

This mode of mass education, where students serve primarily as a source of revenue to help fund research institutions and staff, is the opposite of what a bachelor education should and could be. As Leon Botstein succinctly put it: “Students deserve attention beyond the grading of their work, the marking of their tests, and the answering of their questions. The benefits of informality include the increased probability that some admirable adult who is not a relative might take an active role in the life and career of a young adult” (Botstein, 2006, p. 218). Indeed, that takes time, patience, dedication and, even for a teacher, academic sacrifices. However, such an education, and such a mission, is not provided by mass undergraduate education and, in fact, it is not interested in providing it.

11.5 The ECOLAS *Manifesto*

Alarmed by the further decline in the quality of education during the pandemic, in 2021 ECOLAS issued a *Manifesto* calling on educators and politicians in Europe to change their attitude towards the bachelor’s degree. The immediate impulse was the experience of online education during the pandemic. It demonstrated that a semester-long online lecture model, generally practiced at undergraduate level, is inadequate for, and quite detrimental to, students’ learning. Passive listening to even excellent online lectures without interaction, discussion and personal communication diminishes students’ attention span and the ability to critically assess the learning material. Above all, online education does not teach the important soft or intellectual skills that are so crucial for further study or employment. The dire experience of online education during the pandemic should serve as a wake-up call for educators and administrators of undergraduate programs, and should prompt reform of bachelor’s

degrees around Europe. The post-pandemic experience could lead to two outcomes: while it could offer an opportunity to change the shape of bachelor studies, it could also lead to ongoing deterioration, and expansion of online education, and thereby to a further decline in quality. The *ECOLAS Manifesto* first examines this predicament and lists the elements that a good education demands (The Editorial Board, 2021, pp. 2–4):

As the COVID 19 pandemic lifts, higher education in Europe stands at a crossroads: should universities return to the massive and narrow, subject-focused undergraduate (bachelor's) degrees of before the lockdown, or should they embrace the lessons of this experience and take a serious look at higher education in Europe? The complexity of the pandemic has demonstrated that university education is not only about the transfer of knowledge. What was missed the most during more than a year of online education was small-scale human interaction between teachers and students, as well as between students. We must ask: does our current undergraduate education or Bachelor's Degree respond adequately to the contemporary needs of societies threatened by economic, environmental, and political challenges? Does it provide the skills and personal traits that will strengthen democratic values in the EU?

The answer to such questions must be an emphatic "No". In order to realize fully their capabilities, instead of mass-scale and narrow subject studies, today's Bachelor students require student-centered learning, engagement with multiple disciplines and hands-on research experience. Only in this way are they able to acquire the breadth of knowledge and the depth of learning that leads to moral, non-extremist viewpoints as well as the kind of creative problem-solving that our institutions increasingly seek and that the well-being of democracies demand. Such an education can be defined as one that:

- Allows students to direct themselves gradually toward their main interests;
- Offers them the means and opportunities to solve problems creatively, collaboratively, and from multiple disciplinary perspectives;
- Teaches them to communicate their findings clearly and persuasively;
- Highlights the ethical dimensions in every study discipline;
- Provides students with the tools to turn theory into practice;
- Engages them directly in the task of sustaining democracy;
- Helps them to acquire the soft intellectual and personal skills that business and industry require to meet professional challenges;
- Prepares young people for future academic and professional careers fortified with moral responsibility.

ECOLAS suggests a solution: implementation of the liberal arts model, or at least some of its aspects. It states (The Editorial Board, 2021, p. 4):

Since the declaration of the Bologna process in 1999, small-scale, multi-disciplinary, efficient undergraduate programs offering Bachelor's Degrees have emerged throughout Europe to provide just such an education. These liberal arts programs, heirs to the traditional European *Artes Liberales*, offer thoughtful ways to renew undergraduate learning and have a record of proven success. It is here that the discovery and fostering of innovative pedagogical approaches including the latest technologies produce the skills and attitudes that business, industry and society-at-large will need in order to defend its democratic values and remain tolerant of minority and marginalized groups. We should be wary of claims that promote online education as a panacea. While the data indicate that massive online learning has been

an asset during the pandemic, it is clearly of limited utility and serves, at best, as a supplement to the kind of education that will allow students to attain the intellectual agility, flexibility and critical thinking necessary for the 21st century.

A wholesale implementation of liberal arts is not likely in Europe, as argued above. There are enormous obstacles to such an enterprise, although Hans Adriaansens offers a radical model for the transformation of large universities, through a combination of the Oxbridge collegiate model and the university college structure and method of teaching (Adriaansens, 2021, p. 30). Adriaansens (2021) believes that if universities wish to survive in the future as viable institutions, they should reform. Certainly, the attention to bachelor students' education should receive priority. Governments and educators need to redirect attention towards these educational institutions both for the sake of academic excellence but also in order to protect democracy. It is alarming how many extremists in Europe are graduates of high schools and universities. The educational system and, in particular, universities must bear responsibility for this phenomenon. The conclusion of the *ECOLAS Manifesto* urges in this direction (The Editorial Board, 2021, p. 4):

European higher education finds itself at a critical crossroads. It is our intention to encourage educators and policymakers to find the ways and the means to make this kind of contemporary undergraduate education more widely accessible to all. We believe that Bachelor Degrees can be taught and designed efficiently and effectively where there is a will to do so. Therefore, we invite all those who value education as the engine of democracy and social well-being to join this effort. Now is the time to work together towards realizing the full potential of Europe's future generations.

11.6 Conclusion: Liberal Arts as a More Enlightened Model of Higher Education

The liberal arts model in its current form has existed in Europe for over twenty years and provides a viable alternative to the current standard of single-discipline bachelor studies. It offers students acquisition of knowledge and skills, and awareness of multiple disciplines, and encourages each student to face up to and deal with moral dilemmas and be aware of problems within their own society, and globally. I have listed the obstacles to wider adoption of the liberal arts model, among them the importance placed on academic rankings which disregard bachelor studies, and the amount of work required to arrange a good student-based education.

It would also be rather expensive to implement seminar-type studies at large universities with tens of thousands of bachelor students. Furthermore, liberal arts is a very demanding study program and some students might be intimidated at the prospect of such intensive study. This is especially true if they can obtain a bachelor's degree more easily at a mainstream university—with the added attraction of ample time for work and leisure. Last but not least, the perception of students and their parents is also conditioned by the emphasis on strictly single-discipline studies, which are viewed as the best vehicle for certain careers and jobs. Yet such career

paths are in flux and we do not know how new jobs will look in twenty years. It is the flexibility, soft skills, critical thinking and broad spectrum of subjects studied by liberal arts graduates that prepare them for future positions better than the study of narrowly-focused disciplines with limited flexibility to adjust to new professions.

The traditional bachelor's degree at most European universities limits students' choices and prevents or restricts multidisciplinary study. A young person needs to be exposed to a range of views and subjects while mastering a variety of skills. The pandemic has demonstrated the disadvantages of online education and many students have lost almost two years of education during the pandemic. As a result, what is at stake is their mental, social, and cognitive experiences during the most important three years of their lives. Derek Bok quotes L. Auchincloss, who described four years of everyone's life with some poignancy: "Never again does one receive impressions with quite the same kind of emotional intensity that one does between the age of seventeen and twenty-one. It is so brief a time, so very brief, yet one can build a lifetime on the exploitation of it" (Bok, 1986, p. 38). Educators owe it to students to ensure that they can make the most of this opportunity.

Europe, indeed the world, stands at a crossroads following the pandemic. Challenges like political polarization, economic crisis, climate change and inequality have become even more significant. In the long term, education will play the key role in tackling and hopefully remedying these problems. To that end, educators must ask, how does education prepare the younger generation for a rapidly changing world? No less important, what remains in the modern university to inculcate students with the ethical values and moral outlook that were integral to the original *Artes Liberales* project as well as to the German tradition of *Bildung*? For now, the answer remains: not enough. If students lack moral fortitude, our future politicians, scientists, scholars, and artists are likely to pursue their own self-interest and security rather than the common good. To protect the future of our environment and our democracies, a more enlightened model of higher education is an objective to which we should all be committed.

To some, the liberal arts model represents an elite type of education but in fact it offers the best type of education for the future. As we witness staggering advances in natural sciences and information technology, each young person must first develop his or her own critical mindset in order to navigate a complicated information landscape, one strewn with falsity. Second, the critical mind must be fortified with a sound ethical outlook in response to the growing political and ideological radicalization that seems to polarize and endanger the world in the twenty-first century. The liberal arts model offers the best preparation to face both challenges because it provides not only depth but also breadth of knowledge. And although no education can guarantee the moral and ethical resilience of its graduates, liberal arts is best suited to clarify the moral choices and expose political rot, and to shield its students from extremism of any kind.

Finally, liberal arts education will fulfill its potential only if its presence eventually becomes universal. If it only remains embedded in the United States and spreads in Europe, its utility will be limited. Other parts of the world must appropriate this flexible model of education, adjust it to local conditions, and aim for the same goal

of a stable democratic polity. The reason is that although distinct in origin and focus, liberal arts and liberal democracy share common principles. It is laudable that there are several institutions, schools and individuals in Asia and Africa that promote liberal arts studies as a way to improve the quality of education as well as to prepare the younger generation for a world that can be more democratic and tolerant. It also offers a way to better cooperate among educators because the language of communication would not be strictly scientific, but based on shared values and democratic principles. Even in non-democratic societies, there is a place for liberal arts studies because its graduates can gradually assess what is best for their diverse societies in the future. It would take a concerted effort by educators from around the world to implement comprehensive reform of bachelor studies. Education in Europe, as in many parts of the world, is at a crossroads following the pandemic. Sound undergraduate education would be the first important step to improve education and strengthen democracy.

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Chapter 12

A Partnership for the Common Good: International Christian University in Tokyo and the Japan ICU Foundation in New York



Paul Daniel Hastings

Abstract In the autumn of 1945, months after the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, plans were put in motion in Japan and the United States for the establishment of a new university in Japan. Through dedicated efforts on both sides of the Pacific Ocean, International Christian University (ICU) and the Japan ICU Foundation (JICUF) were incorporated in 1949. ICU was established as an international liberal arts institution committed to peacebuilding and human rights. JICUF's purpose was to raise support for ICU in the United States. This chapter explores the partnership between ICU and JICUF. It begins with a sketch of the history, key people, and accomplishments of the partnership before exploring how the relationship has been revitalized in recent years within a rapidly evolving international landscape. Examples of programs such as the Japan–Ukraine Pathways Program, Rethinking Peace Studies, Global Link, the Syrian Scholars Initiative, and the JICUF Grants program are presented. The chapter concludes with ideas for the future of the partnership and advice for educators and policy makers.

Keywords Japan · International · Global citizenship

12.1 Introduction

International Christian University (ICU) is situated on a densely forested 150-acre campus in the western suburbs of Tokyo. Established in 1949 following the devastation of World War II, ICU was envisioned by its founders as a “University of Tomorrow” where students would learn the values and skills necessary to live a life of service to God and humankind. With its emphasis on human rights, unique English and Japanese bilingual liberal arts curriculum, and international character, ICU is firmly committed to liberal learning as defined by the editors of this volume. While much has been written about ICU (Iglehart, 1964; Nishimura, 2016; Steele,

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2016; Takeda, 2003), not as much attention has been given to the abiding relationship between ICU and the Japan International Christian University Foundation (JICUF), an educational foundation based in New York. The partnership between ICU and JICUF began at the time of ICU's founding and continues over 70 years later. This chapter explores how this relationship has changed over time and what lessons it can impart to those interested in global liberal learning.

The chapter is broken into four sections. The first focuses on the founding and growth of ICU through the early 1990s when JICUF initially closed its doors. This period corresponds with significant geopolitical developments, including the rise and fall of the Cold War and Japan's rapid economic expansion. The section showcases how a group of innovators on both sides of the Pacific sought to rethink education at a critical turning point in the international order. To bring the story to life, brief biographies of two of ICU and JICUF's founders, Hachiro Yuasa and Ruth Miller, are presented. The second section covers the reestablishment of the partnership in the late 1990s through 2015. This period is marked by the reopening of JICUF's office and receipt of a transformational gift from Donald and Mildred Topp Othmer. The period corresponds with the ascendancy of globalization, the rapid growth of the internet, the 9/11 attacks and the subsequent War on Terror, and the rise of China. The final section looks at the evolution of the partnership from 2015 to the present, focusing on how the two institutions have sought creative ways to prepare students to be global citizens who contribute to the common good. This period has been marked by the New Cold War between the United States and China, growing economic inequality, a global rise in nationalism, a worsening climate crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic and most recently the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Within this challenging context, significant accomplishments and innovative programs will be presented that can serve as models of liberal learning for the future. Throughout the chapter, changes in the articulation of core values and interpretations of liberal learning are noted. The chapter concludes with advice for policy makers and practitioners interested in pursuing dynamic global partnerships.

12.2 The Founding and Growth of ICU

The founding of a Christian liberal arts university committed to peacebuilding, human rights and reconciliation following the most devastating war in human history was not guaranteed to succeed. From the beginning, ICU was an experiment in higher education undertaken with the support and involvement of people from a variety of cultural, religious, and national backgrounds. The establishment and continued vitality of ICU is the result of concerted effort by thousands of people in Japan, the United States and beyond.

Those involved in ICU's founding were motivated by a variety of factors. Some were inspired by ICU's potential to shape Japan as a democratic and Christian nation, while others were motivated by ICU's commitment to human rights. Many were inspired by ICU's bilingual liberal arts model and international emphasis. According

to an early ICU professor and historian Kiyoko Takeda Cho (2003), ICU was, “Far ahead of its time,” as it “grappled with the problems involved in the “coexistence of diverse elements,” which humankind as a whole must now face in the twenty-first century” (p. 35). ICU values diversity and dialogue between people of differing worldviews.

Two people of vastly different backgrounds who played an important role in ICU’s founding and growth were ICU’s first President Hachiro Yuasa and JICUF’s long-serving staff member and Executive Director Ruth Miller. Yuasa was raised in a prominent Protestant Christian family in Tokyo and Kyoto. His father was from Gunma Prefecture and was baptized by Joseph Hardy Neesima, the famous educator and founder of Doshisha University in Kyoto who earlier in life was educated at Amherst College in Massachusetts. At the age of 18, Yuasa followed in the footsteps of Neesima and moved to the United States, arriving without a “definite plan and open to new ideas” (Takeda, 2008, p. 26). After three years of farm work in Livingstone, California, he applied and was admitted to Kansas State Agricultural College (now Kansas State University) in 1911. Following this, he pursued a Ph.D. in entomology at the University of Illinois.

After completing his Ph.D. in 1920, Yuasa lectured in the United States before returning to Japan in 1924 to take up a faculty position at Kyoto Imperial University. In 1935 he was invited to become the president of Doshisha University. By this time, Japan’s military was rapidly expanding across Asia and nationalism was spreading within Japan. Yuasa was a committed Christian and pacifist and disagreed strongly with the militarization of Japan. In 1937, Yuasa stood up to the military authorities by refusing demands to remove Christianity from Doshisha’s mission statement. He was labeled a traitor by right-wing factions, leading to his resignation from the presidency of Doshisha (Steele, 2016, p. 23).

The following year, Yuasa joined a group of prominent Japanese Christians in representing Japan at the Madras Christian Conference, the third major worldwide Protestant Christian conference that led to the creation of the World Council of Churches in 1948. After the conference, Yuasa was invited by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to travel with a delegation of Asian and African Christians to the United States. With war looming on the horizon, what was meant to be a six-month stay in the United States was extended to nearly eight years. While thousands of Japanese Americans were being forcibly removed from their homes and placed in internment camps, Yuasa had a guarantor in a close friend named Ruth Seabury. He spent the war under her protection in Boston and New York, and unlike most Japanese citizens, was allowed to travel and give talks about the Christian movement in Japan. Amazingly, he even visited the Japanese American internment camps to console internees. In one speech at a camp, he stated that,

The policy of discrimination and segregation created by the United States is wrong. But this is your mother country, and the day will come when it admits the policy is wrong. When that happens, it will be your duty to take responsibility to live and work as good citizens to make your mother country better (Takeda, 2008, p. 63).

We can glean from this episode that Yuasa was not afraid to speak truth to power and he upheld a strong sense of civic duty and belief in reconciliation, values that he would later bring with him to ICU.

Yuasa returned to Japan following the war and resumed the presidency of Doshisha University. During this time, momentum was building in Japan and the United States to establish a new international and Christian university. Organizers on both sides of the Pacific sought a dynamic and well-known educator to lead the new institution that would become ICU. They reached out to Yuasa, but he initially turned down the request. However, his excitement for ICU grew and he agreed to be ICU's founding President in 1950.

Yuasa brought his life experiences with him to ICU. In his vision for the new university, Yuasa wrote that ICU must be, "international, inter-racial, cross-cultural and co-educational" (Takeda, 2008, p. 99). Yuasa's experiences and his Christian faith led him to instill human rights, peacebuilding, and reconciliation as key values at ICU. His parting message to the twenty-first century sums up his philosophy. It reads, "To live is to love; To love is to understand; To understand is to forgive; To forgive is to be forgiven; To be forgiven is to be saved" (Takeda, p. 153). ICU would not be the institution it is today without Hachiro Yuasa.

Another important person in ICU's first 40 years is Ruth Louise Miller. Miss Miller, as she was known by most, dedicated her entire professional life to ICU, serving JICUF from 1947 to her retirement in 1982. Like Yuasa, Miller came to work at JICUF through a deep Christian commitment and involvement in ecumenical movements. Born and raised in Akron, Ohio, Miller was the first in her family to attend college. She completed her undergraduate education at the University of Akron and earned her M.A. in Religious Education in 1941 from Hartford Seminary. In 1946, Miller moved to New York to join the planning efforts for the World Conference of Christian Youth which was to be held in Oslo, Norway, in the summer of 1947. A major theme of the ecumenical conference was postwar reconciliation. Through her involvement in the conference, her talent and passion came to the attention of the newly established Joint Committee for a Christian University in Japan, and later that year, she was offered a temporary assistant position. The position became permanent in early 1948, and that year the Joint Committee, led by JICUF's first President Ralph Diffendorfer and a group of prominent Church leaders, drafted the charter and prepared the groundwork for JICUF's incorporation. JICUF was officially chartered in the spring of 1949 and was granted 501(c)(3) public charity status as an independent educational foundation in May 1951.

In 1948, Diffendorfer, Miller and the team at JICUF set out to raise \$10,000,000 for ICU by the summer of 1949. While the ambitious goal was not achieved for many years, groundwork was laid for a nationwide campaign. Over the next several years, Miller played a key role in organizing and implementing creative fundraising strategies at JICUF. Examples include a Youth Campaign that garnered support from over 75,000 young people across the United States, a scholarship campaign in which universities that gave at least \$250 received a Japanese cherry tree, and a Friends of ICU campaign, which enlisted support from over 1500 people in 45 states (Roeder, 2003).

Two programs initiated by Miller had an outsized impact on the history of ICU. The first was the Women's Planning Committee (WPC). Membership in the WPC, which became an official committee of JICUF in 1953, was sought from women across the United States. Membership, "peaked in 1968 with nearly 1900 members and 100 sponsors from every state and over thirty foreign countries" (Roeder, 2003, p. 15). Over the years, the WPC fundraised hundreds of thousands of dollars for ICU and raised significant awareness about ICU across the United States and the world.

The second program that had a profound impact on JICUF was called the Fund for the Future. Initiated by Miller in 1972, the fundraising campaign sought pledges of future support, for example by adding JICUF to one's will, a trust, or as a beneficiary of an insurance policy. One hundred and twenty-three people and couples enrolled in the Fund for the Future during the first year. One of the couples was Donald and Mildred Topp Othmer, who pledged 5% of their estate to JICUF. Little did anyone imagine that 5% of the Othmer's estate would end up equating to \$31 million when they passed away in the late 1990s. The Othmer bequest was a seminal moment for JICUF and is discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

As a new institution with limited resources, the need to raise funds dominated the first forty years of ICU and JICUF's partnership. The establishment of ICU attracted widespread attention in the United States, and several public figures were enlisted by JICUF to raise support and awareness during its early years. For example, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt visited the ICU campus in the spring of 1953 to deliver the first commencement address, which focused on ICU's commitment to human rights and its decision to require that every incoming student pledge to uphold the recently adopted Universal Declaration of Human Rights. General Douglas MacArthur and former Ambassador to Japan Joseph Grew co-chaired the fundraising campaign initiated by JICUF, and the Brooklyn Dodger's popular manager Branch Rickey and star Jackie Robinson helped to raise funds for ICU's gymnasium.

Although the ambitious fundraising goals set in the United States took much longer to achieve, the support proved invaluable to ICU's development. For the first decade, JICUF funded many of ICU's operating expenses, including the salaries of non-Japanese faculty. There was also success raising funds for the construction of several buildings, including the library, faculty homes on campus and student dormitories (Iglehart, 1964). However, as the Japanese economic miracle heated up between the 1950s and 1980s, philanthropic interest in Japan waned in the United States. JICUF found it increasingly difficult to raise money for ICU, and the Protestant Denominations that were involved in the early years shifted their focus away from Japan toward international development projects in other parts of the world. With a dwindling bank account and few prospects for future growth, JICUF made the decision to close its doors and a celebration of JICUF's accomplishments was held in 1991. However, a fateful decision was made by a core group of board members to continue to meet annually and file the forms necessary to maintain JICUF's legal status.

12.3 A Focus on Strengthening ICU's Christian and International Dimensions

ICU President Masakichi Kinukawa announced in 1997 that, as part of his internationalization strategy, the university would reopen the JICUF office and cover three quarters of the cost of administrative expenses. Ideas for how ICU would utilize JICUF included helping to manage ICU's university exchange partnerships in the United States, recruiting students, and raising funds. JICUF thus reopened a small office in the Interchurch Center near Columbia University in Manhattan's Morningside Heights neighborhood.

In 1998, a member of the JICUF board received a phone call from a lawyer representing the estates of Donald and Mildred Topp Othmer. While it took several months for the Othmer estate to be settled, JICUF ended up receiving an astonishing \$31 million. This transformational gift was by far the largest donation in the organization's history. The Othmer estate was valued at over \$750 million, and several educational and charitable organizations also received significant bequests (Arenson, 1998).

The Othmers lived a private life in Brooklyn, New York. Donald was a professor of chemical engineering at Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute, and Mildred was involved in charitable organizations. They both hailed from Omaha, Nebraska and were family friends with legendary investor Warren Buffet. Through this connection, they invested \$50,000 in Buffet in the 1960s as he was starting his meteoric investment career. From their seed investment in Buffet, the Othmers were allocated 14,500 shares of Berkshire Hathaway stock in the 1970s at \$45 per share. When Mildred passed away in 1998, the shares were each worth \$77,250 (Arenson, 1998). The only instructions JICUF received from the Othmers were to establish the Othmer Chair in the Natural Sciences at ICU, and "if anything is remaining," to use it for "campus facilities."

Soon after receipt of the Othmer funds, JICUF engaged with ICU to establish the endowed Othmer Chair in the Natural Sciences and began discussing plans for supporting campus facilities. The first Othmer Chair was appointed in 1999 and in the same year JICUF and ICU struck an innovative agreement wherein ICU took out a 20-year mortgage in Japan at a very low interest rate for the construction of the Othmer Library and Global House Dormitory, and JICUF agreed to make annual mortgage payments for the term of the mortgage. Meanwhile, the investment returns on the bulk of the Othmer gift were deemed unrestricted. Between 1999 and 2022, JICUF has provided ICU with over \$22 million in support for campus facilities, the Othmer Chair, scholarships, and other programs. Due to strong returns in the financial markets and prudent management, the balance of JICUF's endowment as of early 2022 was \$42 million, and the fund has shifted from largely restricted to largely unrestricted.

In 2002, David W. Vikner assumed the leadership of JICUF. Vikner had served in senior positions within educational institutions in Asia and the United States, and most recently as the President of the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia. A China expert, Vikner helped ICU grow its relationships with Chinese

universities. The ICU-Nanjing University Program is an example of a project that JICUF and ICU worked on together from 2006 to 2008. Short-term student exchanges were arranged between ICU and Nanjing University to forge friendships and a deeper awareness of both societies. The group of students from China and Japan was tasked with writing and producing a play together, which was subsequently performed at ICU and Nanjing University. While the program was short-lived, it was reported in the international media and led to warm relationships between faculty and students from both institutions (Leow, 2007). It is unfortunate that such collaborations are difficult today with the growing tensions in East Asia and the broader Pacific.

Under Vikner's leadership, JICUF engaged in multiple rounds of strategic planning, and in 2009, JICUF revised its mission statement. The new mission read, "JICUF works with International Christian University, a visionary liberal arts university in Tokyo, Japan, to further strengthen its broadly international and ecumenically Christian dimensions." It was also under Vikner's leadership that JICUF increased its emphasis on fundraising and began a new focus on student recruitment. The staff grew from two fulltime members in 1998 to five fulltime in 2006, when I joined JICUF.

During Vikner's tenure, the relationship between JICUF and ICU was highly centralized. While the staff of JICUF interacted with some colleagues at ICU, particularly related to fundraising and student recruitment, there was little awareness of JICUF among the broader ICU community. During this time, a close working relationship emerged between Vikner and ICU President Norihiko Suzuki, which led to JICUF further supporting the development of ICU's campus facilities. Between 2008 and 2010, JICUF provided \$5 million of support for a new guesthouse and conference center called the Kiyoshi Togasaki Memorial Dialogue House, a new dining hall and three new student dormitories. In addition, in 2003 JICUF launched a Visiting Scholars Program for international researchers and professionals to visit ICU and engage with the community. Scholarship funding was also provided to ICU to distribute to international students.

Vikner often spoke about JICUF's Christian and international focus as a call to bolster ICU's emphasis on peace studies, gender studies, and environmental studies. While some funding was provided to ICU's emerging gender studies and environmental studies programs, peace studies received the most attention. Two programs in particular stand out. The first is the 2012 Aspen Institute Cultural Diplomacy Forum (Aspen Forum) held at ICU. The Aspen Forum brought together 100 people from 20 countries for three days of dialogue on the "Art of Peace-building and Reconciliation." Keynote addresses were given by Sadako Ogata, the former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Olusegun Obasanjo, the former President of Nigeria.

Two faculty members from Rutgers University attended the Aspen Forum, and through discussions with JICUF the contours of a new program emerged. Rethinking Peace Studies, was launched in 2013 as a collaboration between Rutgers, ICU and JICUF. Held over a three-year period, the program consisted of three workshops and a culminating conference. An edited volume called *Rethinking Peace: Discourse,*

Memory, Translation and Dialogue was published in 2019 by Rowman and Littlefield. According to Mustapha Kamal Pasha of Aberystwyth University, “*Rethinking Peace* is a path-breaking book in Peace Studies. Brilliantly exposing the field’s recessive underside, it offers radically new avenues of reflection, engagement, and analysis. The volume is likely to emerge as an indispensable resource for innovative research and pedagogy.”

The period between the reopening of the JICUF office in 1998 and Vikner’s retirement in 2015 was marked by a strong relationship between the leadership of JICUF and ICU, by the continued support of ICU’s campus development, and by an attempt to raise funds and recruit students for ICU. However, fundraising and student recruitment efforts were only mildly successful. Close collaboration between JICUF and ICU proved challenging, and the donor constituency and applicant pool for ICU in the United States remains small to this day.

12.4 A Shift to Global Citizenship Education for the Common Good

In September 2015, I was given the opportunity to succeed David Vikner at the helm of JICUF. A couple of months prior, a leadership retreat was held to discuss how the relationship between ICU and JICUF could be strengthened, and with the encouragement and support of ICU, JICUF embarked on a new path in its work. ICU President Junko Hibiya encouraged JICUF to expand beyond the fields of peace studies, gender studies and environmental studies to support other academic areas. She also suggested JICUF work more directly with ICU faculty, staff, and students.

JICUF launched direct grantmaking to ICU students and faculty in 2016. A newly hired team developed a system to solicit, evaluate, and award grants. Through the grants program, ICU students and faculty apply directly to JICUF for funds to plan and implement projects that align with JICUF’s mission and ICU’s academic, international, and Christian commitments. Between 2016 and 2020, when the grants were put on hold because of the global pandemic, JICUF provided ¥43,041,526 (about 375,500 USD) in support to 70 student and 49 faculty projects. Examples of projects included two students who launched a coding academy in Nepal, a faculty member who led a student research trip to Korea to study technology and education, and an undergraduate research day wherein students share the results of their senior thesis research. The grants program has broadened and deepened the relationship between JICUF and ICU and enabled students and faculty to pursue projects in support of JICUF’s mission.

In 2017, JICUF launched two scholarship programs called the United States Scholars Initiative (USSI) and the Syrian Scholars Initiative (SSI). The USSI scholarship is awarded annually to two US citizens and covers full tuition for four years of undergraduate study at ICU. USSI has helped to raise awareness about ICU among prospective students in the United States. However, most of the applicants to USSI

are students with a preexisting connection to Japan and it is not clear if the program has increased the overall number of applicants to ICU from the United States.

The Syrian Scholars Initiative (SSI) is a full scholarship for Syrian refugees to attend ICU. It was launched out of a deep concern for the plight of refugees and is managed in coordination with Pathways Japan, a refugee support organization based in Tokyo, and ICU. SSI epitomizes JICUF's values and helps to achieve its mission to nurture global citizens. It is the first privately funded scholarship for refugee students to study at a Japanese university and is an example of an emerging strategy known within the refugee support community as complementary pathways. According to UNHCR (2021), "Complementary pathways are safe and regulated avenues that complement refugee resettlement and by which refugees may be admitted in a country and have their international protection needs met while they are able to support themselves to potentially reach a sustainable and lasting solution." As awareness of SSI spread, JICUF was increasingly asked to participate in international efforts to raise awareness about complementary education pathways, and in 2020 JICUF became a founding member of the Global Task Force on Third Country Education Pathways, along with institutions such as the Open Society Foundations, Institute of International Education, and UNESCO.

Another project that JICUF has been supporting since 2014 is Global Link, a professional development summer program in New York City for ICU students. In the first year of the program, five students spent July and August in New York City and were matched with internships at businesses and nonprofit organizations. From 2015 onwards, the program was shortened to three weeks and internships were discontinued. Instead, a variety of activities were planned by the JICUF staff. These included office visits, sector-specific roundtable discussions, networking events, skill development trainings, volunteering, and cultural site visits. Six students participated in 2015, and from 2016 to 2019, 12 students participated. The students have been extremely positive in their evaluations of Global Link, citing the experience of living in New York City and the connections they developed with ICU alumni as impactful outcomes of the program. Some students were challenged by the high level of technical English required to understand complicated fields such as law and finance. One of the greatest benefits of the program has been the close relationships developed between JICUF staff and ICU students.

Much of JICUF's work was put on hold in March 2020 at the start of the global pandemic. The pause provided a chance for reflection and an opportunity to pivot. Strategic planning efforts began in earnest in the Spring of 2020, and a relationship was forged with a professional evaluator to guide an evaluation of JICUF's grantmaking. The JICUF board of trustees adopted the following mission and vision statements in September 2020.

Mission Statement

JICUF's mission is to work with International Christian University to nurture global citizens who contribute to the well-being of humanity.

Vision Statement

JICUF envisions a community of global citizens who actively contribute to a peaceful and sustainable future for humanity. These global citizens are critical thinkers and effective communicators, comfortable traversing cultural and national boundaries. They have a firm ethical compass and a commitment to the common good. They are inspired by ICU's Christian heritage and the universal values of peace, justice, equality, freedom, and love.

While these statements show a continuity with JICUF's past, they also propel JICUF in new directions. It is a shift away from focusing on strengthening ICU's "broadly international" and "ecumenically Christian" dimensions, toward an emphasis on working together with ICU to nurture global citizens who serve the common good.

JICUF utilizes Schattle's (2008) definition of global citizenship as comprising three interrelated concepts of awareness, responsibility, and participation. As he writes, "awareness of the wider world provides the motivation for many self-described global citizens to embark on sustained involvement in society or politics and to begin to take responsibility for a global common good" (Schattle, 2008, p. 32). Furthermore, JICUF identified sustainability, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and peacebuilding as three areas of focus. JICUF considers these themes as core responsibilities of global citizens, and key to the common good.

12.5 The COVID-19 Pandemic and Ideas for the Future

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about a major shift in university education and international exchange. Japanese higher education has been particularly impacted due to the government of Japan's entry ban on international students. During the first half of 2021, only 7078 international students entered Japan, which is an 88.5% decrease from the first half of 2019. While Japan reopened its borders for a brief period in November 2021, the emergence of the Omicron variant led to a quick reversal, and as of early 2022, it remains unclear when Japan will reopen. Meanwhile, Japanese citizens and long-term residents have been able to travel in and out of the country throughout the pandemic. This double standard has led many to criticize the travel ban, and some have raised concerns of xenophobia and a return to the Tokugawa period's policy of *sakoku*, or closed country. The head of the World Health Organization's Health Emergencies Program said he found the travel ban, "hard to understand" from a scientific standpoint, stating, "Does the virus read your passport?"

As we enter the third year of Japan being closed to non-Japanese, JICUF and ICU must consider how to work together to nurture global citizenship within Japan and beyond. What can we do to, as our vision states, cultivate "a community of global citizens who actively contribute to a peaceful and sustainable future for humanity?" One direction we are considering is creating new programming aimed at achieving our mission within the broader Japanese and global societies. Another learning from the pandemic has been the integration of technology into our work.

One program we are considering is the Refugee Scholars Initiative. The idea for the Refugee Scholars Initiative has evolved from our experience with the Syrian Scholars Initiative. In partnership with Pathways Japan, the program will recruit refugee students to travel to Japan for two years of Japanese language studies before pursuing higher education. Unlike the Syrian Scholars Initiative, the Refugee Scholars Initiative will support students who attend any institution in Japan. The long-term goal is to provide a pathway for refugee students to thrive within Japan. In addition to the obvious benefits for the scholars, the program also provides an opportunity for students, teachers, and the broader society to develop cross-cultural understanding through people-to-people diplomacy.

In addition to launching new programming, the COVID-19 pandemic also led JICUF to utilize technology in new ways. As social distancing became paramount, there was a mass adoption of new technologies across society, including within higher education and international exchange. Universities around the world quickly moved from in-person to online teaching and learning. While the sudden transition to virtual learning was challenging for many professors and students, the experience also provided lessons about how technology can be adopted in impactful ways to strengthen the educational experience.

JICUF also incorporated online programming into our work at the start of the pandemic. We launched two online series, one focused on Japan and the Sustainable Development Goals and the other featuring ICU alumni engaged in global careers. Zoom has been the primary tool that we have used to host these activities. We have received strong feedback from participants and the online programming has enabled us to connect with people in meaningful ways during the pandemic. We plan to integrate online programming within our work into the future.

12.6 Conclusion: Lessons Learned and Implications for Policy Makers and Practitioners

There have been many lessons learned from the seventy years of partnership between JICUF and ICU that can be applied by institutions seeking to develop effective international partnerships. The most important lesson is to remain relevant. When ICU was founded, reconciliation with Japan was an issue of public concern within the United States. This enabled JICUF to raise funds and attract supporters. JICUF closed its doors in the early 1990s partly because it was no longer relevant. While receipt of the Othmer gift gave JICUF a second life, it has taken years for JICUF to find its purpose. Remaining relevant is critically important for effective partnerships.

Another lesson is the importance of nurturing trusting relationships between the people involved in the partnership. JICUF has made a deliberate effort to cultivate relationships with colleagues at ICU. Before the pandemic, JICUF staff and board members regularly visited the ICU campus, and we continue to communicate with colleagues at ICU daily via Zoom and email. A third lesson is the importance

of reflection and evaluation. As mentioned above, in 2021 JICUF engaged with a consultant to evaluate the impact of its grantmaking to the ICU community. Many important lessons were learned, and the program has been strengthened as a result. The final lesson is that partnerships will evolve over time. There will be times when the institutions are dependent on each other, and times when the institutions operate more independently.

With the above lessons in mind, this essay concludes with a short list of recommendations for policy makers and practitioners interested in establishing effective international partnerships.

- It is essential to have a shared vision, mission, and values.
- Personal relationships are at the core of all institutional partnerships, and those relationships need to be cultivated and maintained.
- Transparency around financial resources is essential.
- It is important to maintain an openness to change and not be afraid of making mistakes.
- Partner institutions should maintain a focus on the future to remain relevant.
- Cultural differences and diversity should be celebrated as strengths.

While the above recommendations can be applied in a variety of contexts, it should be noted in conclusion that setting up international partnerships between institutions in countries with vastly differing socio-economic circumstances and cultures adds additional complexity and is an area for further research and consideration.

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Chapter 13

Innovative Teaching and Learning Approaches During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case Study of Five Liberal Arts Institutions in East Asia



Guoguo Ke and Youliang Zhang

Abstract Liberal arts education emphasizes student-oriented teaching and learning, placing a high value on close relationships between faculty and students. This interactive teaching and learning mode plays a significant role in facilitating whole-person education. However, given the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, the higher education sector has been forced to adopt online teaching and learning, which typically reduce the effectiveness of personal interactions, thus potentially bringing difficulties especially in liberal arts education. This chapter aims to examine how liberal arts colleges and liberal arts programs within large comprehensive/research universities in Asia innovate student learning experiences when the study mode shifts from face-to-face mode to online. On the basis of the comparative analyses of selected liberal arts institutions and literature review about the implementation on innovating education, the chapter explores how these institutions have adopted innovations to enhance student learning experience but still maintain the liberal arts education tradition. While the return of face-to-face learning and teaching is highly anticipated, the values of online teaching and learning still need to be reimagined and reinterpreted.

Keywords COVID-19 pandemic · Innovation practice · Liberal arts education · Sustainable development · Teaching and learning

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13.1 Introduction

The whole world has been shaken by the abrupt COVID-19 pandemic since the late 2019. The pandemic has unfavorably impacted different industries worldwide, including the higher education sector (Mok et al., 2021). The closure of educational institutions and turn to online classes is one of the major changes during the pandemic (Altbach & de Wit, 2020). Under such changes, COVID-19 is reshaping the model of higher education, and the internet has become a must, not an option, for higher education. Liberal arts education, which emphasizes interpersonal communication, has been severely impacted by COVID-19, and the traditional education model is unsustainable.

Liberal arts education emphasizes student-oriented teaching and learning, placing a high value on close relationships between faculty and students. The interactive teaching and learning mode also plays a significant role in facilitating whole-person education. However, given the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, the higher education sector has been forced to adopt online teaching and learning, which typically reduce the effectiveness of personal interaction and have an especially greater impact on liberal arts education. In view of online teaching going against the traditional philosophy of liberal arts institutions, faculty members in liberal arts programs are the least willing to carry out online teaching. Meanwhile, Adnan and Anwar (2020) demonstrated that compared with traditional learning, online education has difficulty motivating students to engage in class activities because students need face-to-face interaction with their teacher. Whole-person development may be harmed if they are not in close contact with their teachers and peers (Robinson & Kakela, 2006). In particular, whole-person development is one of the key concepts under liberal arts education. Therefore, doubts about the continuation of traditional liberal arts education is easy to understand (Hicks, 2020). Whether the introduction of information technology can effectively make up for the shortcomings of practice has become a challenge that liberal arts education must deal with in the new era. In addition, the shift from face-to-face teaching to online learning poses challenges for teachers and students in terms of their ability to adapt. It also raises concerns about the long-term effectiveness of this pedagogy if it lasts longer than expected (Mok et al., 2021).

This chapter uses five case studies to examine how liberal arts institutions in Asia have attempted to innovate their teaching and learning when most of the teaching activities are forced to go online. To provide a broad background of the study, this chapter first discusses how liberal arts education has risen in Asia and what changes liberal arts institutions have experienced since the pandemic. Then, it presents the five cases and discusses their innovative ways of teaching and learning as responses to COVID-19 to maintain and promote liberal arts education values. On the basis of the analysis of their innovations, this chapter discusses the impact of COVID-19 on liberal arts education. While the return of face-to-face teaching and learning is highly anticipated, the values of online teaching and learning need to be reimagined and reinterpreted.

13.2 Context

13.2.1 *The Rise of Liberal Arts Education in Asia*

Although scholars have not formed a clear concept of liberal arts education, they generally agree that liberal arts education is a non-professional education. Liberal arts education is one of the most important concepts in the American and British higher education systems (Shen, 2017). The development of modern American higher education has experienced a transition from liberal arts education to professional education. Traditional liberal arts colleges are gradually transformed into modern liberal arts colleges or comprehensive universities. However, comprehensive universities have still retained liberal arts education at their core. Comprehensive universities have institutions that implement the liberal arts education model, such as Harvard College at Harvard University (Chi, n.d.). Since the 1960s, liberal arts institutions have gradually lost popularity in the US with the development of research-oriented and comprehensive universities (Ferrall, 2011). Given the anemic funding and attendance rates, the future of small liberal arts colleges in the US looks tenuous (Klebnikov, 2015).

Unlike in the US, the idea of liberal arts education has spread to different countries in Asia and has won the favor of some practitioners in the field of higher education. Some even predict a global renaissance of liberal arts education, observing the rise of liberal arts education in Asia, especially East Asia, where educators are turning to liberal arts education because they are dissatisfied with their educational outcomes (Yang, 2016). Since the twenty-first century, colleges and universities in Asian countries, including China, Japan, South Korea, India, and Singapore, have carried out the reform practice of liberal arts education. The shift toward liberal arts education takes diverse approaches in different societies as well. For example, in preparing students for a rapidly changing and increasingly competitive global environment, China has made a concerted effort to restructure undergraduate education with an emphasis on liberal arts education (Sharma, 2017). Thus, a small number of prestigious academic institutions have begun experimenting with the liberal arts curriculum. Same as the reform of education in mainland China, higher education in Hong Kong aims to avoid overspecialization, and all students are expected to undertake arts-related courses regardless of their major (Sharma, 2017; Yang, 2016). Students are exposed to a variety of subject areas and are motivated to benefit from the whole-person education. In the case of Japan, liberal arts education is encouraged and combined with the technology field to strengthen national development and acquire broad knowledge (Sawa, 2013).

However, given the generally large number of students in Asian universities, difficulties have emerged in implementing small-scale liberal arts education. Typically, East Asian liberal-studies programs function like honors colleges inside larger universities, including Peking University, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Tunghai University, National University of Singapore, and Seoul National University. They all emphasize the small scale of classes, personalized counseling, broad-based

interdisciplinary courses, and deferred major selection, among others (Klebnikov, 2015). Some colleges and universities have also explored more appropriate development paths and established a hybrid model of liberal arts education and professional education (He, 2015).

13.2.2 Liberal Arts Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Before the pandemic, some liberal arts institutions in the US faced the difficult choice of closing or merging due to their low market share or brand recognition (Tobenkin, 2020). Volk and Benedix (2020) also criticize that with the emergence of competing rankings among peer institutions, rising tuition that outpaces income, and growing pre-professionalism, many private liberal arts colleges have deviated from the goals of their founders, thus leading to termination. Zemsky et al. (2020) anticipate that roughly 20% of small-scale liberal arts institutions will have to close their doors in the next five years. The optimal choice for some liberal arts institutions may be to close with dignity at the right time, considering their more painful time during the pandemic.

Like other higher education institutions, liberal arts institutions experienced a period of closures during the COVID-19 outbreak. The adoption of online education is the only way to provide education to students. As one of the characteristics of liberal arts education, interaction between students and their teacher or peer is significant. However, online classes hinder building rapport between teachers and students. Instead, student self-motivation becomes critical to online learning (Boardman et al., 2021). Online classes lead to a sense of disconnection between students and their peers and between students and professors (Otter et al., 2013). Most students believe that face-to-face classes create a sense of community (Conole et al., 2008) while a lack of pleasant interaction between students and instructors can negatively impact learning outcomes (Vaughan & Garrison, 2006).

A survey conducted by Wesley College showed that students were less satisfied with online courses than offline courses, and 38% of students were less confident in acquiring new laboratory skills from the new remote learning format (D'Souza et al., 2020). Similar findings have also been demonstrated in a study conducted by a research team from Lingnan University, in which 63% of respondents considered that the learning effectiveness of online classes is worse compared with face-to-face classes (Xiong & Mok, 2021). Hays (2021) has also pointed out the potential loss not only of experiences, events, or time away from in-person campus experiences but also of liberal arts institutions themselves. However, for most liberal arts institutions, the more common scenario is to promote teaching reform and implement a new management model. Several liberal arts institutions have continued digital experimentation during COVID-19, including the increased use of innovations such

as flipped or inverted classrooms, asynchronous content on course learning platforms, and online discussion boards (Hicks, 2020). One example can be found at Bard College, which has organized a series of virtual events to build up the relationship between the professor and the students and make them even more intimate than before (Becker, 2020). In addition, Lee (2021) proposed four suggestions to ensure that online education is properly operated under the liberal arts education model: (1) innovating the teaching content, (2) improving the evaluation system, (3) diversifying the educational approach, and (4) emphasizing the role of teacher as tutor and lecturer. These studies show that innovative ways of maintaining and promoting interactions between students and teachers as well as student engagement in online learning are crucial for liberal arts education.

13.3 Five Cases

The Alliance of Asian Liberal Arts Universities (AALAU) was founded in November 2017 as a network of respectable liberal arts institutions, including dedicated liberal arts colleges and liberal arts programs/schools residing in comprehensive or research universities in Asia. To understand the challenges faced by the AALAU member institutions during the pandemic and share the best practices in coping with these challenges, a multiple case study was initiated (AALAU, n.d.) in early 2022.

The study included five AALAU member institutions to identify major challenges and their innovative practices during the COVID-19 pandemic. The selected five institutions were NYU Shanghai, China; Lingnan University, HKSAR; Tunghai University, Taiwan; Sophia University, Japan; and Kyung Hee University, Korea. Among the AALAU members, these institutions were shortlisted as cases for the study as they have implemented multiple innovative measures during the pandemic.

Between February and May 2022, the research team closely examined the website of each case institution and analyzed several scholarly papers and evaluation reports on innovative practices in the case institutions. The study does not attempt to provide a panoramic description of the activities carried out by each institution. Instead, it focuses on a few distinctive features of each institution as a liberal arts education provider. Although these liberal arts institutions share some common features and challenges, each has its own concerns and thus need to deal with different challenges during the epidemic, as summarized in Table 13.1.

13.3.1 *NYU Shanghai*

NYU Shanghai is a Sino-US research university founded in 2012 by New York University in the US and East China Normal University in China. Adhering to the philosophy of liberal arts education, NYU Shanghai educates students to become global citizens with an international perspective, cross-cultural communication skills,

Table 13.1 Challenges of promoting teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic

Case institution	Unique feature(s)	Key challenge in teaching and learning during the pandemic
NYU Shanghai	Teachers and students spread all over the world	How to ensure the flexibility of teaching and meet the needs of teachers and students located in different time zones
Lingnan University	Every student needs to be provided with opportunities to study abroad	How to provide students with global learning opportunities
POYA School at Tunghai University	Various residential activities are offered to develop students' abilities and build up the interaction between the teachers and students	How to maintain the teacher–students and peer-to-peer interactions when residential activities are limited
Faculty of Liberal Arts at Sophia University	Creating global connections is emphasized	How to promote collaborative online international learning (COIL)
Humanitas College at Kyung Hee University	Strong emphasis is on improving students' autonomous learning ability considering their needs	How to customize learning to meet individual learning needs

and innovative abilities. The key elements of NYU Shanghai's undergraduate education include a customized curriculum system and an academic path that combines liberal arts and professionalism, a world-class faculty team and an internationally leading faculty ratio per student, a highly internationalized teaching environment, and a world-recognized dual degree certificate from the US and China. The university has nearly 1800 undergraduate and graduate students, half of whom are from China. Students from the US and some 80 other countries represent the other half. Faculty members come from more than 20 countries or regions, and all have academic or working experience in world-class universities (NYU Shanghai, n.d.). Under the influence of the epidemic, how to ensure the flexibility of teaching and meet the needs of teachers and students located in different time zones has become a major challenge that NYU Shanghai must address.

13.3.2 Lingnan University

Lingnan University is a dedicated liberal arts college in Hong Kong. The university's history dates back to 1888, when the forerunner, the Christian College in China, was founded in Guangzhou, and to 1967, when the institution, as Lingnan College, was re-established in Hong Kong and renamed Lingnan University in 1999. Lingnan's liberal arts education has some key elements, including a broad-based curriculum,

close staff-student relationship, fully residential campus, rich out-of-class learning experiences, active community service, multi-faceted workplace experience, strong alumni and community support, and global learning opportunities (Lingnan University, n.d.). In particular, Lingnan University is committed to providing students with global learning opportunities. Hence, it has established partnerships with 250 higher education institutes in over 45 countries and regions. Leonard K. Cheng, the president of Lingnan University, noted that liberal arts education is not just about the academic curriculum but also about soft skills that in large part are developed outside the classrooms and even away from campuses (Cheng, 2021). COVID-19 has hindered international academic exchanges, and the number of students going abroad has dropped sharply. Only 280 Hong Kong university students went on exchange programs in 2020–21, 95% fewer than the figure in 2019–20 (Yiu, 2022). The major challenge for Lingnan during the pandemic has been how to offer its students with opportunities to experience global learning.

13.3.3 POYA School at Tunghai University

Tunghai University, which was founded in 1955, is the first university that offered liberal arts education in Taiwan. Like other liberal arts institutions, the university emphasizes the close interaction between teachers and students and the spirit of intellectual freedom and holistic education (Tunghai University, n.d.). In particular, the establishment of POYA School at Tunghai in 2008 builds on the core value of liberal arts education for students and aims to revitalize the spirit of innovation. The university follows the four principles of education: service to the community, broad-based education, small class sizes, and residential learning. Students from 34 different departments and programs at the university are brought together by POYA School to take part in cross-disciplinary learning. The learning in POYA School not only pays attention to general education to balance over-developed professional education but also emphasizes residential learning and service learning. Residential life in POYA School is one of the essential components of a liberal arts education. Student learning is facilitated by educational activities provided by the residential hall and the interaction between the residential tutor and student. POYA School students are assigned to 15 families with a teacher–student ratio of about 1:15. Each family has a tutor who is responsible for guiding students’ lives, schoolwork, careers, and other projects. However, given the impact of COVID-19, students and teachers have been facing difficulties in gathering and organizing for various activities, thus becoming among the major challenges of POYA School.

13.3.4 Faculty of Liberal Arts at Sophia University

Sophia University is a Jesuit-based private Catholic university founded in 1913 and located in the center of Tokyo, Japan (Sophia University, n.d.). The university offers a variety of academic programs and is devoted to being an institution that is innovative and globally oriented. Since its inception in 1949, the university has offered a pioneering English-taught program at the Faculty of Arts in Japan. For over 50 years, the Faculty of Liberal Arts at Sophia University has been providing high-quality international education in English in Japan. As a liberal arts faculty, the faculty aims to train students as well-rounded individuals who are capable of thinking for themselves and verbalizing their thoughts to contribute to society (Sophia University, n.d.). To continue to meet the demand of establishing and expanding a global network, the faculty has explored the possibility of collaborative online international learning (COIL) with partner institutions since the pandemic began.

13.3.5 Humanitas College at Kyung Hee University

Kyung Hee University, founded in 1949, is a private comprehensive university located in Seoul, South Korea. Humanitas College has made significant progress in college-level liberal arts education since its start in 2011. Having been founded as a liberal arts college, Humanitas College emphasizes the transition from education to learning, which encourages the next generation to develop inventive and autonomous ways to move their future forward, as well as cope with the uncertainty. Under this student-oriented policy, the college offers a number of courses that meet both students' and society's demands. In response to the changes in COVID-19, the college switched all classes to online, adopting Cisco Webex and Google Classroom as the main tools for online students. Since the pandemic, it has strived to customize learning in a sustainable manner to prepare students for the new normal, which is regarded as a challenge.

13.4 Findings: Innovative Approaches to Liberal Learning During the Pandemic

The five cases section above briefly highlighted the challenges faced by the five liberal arts institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic. This section discusses the findings of our analyses on how the institutions have tackled the challenges in response to the changes in teaching and learning environments. Although all five cases are liberal arts institutions, pedagogical approaches to liberal arts education during the pandemic differ widely in their practices. Table 13.2 summarizes each institution's unique approach to address its key challenge listed in Table 13.1.

Table 13.2 Innovative liberal arts education during the pandemic

Case institution	Unique approach to the key challenge
NYU Shanghai	Encouraging teachers to be flexible in selecting teaching methods Building capacity for flexible teaching via teaching seminars
Lingnan University	Creating virtual exchange programs with more choices Offering short-term online academic conferences
POYA School at Tunghai University	Strengthening problem-based learning in online classes Organizing online activities for more frequent interactions
Faculty of Liberal Arts at Sophia University	Promoting COIL to enrich student global learning experience
Humanitas College at Kyung Hee University	Integrating competency-based education in online education Offering short-term online cultural exchanges

13.4.1 Promoting Flexible Pathways for Online and Blended Teaching

During the epidemic, China implemented strict border control policies, and foreign teachers and students who could not enter China were stranded in their home countries. Half of the students at NYU Shanghai are from countries other than China, and the teachers are from more than 20 countries and regions. That is, NYU Shanghai students and teachers are distributed around the world and in different time zones. In an online learning environment during the pandemic, teaching at a specific time cannot meet the actual needs of each teacher and student at NYU Shanghai. Thus, NYU Shanghai provides teachers and students with the greatest degree of teaching and learning freedom. Teachers have the flexibility to choose their own teaching methods, including live teaching, recorded teaching, or a combination of the two. For example, some teachers opt to record lecture videos or develop courseware with audio commentary in advance. In such courses, teachers can conduct real-time online Q&A sessions with students at the agreed time (Wang et al., 2020).

13.4.2 Building Teachers' Capacity for Flexible Teaching

To encourage teachers to promote flexibility in teaching and carry out various forms of teaching practices, NYU Shanghai has offered capacity-building opportunities by organizing teaching seminars. The main focus of 2020 teaching seminars was

on *innovative teaching methods during COVID-19*, and that of 2021's was on *integrating classroom teaching in the post-epidemic era*. In one seminar, NYU Shanghai invited some teachers to share their experience in the design of course content and assignments, the application of teaching tools, and the integration of course resources in online education. An interview with a staff member at the Center for Teaching and Learning Development (CTL) at NYU Shanghai revealed that "For teachers, changing teaching habits involves taking many risks, and experimenting with other teaching methods can be a lot of pressure. NYU Shanghai holds the teaching seminar to encourage teachers to try new things and be bold" (NYU Shanghai, 2020).

13.4.3 Creating Virtual Exchange Programs with More Choices

Lingnan has set up the student exchange program (SEP), offering students a valuable opportunity to "engage the world" and to study in our partner institutions in overseas countries or Mainland China. Before COVID-19, over 85% of students had international exposure through semester-long student exchanges or shorter study programs in summer and winter, often supported with exchange scholarships and stipends (Lingnan University, n.d.). With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Lingnan had to find a way to incorporate the international dimension into the curriculum system to continue to expand students' international horizons. Lingnan's approach to this challenge was to use information and communications technology (ICT) to promote cross-border collaboration via virtual exchange programs and move offline exchange activities online with partner universities (Lingnan University, 2021). As a result of this effort, Lingnan students had 11 virtual exchange programs during the summer term 2020, seven virtual exchange programs in the first semester of the 2020–21 academic year, and 14 virtual exchange programs in the second semester of the same academic year, thus providing students with a wide variety of programs (Lingnan University, 2022).

13.4.4 Adding Short-Term Opportunities for International Exchanges

During the pandemic, Lingnan provided increased opportunities for students to attend short-term international academic conferences, which expanded the international dimension of Lingnan's liberal arts education. An interview with Lingnan's VP clarified that Lingnan's main purpose of organizing online academic conferences is to help students expand their international horizons while saving their time and travel costs. As a result of this effort, compared with before COVID-19, the number of international academic conferences held by the School of Graduate Studies of Lingnan

University during the epidemic has increased by at least 50%. Lingnan was able to invite renowned busy scholars more easily to share their cutting-edge academic research online without worrying too much about their travel time, accommodations, and cultural differences. Mok (2021) reports that online academic conferences allow more students to be exposed to academic exchanges and thus benefit from those online experiences.

Humanitas College at Kyung Hee University, realizing the importance of fully utilizing ICT for its liberal arts education (Kyung Hee University, 2020), also developed a short-term, online cultural exchange program with the National Taiwan University to refute the argument that if face-to-face teaching ceases to be an integral part of university education, then students miss out on the wider benefits of multicultural education, including cultural gains (Bush, 2020). This short-term program was designed around the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations and Taiwanese cuisine culture, covering a wide range of topics over the period of two weeks. Students from Taiwan and South Korea both participated in this cultural exchange online. The results of this program demonstrated that the online mode does not limit the communication of students and it also establishes a closer connection than ever before, thus opening up new possibilities for online short-term learning programs.

13.4.5 Strengthening Problem-Based Learning in Online Classes

As any other universities around the globe, Tunghai University had to adopt online classes when the pandemic began. To provide an innovative and interactive teaching and learning method during the pandemic, POYA School at Tunghai adopted a problem-based learning approach to online education. Moreover, the school encouraged students to be responsible for their own learning and teachers to change their role from sage on the stage to guide on the side. In problem-oriented learning, teachers are no longer eager to deliver the content of the course to students but design problems according to learning objectives. The shifting role of POYA teachers in problem-based online classes allowed students to participate more actively in discussions with each other in small groups to develop solutions and build the required knowledge (Tunghai University, n.d.). The enhancement of problem-oriented learning in online education has also been effective. Berry and Kitchen (2020) report that this innovative approach has cultivated the motivation for self-study or independent study, thus facilitating the learning progress during the pandemic in which home-based learning plays a dominant role.

13.4.6 Establishing Frequent and Unique Connections Online

POYA School's other approach to strengthening teacher–student and student–student interactions during the pandemic was to organize various talking and sharing sessions online more frequently and in a unique way. A professor at Tunghai points out that “connect” or “communicate” is a verb that rightly captures the essence of the university's liberal arts education during the pandemic (Po-Ya School Tunghai University, n.d.). POYA's online talks and sharing sessions aimed to facilitate the connections between teachers and students and thus enhance their communications. One example of such sessions is an online ceremony for the graduates, where Microsoft Teams was used to enable teachers, students, and parents to participate in the event at home. The recitation of the *Liberal Arts Manifesto* by the manifesto representatives was an integral part of the ceremony, and the online blessing ceremony introduced an innovative model in which a video of all students reading the *Liberal Arts Manifesto* at home was shown. Unlike the previously formalized ceremony, this online one with a creatively edited video made the participants feel more closely connected (Tunghai University, 2021).

13.4.7 Promoting Collaborative Online International Learning

Considering difficulties in expanding global learning opportunities during the pandemic, Sophia integrated COIL, a pedagogical approach to allow students in Japan the opportunity to connect with overseas students using ICT tools (Sophia University, n.d.) in its online education. The university hopes that COIL not only create globally connected educational opportunities but also strengthen multifaceted student mobility programs that leverage resources from partner institutions and local communities. Furthermore, the adoption of COIL is expected to eliminate inequalities for students in developing countries. To sustain well-rounded development for its students coming from different backgrounds, the Faculty of Liberal Arts at Sophia University has promoted a wide range of COIL activities with partner institutions and encouraged its students to participate actively in such activities. For example, an online leadership program in collaboration with Gonzaga University in the US was organized as a COIL activity (Sophia University, 2021). Adedoyin and Soykan (2020) reveal that Sophia's COIL is considered a novel approach that has provided a sustainable global online environment for international student communication and learning.

13.4.8 Competency-Based Education

Since Kyung Hee University in Korea increasingly relied on online education, Humanitas College has introduced competency-based education in its curriculum (Kyung Hee University, 2020), thus shifting the role of the teacher from transmitter of knowledge to re-creator with a focus on coaching instead of teaching. As a result, students are no longer reliant on their lecturers for instruction. Teachers are in charge of providing direction, coaching, and assistance to students while they work to accomplish classroom assignments independently at home (Cheon et al., 2020). Competency-based education allows students to obtain credits at their own pace and proficiency, without worrying about the duration of the class or learning time. Knowledge transfer is no longer the dominant event during the class, and class discussion becomes the main exercise to test student competency. To ensure that the class discussion goes smoothly, students are given course materials and lecture recordings before the class so that they can gain a sense of what to expect. Under competency-based education, meeting the needs of teachers and students for personalized learning and improving students' autonomous learning ability is the priority. However, the effects of Kyung Hee's competency-based education on liberal learning during the pandemic have yet to be examined.

13.5 Conclusions and Lessons Learned

During the pandemic, all five liberal arts institutions gave full play to the advantages of online technologies. Rather than simply imitating typical on-site classes in the online mode, the institutions discussed above came up with innovative ideas to facilitate students' liberal learning. They insisted on introducing various online activities and encouraging students to participate in them to strengthen the whole-person development of students. They also sought to develop students' capacity to connect to others, interact with their peers, and build constructive social skills, which are critical components of liberal learning experiences. Diversifying teaching methods are providing rapid learning, reducing learning costs, improving learning quality, and increasing participation rates. In particular, the PBL of POYA School at Tunghai provides an approach to lead students' thinking about the problem and further drive their learning motivation to rapidly achieve the effect of learning. Lingnan University and Humanitas College at Kyung Hee University offer an online exchange that reduces the physical learning costs and increases the participation rate so that more students have an opportunity to engage in the programs. Innovative education by promoting international collaboration by Sophia University also represents a form of sustainability for online education. Moreover, we conclude our chapter with the following lessons learned from the five case institutions:

13.5.1 Adapt to External Changes

With the changes in the external environment, liberal arts institutions struggle to remain the same. In the past decade, the widespread promotion of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) has sparked heated discussions about the future of higher education institutions (HEIs). Through the discussions, people not only realized the advantages of the low cost and large scale of online education but also highlighted the value of close teacher–student interactions and whole-person development via liberal arts education. COVID-19 has forced HEIs, including liberal arts institutions, to move online. Volk and Benedix (2020) argue that we should create a type of liberal arts education that works for the students who need it the most. Cheng (2021) stated that a large number of the workforce under the threat of automation need to go back to college to retool themselves, and some cannot attend university full-time. Liberal arts institutions need to address the needs of these unconventional students, perhaps by offering online or blended courses and also co-curricular and extra-curricular learning activities for these part-time students who cannot live in the dormitories. To survive and thrive, liberal arts institutions must adapt to changes in the external environment and respond to the needs of different types of students in a timely manner.

13.5.2 Balance ICT Adoption and Face-To-Face Experience

The five institutions discussed above have adopted flexible and diverse measures to respond to the epidemic, not only to reduce the negative impact of COVID-19 on liberal arts education but also to reshape or optimize traditional liberal arts education through the use of ICT. Their cases tell us that liberal arts institutions urgently need to use ICT to improve students' liberal learning outcomes and learning experiences. Fortunately, the large-scale use of ICT during the epidemic has changed people's negative attitudes toward the application of technology in teaching. Although the application of ICT in liberal arts education is promising, online communications between teachers and students may not be enough to replace the subtle influence of face-to-face contact (Cheng, 2021). As Bowen (2014) argues, anyone who benefits from direct interaction with outstanding teachers can attest to how inspiring these experiences are and how these teachers change students' lives.

13.5.3 Improve Stakeholder Knowledge and Capacity

As seen in NYU Shanghai's teaching seminars for teacher capacity building and Tunghai University's enhancement of students' awareness and skills for self-directed learning, liberal arts institutions should help their teachers, students, and other

stakeholders develop new knowledge and skills for innovative ways of teaching and learning and mobilize them in implementing such innovations. Reimers (2021) suggests five ways for capacity building: (1) develop knowledge and skills of all those working in an institution, (2) align and reconfigure roles and responsibilities in the institution for an integrated effort for student development, (3) build partnerships with other institutions, (4) leverage parents and members of the community, and (5) create networks of institutions. In addition, the outcome of online education is highly associated with students' learning ability. However, according to a survey conducted by Lingnan University (Li et al., 2021), the score of freshmen in 2020 in self-management learning ability and environmental adaptability is lower than in 2019. It is a challenge for students to become independent learners without the guidance of teachers. Therefore, it is necessary to cultivate stakeholders to be aware of the challenges students face and to further improve students' self-learning ability.

13.5.4 Evaluate and Revise

One weak point that we realized while analyzing the five cases is the lack of rigorous evaluation on the effects of innovations. To revise and improve any innovative approaches or reforms, we need evidence to show the actual effects, both positive and negative, of each approach or reform. Not all pedagogical reforms can achieve the expected results. We will need to measure the effects of each innovation or reform at various stages and from different perspectives. For such undertaking, we recommend well-designed and systematically carried-out evaluation studies for the further development of innovative liberal arts education.

Acknowledgements This chapter writing is supported by the Hong Kong Scholars Program (Grant No. XJ2020008), and 2019 Beijing higher education undergraduate teaching reform and innovation program (Fund No. 162).

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Part III
Toward the Future

Chapter 14

Crisis Leadership in Liberal Arts Colleges



Ralph A. Gigliotti

Abstract In a world that might be described as both increasingly fragmented and interconnected, liberal arts colleges serve an important purpose. Like all institutions of higher education, leaders of liberal arts colleges must monitor, prepare for, and learn from a wide array of institutional and environmental challenges that might threaten one's mission, some of which might be characterized as crises. This chapter provides a snapshot of potential crises facing liberal arts colleges—both those that are unique to specific schools and others that reflect the more systemic issues across the higher education landscape. The chapter continues with an overview of theory-informed principles for effective risk and crisis prevention, management, and communication during the multiple phases of organizational crisis. Advocating for a values-driven approach to crisis leadership that reinforces and reflects the unique mission of liberal arts colleges, this chapter concludes with potential strategies for policy leaders and practitioners to consider as they triage immediate needs and engage in strategic, long-term, and sustainable development for the future of these institutions.

Keywords Organizational crisis · Liberal arts · Crisis leadership · Higher education leadership

14.1 Introduction

In a world that might be described as both increasingly fragmented and interconnected, liberal arts colleges serve an important purpose. The complexities of the current moment demand a cross-disciplinary education that equips students with a global perspective. As Pasquerella (2019) writes, “fostering student success and preparing the next generation of leaders to thrive amid such vast uncertainty requires creating the foundations for adaptability, flexibility, and innovation—the very skills engendered by a liberal education” (p. v). The global response to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic serves as a reminder of our shared and inextricably

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© The Author(s), under exclusive license to Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2023
I. Jung and K. H. Mok (eds.), *The Reinvention of Liberal Learning around the Globe*,
Crossing Cultures: Liberal Learning for a World in Flux,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-8265-1_14

linked connections with one another, while also highlighting the systemic risks of globalization as it relates to the rapid spread of a contagious virus.

Leaders of liberal arts colleges and universities are no strangers to crisis. A scan of news headlines regarding this subject paint a picture of a system under siege: “The Liberal Arts May Not Survive the 21st Century,” “The Constant Crisis of the Liberal Arts,” and a widely used headline, “Liberal Arts Colleges in Crisis.” To be sure, the challenges facing liberal arts colleges and universities are extensive, and the COVID-19 pandemic has in many ways accentuated these challenges. Declining student enrollment, increased financial pressures, and existential questions regarding the future of the residential campus experience have the potential to threaten the work of liberal arts institutions; yet, as discussed further in this chapter, crisis lies in the eye of the beholder, and many may not agree with this broad characterization of the sector.

Like all institutions of higher education, leaders of liberal arts colleges must monitor, prepare for, and learn from a wide array of institutional and environmental challenges that might threaten one’s mission, some of which might be characterized as crises. This chapter provides a snapshot of potential crises facing liberal arts colleges—both those that are unique to specific schools and others that reflect the more systemic issues across the higher education landscape. The chapter continues with an overview of theory-informed principles for effective risk and crisis prevention, management, and communication during the multiple phases of organizational crisis. Advocating for a values-driven approach to crisis leadership that reinforces and reflects the unique mission of liberal arts colleges, this chapter concludes with potential strategies for policy leaders and practitioners to consider as they triage immediate needs and engage in strategic, long-term, and sustainable development for the future of these institutions.

14.2 Liberal Arts Education Backdrop

The American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), in collaboration with Hanover Research, released the results of a survey administered in Fall 2020 in a report entitled “Campus Challenges and Strategic Priorities in a Time of Change: A National Survey of Campus Stakeholders” (Finley, 2020). This report details many of the significant challenges facing colleges and universities. Of the various challenges detailed in the report, these five challenges were cited most frequently: financial constraints (74%), recognizing and overcoming persistent inequities (46%), capacity-building for institutional change/transformation (37%), articulating the value of the liberal arts for career preparation (30%), and communicating the overall value of liberal education (24%). As we broaden this scope to consider the international landscape of liberal arts colleges and universities, many of these same challenges take center stage. The expansion of liberal education programs beyond the United States is still in its infancy, with a study from Boston College’s Center for International Higher Education noting that almost 60% of non-U.S. liberal education programs

were started since 1990 (Godwin, 2015). In addition to the challenges noted above, the goals of a liberal education may often conflict with the political dynamics of the country, which can position college and university leaders in precarious positions.

Despite the unique priorities, intentions, and approaches that one might find in institutions dedicated to a liberal education, these colleges and universities are subject to the same types of disruptions as any other postsecondary institution across the globe. In some cases, these disruptions—both those that are internally generated and externally imposed—may be viewed as crises. Broadly defined in the literature, a crisis is “a specific, unexpected, and nonroutine, event or series of events that create high levels of uncertainty and simultaneously present an organization with both opportunities for and threats to its high-priority goals” (Ulmer et al., 2018, p. 7). Seeger and Ulmer (2001) describe crises as “high impact events that often strip an organization to its core values” (p. 374), and as Fink (1986) acknowledges, crises might constitute “a turning point, not necessarily laden with irreparable negativity but rather characterized by a certain degree of risk and uncertainty” (p. 15). Crises have the potential to tear at the fabric of an institution, and in addition to causing fear and uncertainty, these moments of exigency can often serve as accelerators for change, renewal, and growth.

As we take stock of recent high-stakes events across the global higher education landscape, some are localized to one institution—consider, for instance, the active shooter situation, the highly publicized dismissal of a senior official, or the admissions scandal at any given institution. One might also consider specific examples outside of the United States, including the court-mandated bankruptcy reorganization of the state-owned Peking University Founders Group (Juanjuan et al., 2021); the scandal involving the falsification of academic achievements of former South Korean Minister of Justice, Cho Kuk, to gain admission to Korea University in Seoul (Chung, 2019); or the resignation of Austrian minister, Christine Aschbacher, following allegations of plagiarism of her university work (Bailey, 2021). In other cases, such as the global COVID-19 pandemic or the 2007–2008 financial crisis, the burden for responding to and navigating the emergency is shared across different institutions. Taking a step back from these specific instances, however, there remains some debate over whether and to what degree an event, incident, or emergency, rises to the level of crisis. The disruption caused by deadly natural disasters, active shooters, rampant sexual abuse scandals, or cases of academic integrity and plagiarism at one or more institution leads to a widespread recognition of the event(s) as a crisis of significance for the institution and its leaders. However, as will be noted in the pages ahead, the lens of social construction helps us to think about the wide array of other events or situations that become crises based on how we come to interpret, construct, and describe them. Furthermore, the wide array of stakeholders who are directly and indirectly impacted by crisis situations are actively involved in elevating situations to the level of crisis. As described further in Gigliotti (2020a), both leaders and internal and external organizational stakeholders wander through crises, render crises meaningful, and elevate crises through our communicative engagement during these periods of unrest.

For leaders in higher education, including those engaged in leading liberal arts colleges and universities across the world, the themes of preparation, perception, and principles can serve as a useful guide for making sense of, responding to, and learning from these moments of disruption. The sections to follow will briefly explore each of these themes and explore the linkages to the liberal arts college setting. Building upon the following themes, a set of guiding questions will be shared that could serve as a guide for leaders and policy makers across the liberal arts education landscape.

14.3 Three Themes for Effective Crisis Leadership Practice

14.3.1 *Preparation*

Despite a shared commitment to learning, leadership training and development, particularly within the context of crisis, has not historically been a priority for colleges and universities beyond the most senior levels of our institutions (Ruben et al., 2021). There are many explanations for this absence of adequate leadership preparation across higher education, including the reliance on on-the-job training, the tendency to view disciplinary or technical expertise as a sole predictor of leadership excellence, and perhaps even the treatment of leadership or administrative work as the “dark side” of the academy.

There was a time when crises on college and university campuses were relatively rare and episodic. Much has changed, and it has changed quite rapidly. Rather than being isolated incidents requiring the exclusive attention of presidents, chancellors, or communication professionals, the proliferation of crises across campuses means that crisis leadership has now become fundamental to the work of university personnel across levels, disciplines, and institutions (Gigliotti, 2019). Preparing leaders at all levels of our institutions to engage in the work of crisis leadership will be critical as we learn from the current exigencies facing institutions of higher education and adequately prepare for those moments of discord and disruption that inevitably lie ahead.

An initial approach to crisis preparation might involve an identification of the types of crises that could impact one’s unit, department, or institution. Some examples of widespread and perennial crises that Mitroff et al. (2006) highlight in their writing include grade tampering; the alteration of key files and student records; computer hacking; major fires and explosions; student unrest; civil disturbances; confrontations, sometimes violent, between students of different political, religious, and ideological viewpoints; ethical breaches by top administrators, faculty, and students; the fraudulent use of tutors by student athletes; and the stealing of body parts from university medical schools (p. 61). Other crisis types that are germane for institutions of higher education are depicted in Table 14.1. The wide range of crisis types included in this table is the result of a content analysis of references to “crisis” from a five-year period of higher education news coverage (Gigliotti, 2019).

Table 14.1 Higher education crisis types (adapted from Gigliotti, 2019)

Crisis type	Example
Academic crisis	Debate over tenure, widespread plagiarism or academic fraud, or significant violations of academic integrity
Athletics crisis	Child abuse scandal and incidents of hazing
Clinical crisis	Physical malpractice in academic health center
Financial or business crisis	Significant decrease in state appropriations
Human resources crisis	Employee crime and issues surrounding hiring and firing of employees
Leadership or governance crisis	Conflict between state legislature and university leadership
Natural disaster	Flood, tornado, or hurricane
Public health crisis	Pandemic or outbreak
Public safety crisis	Active shooter, sexual assault, suicide, or death
Racial or identity conflict	Campus unrest due to racial or identity tensions with the community or acts of intolerance by any campus stakeholder
Student affairs crisis	Mental health crisis, controversial speaker, or student code of conduct violations
Technological and facilities crisis	Water main break, chemical spill, widespread power outage, or significant damage to university infrastructure

Looking more specifically at liberal arts institutions, recent events that might be perceived as crises include the following: Yale-NUS, Singapore's first liberal arts college, is closing (Sharma, 2021), American University of Nigeria is working through a workforce reduction of approximately 400 staff (Nan, 2020), non-state armed groups are threatening violence across educational institutions in parts of sub-Saharan Africa (Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, 2020), faculty and students who speak up against the government are facing censorship in China (McLaughlin, 2021), and student activists at Haverford, Bryn Mawr, and Swarthmore Colleges in the United States are staging protests requesting institutional changes to account for oppressive systems that marginalize various populations (Anderson, 2020).

Crises are not new to colleges and universities; however, changes in technology, the emergence of social media and the 24/7 news cycle, increasing dependence on alternative sources of revenue beyond government and taxpayer support, and evolving expectations and perceptions among key stakeholders make the subject of crisis leadership in higher education one of increased relevance and urgency (Gigliotti, 2022). As crises continue to grow in magnitude, frequency, and complexity (Helsloot et al., 2012), it is incumbent on leaders across the academic enterprise to consider both the unique organizational dimensions that leave higher education vulnerable to such exigencies and the implications for the scholarship and practice of crisis leadership in higher education.

In addition to taking note of the types of crises that one might encounter when leading a unit, department, or institution, leaders at all levels of the institution should

also take the time to consider the individuals with whom one must collaborate in responding to any of the aforementioned crises, the initial strategies one would hope to enact when faced with any of these crisis types, and the appropriate distribution of responsibilities. Prior to the crisis, appropriate preparation steps would also include a comprehensive review of the institution's crisis management plans and emergency management materials, the development and refinement of appropriate campus protocols, the formation of a diverse emergency response team, and the testing of one's response through tabletop simulations or drills.

At the conclusion of an incident or emergency, during what might be characterized as the post-crisis stage, preparation can commence in anticipation of the next crisis, including a debrief with one's crisis management team and key stakeholder partners, and the completion of an after-action analysis to explore lessons learned and areas in need of attention. Leaders should also use this time to encourage learning throughout the organization by broadly sharing these lessons learned to inform how one's unit, department, and institution might address future crises, and by also soliciting input from stakeholders regarding individual pearls of insight gleaned from the crisis. Finally, depending on the scope of the event or series of events, those most directly impacted by the crisis will need an opportunity to heal—and this process of renewal and rejuvenation will often look different for each crisis. No two crises are identical, and the process by which individuals learn from each crisis will also vary (Gigliotti & O'Dowd, 2021).

14.3.2 Perception

There are some situations, such as the previously mentioned active shooter incident or the cascading impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, that are widely understood as "crises." There is much agreement that crises disrupt and derail organizational practices, threaten individual and institutional reputations, and require rapid responses. However, from a social constructivist vantage point, crises lie in the eye of the beholder, and it is incumbent on formal and informal leaders to monitor potential issues that might develop into crises of significance, solicit input from stakeholders who may exhibit competing perceptions of what constitutes an organizational crisis, and engage in practices that reinforce, reflect, and reveal one's individual values and those held in regard by the organization during times of perceived crisis (Estes, 1983; Gigliotti, 2020a; Grint, 2005; Spector, 2019). Complicating the work of crisis leaders within the context of higher education—a sector with an abundance of key stakeholders—each group may possess different and at times competing perceptions of crisis. This perspective is echoed by Voss and Lorenz (2016) in their description of a constructivist understanding of crisis as one that "privileges not the objective threat but rather stakeholders' *perception of the situation as a crisis*. Regardless of whether purportedly 'objective' criteria have been fulfilled, a crisis is said to exist when a certain situation is regarded as critical from the involved actors" (p. 48, emphasis in

original). Incidents and emergencies happen, but crises are created through communication—and it is through communication that they must be addressed (Gigliotti, 2019).

Given that crises are perceived and defined differently by a wide array of institutional stakeholders—of which there are many in higher education—leaders must seriously consider the ways in which potential crises are perceived by internal and external constituent groups. Individual perceptions matter, and as socially constructed phenomena, crises exist if others perceive the existence of crisis. The failure to respond meaningfully to these events of perceived crisis has the potential to erode the trust and credibility of leaders; complicate future leadership decisions and actions; and perhaps even amplify, elevate, and escalate the situation to a level of heightened concern. Many say that liberal arts colleges are in crisis. But leaders might ignore those perceptions or minimize the extent of the risk if they have enough applicants or avoid immediate threats. As evidenced by the closure of Concordia University Portland or Green Mountain College in Vermont—liberal arts institutions in the United States—the institution might fail to “execute sound strategies in the face of challenges” (Seltzer, 2020).

14.3.3 Principles

Crises are disorienting and unwieldy events for an organization and its leaders. These often senseless and complicated moments become crucible experiences for those with leadership responsibility (Gigliotti, 2016; Koehn, 2018; Stern, 2009). It is in the darkness and chaos of crisis where values-based leadership becomes most critical, most visible, and most desired (Gigliotti, 2019). Recognizing, endorsing, appreciating, communicating, and behaving in accordance with the core values of an institution are important during times of normalcy and stability. When responding to crises, it is essential for leaders to rely on these shared values and principles as a guide, an anchor, and a source of stability. Crises threaten individual and organizational reputations, but reacting to these challenging moments in ways that are purely centered on preserving and protecting one’s reputation is both short-sighted and problematic. Rather, effective crisis leadership involves responding in ways that reflect and reinforce the mission and core values of an institution and acknowledge the significance of the crisis on those individuals most directly impacted.

Acting in accord with core values could enhance one’s reputation, yet these values have the potential to be undermined or downplayed when responding to crises in ways that exclusively focus on preserving reputation. In some cases, leaders and institutions may feel pressured to act in ways that are incongruent with these espoused values due to the time pressures imposed by the crisis, or under conditions of stress and stress-induced “tunnel vision.” For some, a restricted focus on preserving reputation can lead to acts of egregious behavior, such as active attempts to conceal the truth. Any attempt to deemphasize sincere concern for those most impacted by crises may

limit dialogue, stifle learning, and stall the necessary renewal and healing that are necessary during times of crisis (Gigliotti, 2022).

Liberal arts colleges and universities are values-based organizations—with a common emphasis on freedom of thought and expression, global education opportunities, intimate interactions with faculty and students, diversity, and critical thinking. These values, along with a broad commitment to a “fully rounded” education serves as a guide for liberal arts education throughout the world (Al-Hendawi et al., 2019; Jung et al., 2016; Lilford, 2012; Ma, 2018). Many of the core values shared across the liberal arts education landscape have been threatened by the COVID-19 pandemic because of sudden shifts to remote education and the closure of global borders (Gigliotti, 2020b). However, as noted at the outset of this chapter, this very crisis both threatens these central imperatives, while also reinforcing the broader value of a liberal arts education. The challenges of the time demand a comprehensive understanding of the world around us, including a mutual respect for others, an ability to engage in thoughtful synthesis and critical exploration, and the skill to think across disciplines, across boundaries, and across intellectual, cultural, and social traditions. In responding to the global health crisis in a principle-centered way, we might find leaders amplifying the fundamental value of global learning opportunities in a coordinated manner, responding to financial and enrollment exigencies in ways that leverage the distinctive value proposition of a liberal arts education, and positioning student and employee health and well-being at the foundation of all college and university decisions. A response of this kind takes notice of the alternative voices that call into question these espoused values—and rather than distancing oneself from these shared principles, these pillars help to propel the organization forward. For example, in advocating for the relevance of a liberal arts education in the twenty-first-century world, Wellesley College (n.d.) notes the following:

Without an immediately obvious vocational outcome, study of the liberal arts sometimes comes under attack for being impractical. Wellesley is at the forefront of addressing this challenge, not by abandoning its belief in a liberal arts curriculum, but by working to ensure that students themselves understand—in the course of every learning challenge—that the disciplined thinking, refined judgment, creative synthesis, and collaborative dynamic that are hallmarks of their Wellesley education are not only crucial to developing their leadership abilities, but are habits of mind that will serve them well throughout their lives, and be primary contributors to their success (The Value of a Liberal Arts Education).

As this example so eloquently displays, a values-centered response demands that we lean into these shared principles with conviction and confidence during times of normalcy and perhaps most especially when navigating threat, risk, or disruption. Furthermore, when facing existential challenges during times of crisis, the exigency provides a unique opportunity to review, rethink, and reorient members of the community regarding the espoused values and principles of the institution. Within the context of liberal arts education, crises have the potential to threaten *and* reinforce the values held in high regard by these institutions who share a commitment to the liberal arts.

14.4 Conclusion

Given the wide array of challenges facing liberal arts institutions, and the three-fold focus on preparation, perception, and principles discussed in this chapter, the following questions may serve as a guide for leaders and policy makers from across the liberal arts education landscape:

- What values do I stand for as a leader/teacher/scholar?
- What are the espoused values of my specific liberal arts institution and what shared values do these types of institutions hold in high regard?
- What are the criteria I use to identify, define, and assess the severity and impact of a crisis?
- What are the crisis warning signs I need to monitor in my current role?
- What are the types of crises that could potentially impact me individually as a leader/teacher/scholar, and what are the types of crises that could potentially impact my unit/department/school?
- In what ways would I like to respond to a crisis? What resources would I need to marshal, on whom may I need to learn, and how might I address the crisis in a coordinated, systematic, and values-driven manner?
- How will I evaluate my response to the crisis? What metrics would I use to determine a successful response?
- Following the crisis, what did I learn from the situation? What might I do differently if faced with a similar crisis in the future?

No pre-determined formula can prevent the onset of crises and no rubric can guarantee a successful response to a crisis; however, these questions highlight the value of approaching these periods of disrupt from a position of intentionality and purpose. Furthermore, as we look ahead to consider the potential crises that might not yet be known, this broad and expansive treatment of crisis leadership might prove useful as we enter a post-pandemic period of prolonged uncertainty for liberal arts colleges and universities.

Referring to some crises as “cosmology episodes,” Weick (1993) describes the profound impact such events have “when people suddenly and deeply feel that the universe is no longer a rational, orderly system” (p. 633). As he goes on to suggest, “What makes such an episode so shattering is that both the sense of what is occurring and the means to rebuild that sense collapse together” (p. 633). Those engaged in leadership play a critical role in helping members of the community make sense of the uncertainty, volatility, and deeply fractured sense of normalcy posed by crises. And to be sure, there is no shortage of events that might be viewed as crises across the liberal arts education landscape. As this chapter highlighted, crisis leadership requires a commitment to the preparation of leaders across an institution, an awareness of the power of perception in shaping impressions of an organization, and an unwavering and steadfast commitment to the principles and values that unify the members of a diverse community. As current crises and the crises of tomorrow threaten institutions of higher education, including those dedicated to a liberal arts education, it is my

hope that we will respond to these unsettling episodes with care, compassion, clarity, and a commitment to the well-being of our communities—all the while contributing to the “reservoir of goodwill” from which we may need to draw upon in the future.

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Chapter 15

Liberal Arts Education and Online Learning: Prospects and Challenges



Aaron Einfeld

Abstract The COVID-19 pandemic forced liberal arts educators into an unplanned dive into online learning. Though many schools had little experience with online learning, some liberal arts colleges had already begun experimenting with online learning before the pandemic. This chapter begins by examining the perceptions, practices, and lessons learned from online liberal arts education before and during the pandemic. Based on this insight, this chapter discusses the ways that liberal arts educators can leverage online environments for learning in future. As the chapter illustrates, crisis and constraints can prompt new thinking and unexpected innovation. The chapter closes with advice and suggestions for future research, theory, and practice of online liberal arts education.

Keywords Online learning · Hybrid learning · Liberal learning outcomes · Online learning community

15.1 Perceptions of Online Learning Quality

Enrollments in online higher education have grown significantly in the twentieth century. For example, by 2018, the National Center for Educational Statistics found that 79% of colleges in the United States were offering online courses or programs (Ruiz & Sun, 2021). Although faculty perceptions of the quality of online learning had improved pre-pandemic surveys still revealed mixed perceptions of the quality of online instruction in the United States (Lederman & McKenzie, 2017). As recently as 2015, only 29% of academic leaders in the United States reported that their faculty “accepts the value and legitimacy of online education” (Allen et al., 2016, p. 26). Furthermore, online learning has not been adopted equally by all institution types. For instance, by 2019, nearly all public universities in the United States (96%) offered online courses or programs, whereas only a slight majority (53%) of private non-profit colleges had online options (Ruiz & Sun, 2021). This data demonstrates that

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© The Author(s), under exclusive license to Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2023
I. Jung and K. H. Mok (eds.), *The Reinvention of Liberal Learning around the Globe*,
Crossing Cultures: Liberal Learning for a World in Flux,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-8265-1_15

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enrollments in online learning have grown despite widespread concerns regarding its educational effectiveness.

This tension poses a particularly challenging question for liberal arts educators because liberal arts education has long relied on intensive and formative residential peer learning environments. As Roche (2010) points out, liberal arts education presupposes that there is a meaningful, residential community of learning that extends beyond the classroom. This highly social form of education is aimed at developing particular skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and collaboration. Further, liberal arts education is aimed at deeper goals of developing moral and civic character and training citizens for democracy (Chopp, 2014; Nussbaum, 2010). But what happens when this form of education moves online? In other words, do online learning environments challenge, undermine, or support liberal arts education?

15.1.1 *Undermining Learning*

Throughout the past two decades, liberal arts educators have expressed skepticism about the potential compatibility between liberal arts education and online learning. For example, Socratic pedagogy has been a hallmark of liberal arts education where students engage in self-examination, critical argument, and logical questioning (Roche, 2010). Some have gone as far as to say that Socratic pedagogy in a liberal arts education requires an *embodied* experience that is relational, emotional, and engages more than simply the mind (Ess, 2003). Ess, therefore, proposed that developing wisdom or virtue cannot be fully taught online. Instead, live, embodied interaction is required. A recent survey of faculty at a mid-sized liberal arts university concurs that in-person communication and relationships, live interaction, and the residential campus experience are essential ingredients for this kind of learning (Shreaves et al., 2020). In other words, the embodied experience of interactive learning should extend beyond the formal pedagogy of the classroom. As McCardell Jr. (2014) points out, an effective residential learning community is seamless, comprehensive, and relevant. Seamless learning communities extend learning beyond the classroom. Comprehensive residential experiences incorporate a wide range of character forming activities beyond the classroom. Relevant learning communities do not limit learning to abstract ideas, but seek to make clear connections between the learning experience and life after college (McCardell Jr., 2014). Together, academic and social experiences can shape deep learning and liberal arts outcomes.

There is concern that without interactive, in-person instruction, and residential peer learning, the quality of a liberal arts education would be undermined. Historically, outcomes such as critical thinking problem-solving, communication, and collaboration have been connected to a highly interactive and relational residential learning experience. If in-person and residential aspects of liberal arts education

are removed, what are the implications for developing these outcomes? Can individuals develop these skills through online platforms? Moreover, can the broader goals of developing moral citizens in a democracy be achieved through online platforms?

15.1.2 Online Possibilities for Liberal Arts Education

Despite these well documented questions and concerns about the quality of online learning, some liberal arts educators who had experience with online teaching before the COVID-19 pandemic already saw potential ways for some compatibility between online learning and liberal arts education. My own doctoral research in 2016 examined a case where a liberal arts college had begun piloting online undergraduate courses. The purpose of the study was to gain an in-depth understanding of the key issues, tensions, and perceptions surrounding online liberal arts education (Einfeld, 2016). Through in-depth interviews with administrators, faculty, and students, I observed a consensus: The common perception among these stakeholder groups was that moving liberal arts education to an entirely online format would undermine the essential nature and quality of the experience. Administrators—none of whom had experience teaching or learning online—were concerned that online learning would undermine essential features of liberal arts education, such as interactive problem-solving, community life, and good teaching. Faculty—each of whom had experience teaching online—said that online learning made faculty and student interaction more difficult. Faculty was concerned that “disembodied learning” made it more difficult for online classes to develop the sense of trust and community that normally would help students’ holistic learning and development. Students at the same college concurred that face-to-face discussion was preferable to technology mediated interaction.

Although my research elaborated on the concerns that national surveys had already identified, administrators, faculty, and students each expressed openness to online aspects of a liberal arts education. The common overarching theme was an openness to *hybrid learning*. Interviewees believed that portions of a liberal arts education could move online as long as co-curricular learning, campus life, and face-to-face learning remained essential features of the student experience. Liberal arts faculty with online teaching experience was the most open to the format. They pointed out that online, asynchronous formats are amenable to particular learning styles. For example, solitary and reflective aspects of asynchronous learning can provide the space for deep analysis and insight. Faculty observed that communal experiences online can quickly bridge a physical divide that allows international and cross-cultural engagement and learning. In this way, faculty expressed a desire to combine and leverage the best and most promising aspects of online and face-to-face learning.

Although examining perceptions of the quality of online learning is helpful in identifying major themes and questions, decisions about learning formats and environments should be grounded in empirical research on educational outcomes that might allow us to re-examine our perceptions. Furthermore, referring to categories

such as *in-person, online, or hybrid* has limited value because the focus is too broad. There is huge variation within each category of learning format. For example, in-person learning includes lecture, experiential learning, problem-based learning, and science labs.

Therefore, rather than talk about online versus residential forms of education, some researchers find it more productive to examine and discuss indicators of online course quality. For example, one study (Joosten et al., 2019) cites learner support, course design and organization, content design and delivery, interactivity, and assessment as key features of online learning environments.

15.2 Lessons Learned by Practitioners During the Pandemic

The Spring 2020 semester was a pivotal moment for online learning because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Suddenly, the world was immersed in an unplanned experiment in the mass adoption of online learning. Instructors and institutions that might never have considered online learning were forced into adapting their instruction with little to no time to prepare. Although this experience began as a way to offer online learning in an emergency, significant lessons were learned through the experience.

First, the pandemic demonstrated that the choice between residential and online learning is not a binary choice. There are variations and combinations of residential, hybrid, and online environments that can be effective for different learners in different contexts (Beatty, 2019). For example, large, lecture-based courses might offer recorded lectures online but require in-person small group discussion. In these courses, students can re-watch or pause lectures while also engaging in meaningful discussion in-person. One particular format of online learning that became common during the pandemic was a hyflex model. Hyflex refers to a course design where students can participate in-person, online, or both. Some students are physically present while others participate via video chat or discussion forums. Hyflex learning allowed students in physical quarantine or isolation the ability to continue to participate in their coursework.

Hyflex learning offers the promise of a more flexible and accessible form of education. For some, the ability to access live class discussion online removed barriers to their learning. For example, a student in one of my classes explained that she had a physical limitation that made travel to campus challenging. Online discussion allowed her to participate without the stress and challenge of navigating to campus. For this student, sitting in chairs on campus might be particularly uncomfortable, while being able to sit a chair at home that was designed for her, would allow her to relax and engage in conversation more easily.

Second, we observed that different formats of online learning are better suited for different types of learners. A significant choice in designing an online course is whether or not to include synchronous online learning elements to the course.

Adding synchronous video chat can increase student interaction and build the sense of connection and trust between learners (Fabriz et al., 2021; Rinesko & Bukhori Muslim, 2020). However, faculty whom I interviewed for this book chapter observed that participating in synchronous chat during the pandemic was very difficult for students with family responsibilities. This was particularly evident as students who are parents tried to participate in live video chat while at the same time facilitating at home online learning for their children. For non-traditional students, or those with significant work and family responsibilities, synchronous requirements can be a significant barrier. Required synchronous sessions create logistical challenges for courses with students enrolled across the globe simply due to time zone differences. However, for students without outside family or work requirements, synchronous chat requirements are less burdensome and can increase engagement if facilitated well. The value of synchronous chat depends on a particular learner's needs as well. For students who have high needs for socialization, or who are seeking deep friendship with classmates, live conversation is more important. For learners with more established social networks and outside commitments, the need to experience community in a course might be less.

Third, faculty need significant support in order to successfully offer hybrid, hyflex, and online learning. This was evident before the pandemic. For example, research from the Teagle Foundation's "Hybrid Learning and Residential Liberal Arts Experience" initiative found that faculty support should be multidimensional: including technical training, faculty peer-to-peer mentoring, and close work with instructional designers (Pazich et al., 2018). In addressing the challenges and opportunities with adapting liberal arts education to new formats, one faculty member explained:

My concern is that most people I work with and talk to have no concept of the level of redesign this takes, nor do they have the courage to tackle it. So they use online tools in uncoordinated and unsatisfying ways, to themselves and to their students, and rightly feel it weakens the liberal arts experience. But it is not the online that does that. It is the design of the learning experience in the medium that does that (Pazich et al., 2018, p. 50).

The abrupt shift to online learning during the pandemic did not afford schools the opportunity to develop robust, system wide faculty support. The following section explores how schools might intentionally design online learning to achieve liberal arts outcomes.

15.3 Achieving Liberal (Arts) Outcomes Through Online Learning

A varied range of instructional strategies and course design principles can make up the ingredients of high-quality online learning (O'Keefe et al., 2020). In this way, educators can design learning experiences that are aligned to most effectively facilitate particular learning outcomes. A liberal arts education equips students with skills

in problem-solving, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration. Additionally, students develop moral and civic character and the motivation and skills to be an engaged member of a democracy (Chopp, 2014).

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, liberal arts colleges had already begun experimenting with online learning. In 2014, the Council of Independent Colleges created the Consortium for Online Humanities Instruction. This group began offering online humanities courses and researching their effectiveness. Overall, their research concluded that a large majority of online humanities students met or exceeded the learning expectations defined by their instructors (Hetrik et al., 2019). Students, particularly non-traditional, reported satisfaction with the flexibility of online formats (Hetrik et al., 2019). However, students are not always satisfied with online learning experiences. For example, the abrupt switch to emergency online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in students reporting a sense of disconnection from their peers (Boardman et al., 2021).

Though it is possible to achieve liberal arts outcomes in online settings, it is important to design experiences that maintain a sense of student connectedness while doing so. This section discusses three potential formats for achieving these outcomes while maintaining a sense of connectedness: (a) hybrid models, (b) online learning communities, and (c) place-based online education.

15.3.1 Hybrid Learning

As residential learning communities, liberal arts colleges can be seamless learning environments where relationships and experiences beyond the classroom are necessary ingredients for deep learning. Residential learning communities provide environments and relationships that help to students to connect experiences inside and outside the classroom that result in integrated deep learning. In this way, residential learning communities can facilitate significant moral, social, and intellectual development that are hallmarks of a liberal arts education. Not surprisingly, liberal arts educators are hesitant to adapt hybrid or online learning that would disconnect students from these rich environments.

However, one significant limitation of residential, campus-based educational models is that the residential experience of students can be uneven in quality. This can be particularly for non-traditional or marginalized student groups. Consider the issue of student retention. For many years, educators adopted Tinto's framework for improving student retention (Braxton & Lien, 2000). In order to improve retention, schools should work to help students become fully integrated into campus life—both academically and socially. However, there are limitations to this way of thinking. Pursuing this kind of integration can come at a cost, requiring students to break ties with potential sources of support outside of campus that would help them to navigate campuses that can marginalize some groups of students. Rather than seeking full integration to campus life, what some students need it so maintain strong support networks off campus that will enable better on campus learning

(Rendón et al., 2000). In other words, limiting one's full immersion to campus life while maintaining supportive ties off campus is important for some students to thrive and graduate (Rendón et al., 2000).

But what if adding doses of online learning—intentionally designed—could actually enhance a residential experience? Would maintaining external networks of support help marginalized student groups to achieve better outcomes? Moreover, certain combinations of in-person and online experiences might solve logistical problems while maximizing the learning potential in each format. For example, a student might be able to say “yes” to taking on an internship if a few online courses allow that student the scheduling flexibility to say “yes.” Or a student might be able to study abroad or complete an internship far from campus while spending a semester taking online courses. Online learning environments offer collaborative and interactive tools that allow these students to remain connected to relationships they had established while living and learning on campus. One study observed that hybrid approaches could enable liberal arts colleges to share resources and costs in order to increase programmatic offerings (Pazich et al., 2018). These kinds of scenarios enable educators to offer “a new flexibility” that enhances rather than replaces a residential degree program (McMurtrie, 2021, p. 9). In this way, hybrid degrees and courses can make the most of multiple learning formats. Whereas hybrid courses include multiple learning formats within a course, hybrid degrees could be made up of a combination of courses in different learning formats. For instance, a hybrid degree could begin with an intensive in-person residential experience, then continue online. It seems that hybrid models offer promising options to pursue liberal education outcomes by combining the best of what residential learning and online learning environments might offer together. The previous studies have found that learning outcomes in hybrid or blended courses are comparable to the outcomes of residential courses (Means et al., 2010).

But we can take this a step further by asking a simple question. If embodied, relational, in-person learning is essential to a liberal arts education, does this need to happen on campus, or can it happen elsewhere? Next, we explore the prospects of leveraging online platforms with in-person learning environments that are not limited by the boundaries of a traditional campus.

15.3.2 Online Learning Communities

There is a large body of research that documents the important role that the residential campus can play in facilitating liberal arts outcomes. Relationships with peers and faculty are essential ingredients of a student's liberal arts education (Einfeld, 2016). However, a major limitation to this residential model is accessibility. Foregoing the income of a full time job while paying for an expensive residential experience is a major obstacle for many. Those with less financial means might need to work long hours to afford school, undermining their ability to take advantage of the

holistic learning and development that deep engagement in a campus community can facilitate.

Advocates of online learning are hopeful that online learning communities can remove barriers to accessing liberal arts education. Carefully designed and facilitated online courses can facilitate social learning—rather than undermine—that helps students to engage with broader social issues as global citizens (Spencer, 2004).

Though residential colleges build relationships, so do online environments with people around the world. For example, Spencer (2004) points out that online environments are particularly well suited for connecting social groups and movements for cooperative learning and engagement. Video chats can bring guests from around the world into a traditional classroom. Online course platforms facilitate meaningful follow-up, interactions, relationships, and community. Liberal arts colleges can create virtual networks that increase global connections, learning partnerships, and dialog (McAuliffe, 2004). In this way, online connections have the ability to foster professional relationships and networks beyond the traditional campus. These networks can be cross-disciplinary, include alumni, and focus on developing intercultural community. Still, one major limitation of online learning is the continued digital divide around the world. The pandemic exposed problems related to inadequate access to reliable Internet (Jaggars et al., 2021). As Hill and Lawton (2018) pointed out, it was estimated in 2016 that only 46% of the global population had access to the Internet from home.

15.3.3 Place-Based Online Education

Traditionally, residential liberal arts colleges have been places for students to develop formative relationships with peers and faculty and staff. However, there are also drawbacks to this model. For example, students immersed on campus can become isolated from life beyond campus. While on campus, students are surrounded by mostly 18–24 year olds whose lives are focused on the rhythms of the academic environment.

Despite the potentially insular nature of many campuses, advocates of a residential liberal arts education underscore an important point: achieving liberal education outcomes in with students requires experiences beyond the classroom. Learning must be integrated with life outside the classroom if students are to achieve the kinds of deep learning that we have come to expect from a liberal arts education. Paradoxically, here lies one of the greatest challenges and opportunities for online liberal arts education. Online learning platforms have the ability to remove students from a residential campus environment while at the same time extending learning “beyond the classroom” in new and potentially profound ways.

15.3.3.1 In-Place Learning

Though a residential campus is one example of an effective embodied learning community, schools could explore off campus locations that might provide a similar but different kind of embodied living learning community. Pedagogy in online courses can prompt student interaction with the physical location where a student is located. Assignments and courses can be designed to require students to engage their place through project based and a focus on experiential learning. For example, a student enrolled in a psychology course on the lifespan of human develop might be asked to interview people who are at each of the life stages that that the online course focuses on. A sociology course would require students to research and interact with the community that they are embedded in. Then, online discussion posts allow students to share from their respective neighborhoods around the world using the sociological lenses introduced in the online course.

These placed-based online learning examples enable students to maximize their learning by engaging with the locations where they are physically located. In this way, online pedagogy incorporates proven methods of engaged, active, and experiential learning (Cantor, 1995; Jessup-Anger, 2012). The basic structure is for students to engaging in meaningful work and learning offline, but then to share and extend that learning online. In this model, the online environment provides the accountability, support, and feedback for learners. Students are invited to share the particularities of their own place and culture, and how that relates to the course materials. Rather than relying on translating theory from a classroom to practice in real life, students engage in active experiential learning while receiving support online. Online environments become the place to process, reflect, share, collaborate, and create. In-place online learning leverages active and experiential pedagogy to facilitate learning in online course.

15.3.3.2 Place-Based Hybrid Learning

Hybrid courses have the potential to maximize the benefits of both in-person and online formats. Traditionally, the in-person portion of a hybrid courses has been located on campus. Another option is to gather students at a strategic off campus location for the in-person portion of a hybrid course. Hybrid courses can gather students at culturally and historically significant locations. Learning experiences at these locations can be designed to maximize student interaction with key individuals and organizations at the off campus gathering site.

15.3.3.3 Living Learning Cohorts

Another placed-based model places students in small cohorts of decentralized living learning communities that exist off campus. Drawing from established study abroad models, students live in clusters in a region or around the world. For example, a

cluster might live in an urban art center, or near a government center. Others might exist in border crossing towns or in other strategic locations where the physical environment is rich for engaging in structured experiential learning. These cohorts could be organized around so-called “super courses” (Bain & Bain, 2021) where the focus is on interdisciplinary problems such as the global refugee crisis, climate change, or public health. Students engage in place-based experiential living as a cohort while analyzing these problems from interdisciplinary lenses. The intensive living learning experiences can spark significant learning. Cohorts scattered around the world can then connect with each other through online platforms.

Exact models of place-based online learning could vary by institutional mission and context. But the main idea is that residential learning moves off campus to smaller, intentionally shaped learning communities that remain connected through online platforms. Rather than a centralized campus, there are decentralized learning clusters.

15.4 Supporting Lifelong Learning Through Online Learning

Liberal arts educators hope to instill in their students a capacity and interest in lifelong learning. In this way, the learning and formation of liberal arts education are not intended to end at graduation. The goals of a liberal arts education are ambitious: to develop moral and civic character, critical thinking, problem-solving and communication skills, and the ability to effectively collaborate (Chopp, 2014). Though one can develop these significantly during their undergraduate experience, these are the kinds of skills and competencies that are pursued and refined over one’s lifetime. For example, a liberal arts education might help students develop skills of critical thinking and problem-solving as they study global poverty, climate change, and political radicalization. However, successfully engaging with these problems outside the classroom after graduation requires continual honing and adaptation.

While a four-year degree can prepare students for engaging complicated global challenges, successfully addressing various big social problems require years of interdisciplinary work and collective action beyond one’s college experience (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2020). Additionally, the pursuit of moral and civic character and living as a democratic citizen has different challenges at different stages of life. Online learning environments offer the opportunity for liberal arts schools to offer more sustained support to their graduates throughout their lifespan. These non-degree opportunities can be offered as isolated continuing education experiences in the form of online courses or online and hybrid cohort experiences. Consider Erickson’s theory of lifespan human development (Erikson, 1959). Young adults are establishing their identity, commitments, and love. The dilemma of early adulthood is to wrestle with the tension between intimacy and isolation. Throughout adulthood, we engage in the tension of generativity versus self-absorption and stagnation. In the

context of democratic citizenship, we wrestle with generating something for the civic good or becoming stuck and self-absorbed. Online learning environments offer the possibility for schools to support the ongoing pursuit of moral and civic character throughout these stages of life.

However, time, distance, and graduation are potential barriers to schools offering support for lifelong learning. But features of online learning make it possible for schools to re-engage with their alumni as their alumni (and others) pursue lifelong learning. The collaborative and interactive features of online environments can remove barriers of distance. Communicating asynchronously in online environments can remove barriers of time and time zone differences.

Therefore, liberal arts colleges should consider the possibility of recalibrating their alumni engagement efforts and mission to supporting the lifelong learning of students. This is necessary because the intended outcomes of a liberal arts education require dedicated work beyond a 4-year credentialing degree. Engaging with alumni and lifelong learners is a way for schools to more comprehensively fulfill their existing mission. Online learning environments and tools reduce the barriers for doing this.

If liberal arts colleges/educators are to effectively support the lifelong learning of their alumni, then the educational models should be designed according to the learning needs of adult learners. There is a substantial and growing scholarly literature dedicated to the field of adult learning—commonly referred to as andragogy—from which we can draw insight and inspiration. Andragogy represents an approach to adult learning that has distinct foundational assumptions about the learning needs of adults (Knowles et al., 2020). For example, adults have a self-concept that has an underlying need to be self-directing in their learning. Rather than being told what to do, adults need to be able to control the direction of their learning. Additionally, adults are ready to learn when they see that a learning experience will help them address an immediate need or real-world problem. This can be an immediate need for a concrete skill, or broader developmental task, such as developing one's identity or moving through stages of their psychosocial development. Liberal arts colleges would be wise to develop lifelong learning experiences that align liberal arts learning with these real-world problems.

In summary, principals of andragogy can be used to design collaborative and interactive online environments that support the lifelong pursuit of liberal arts outcomes. As Chametzky (2018) suggests, online environments should be places where learners can be self-directed while building trust with other learners. Online learning environments should be places where learners collaborate and support one another through meaningful interactions (Zucca, 2014). Offering flexible, asynchronous online learning environments can make these kinds of learning experiences accessible for lifelong learners around the world. Online learning environments can be set up in a way to provide students more choice for engaging in open ended projects, experiential learning assignments, and other interactive materials (Spencer, 2004). In this way, self-directed and problem-based online learning that draws on the internal motivation of learners does not require the physical gathering of learners for meaningful learning and interaction. Instead, online connections enable adults to grow

their professional network while gaining connections, encouragement, and accountability for their ongoing learning. In this way, the pedagogical approach of a course is more important than the particular format—online or in-person.

15.5 Fostering Virtue and Civic Engagement in a Digital Age

Online learning environments are particularly well suited for students to wrestle with what it looks like to be a good citizen in the digital age. A liberal arts education is aimed at developing the holistic character and skills of individuals. But the mission includes a broader purpose of pursuing the social good as global citizens as well. Therefore, a successful liberal arts education cultivates moral individuals who pursue the common good and use their knowledge to address the pressing issues of the time and to improve the world (Chopp, 2014).

In this way, a liberal arts education should equip individuals to engage in the public square. However, in the digital age, the public square has made a significant shift online. This shift poses unique challenges and new questions. What does it mean to be a good neighbor and a responsible member of a community when that community has potentially limitless connections online? How do we understand our responsibility to be citizens in a global, digital world? Through social media and video meetings, we can be instantly connected to communities around the world. Online environments are a part of our daily lives, but they are also potentially rich learning labs for learning and practicing critical thinking and communication skills. As evidenced by the spread of conspiracy theories and misinformation throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a need for people to better apply critical thinking skills when sifting through the deluge of information that is available online. By immersing students in online environments and asking them to think critically about those environments, educators can help students apply critical thinking and moral reasoning to their digital lives. In other words, online learning environments can help students engage in critical thinking by engaging with the information in the environments in which they encounter them.

15.6 Conclusion: Future Directions

15.6.1 Research

We began this chapter with the broad question: What are the implications when a liberal arts education moves online? Next, we reviewed perceptions of online liberal arts education. We then reviewed some initial practices of online liberal arts education and explored potential directions for online liberal arts education. More should be

done to experiment with these potential directions and to research and document their outcomes.

Learning is a complex and multidimensional endeavor. There is a vast research literature that catalogs the moral, psychosocial, and cognitive learning and development that is linked to attending college (Evans et al., 2010; Mayhew et al., 2016). A parallel literature has examined factors related to student retention, persistence, and graduation (Tight, 2020; Tinto, 2000). Most of this researches have focused on campus-based in-person learning. With respect to online learning, a significant portion of that literature before the COVID-19 pandemic focused on measuring perceptions of (Allen et al., 2016; Harrison et al., 2017; Walters et al., 2017) and on understanding barriers to faculty adopting online learning (Ruth, 2018). Even though these are all valuable areas of inquiry, it is essential that research focuses on how particular formats and educational strategies might translate to online settings. For example, The American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU) has published a list of evidence-based, high-impact teaching, and learning practices (AACU, 2021). These practices can be adapted to different contexts but include collaborative assignments and projects, global learning, common intellectual experiences, diversity/global learning, ePortfolios, first-year seminars and experiences, internships, community-based learning, undergraduate research, and writing intensive courses. Scholars are beginning to explore how research and best practices on high-impact practices might translate in online environments (Linder & Hayes, 2018). Still, more research is needed to better understand how particular formats of online, hybrid, hyflex, and place-based online learning environments might facilitate specific liberal learning outcomes for specific students. For example, a line of research could ask: What kinds of psychologically and socially supportive online environments might facilitate long-term intellectual, moral, and personal learning and development? Building a more robust body of empirical educational research will enable educators to rely on proven practices rather than on perceptions of online learning that may or may not be accurate.

15.6.2 Practice

Shifting toward online learning has significant implications for faculty, administrators, and students. As Shreaves et al. (2020) point out, “to encourage faculty members to participate in online learning, faculty may need reassurance and support to help them understand how to preserve teaching values in the online environment” (p. 117). A survey completed by the Chronicle of Higher Education during the pandemic found that 60% or more of faculty would like to see the following continue after the pandemic: (a) professional training around effective course design and teaching practices, (b) teaching and learning communities where instructors can share best practices, and (c) more professional training for online and hybrid course design (McMurtrie & Supiano, 2021). As we emerge out of the pandemic, administrators

would be wise to provide the time, space, and permission for their more enthusiastic faculty to explore the prospects and limits of online liberal learning.

Even if faculty is able to refine their programs and pedagogy so that hyflex, hybrid, and place-based online learning effectively result in liberal learning outcomes, the economic question remains. Are these formats economically viable? If a liberal arts college shifts toward online learning, what mix of residential and online learning is ideal from a cost perspective? Early adopters of online learning have found that moving online does not necessarily reduce cost of instruction (Archibald & Feldman, 2011). As faculty discovered during the pandemic, facilitating high-impact learning in online environments can be more time intensive than in-person learning. Therefore, faculty training, development, and support are essential. Administrators will need to determine which financial and educational models hold the most promise in terms of student learning and financial sustainability.

Finally, but most importantly, decisions about online learning should be centered around the learning needs of the student. Research-based practices from the field of adult learning and andragogy should guide decisions about how to best structure liberal arts learning. These student-centered approaches can provide guidance and wisdom as educators engage in the most important question: What makes the most sense for this student in this context?

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Chapter 16

The Post-pandemic Future: Possible Scenarios for Liberal Arts Colleges



Insung Jung

Abstract The current COVID-19 pandemic has affected universities all around the world forcing them to make changes or adjustments in almost all aspects of their operations. Some of these changes will likely have lasting effects on the way the universities teach and work: sweeping away the old system replacing it eventually with a system that will create new values, services, and eventually new markets. Based on discussions of possible opportunities, this chapter explores six scenarios that liberal arts colleges might contemplate in planning for the post-pandemic future. These scenarios, for convenience, can be placed on a continuum, with the *back to normal* model at one end and the *lifetime liberal learning* model at the other end, and in between scenarios related to changes in mission, target population, curriculum, and method. The chapter concludes with recommendations for educators and policy leaders in such liberal arts colleges.

Keywords Back to normal · Blended learning · Lifetime liberal learning · Networked learning · Disruptive innovation

16.1 Emerging Opportunities for Liberal Arts Colleges

COVID-19 has brought several challenges to higher education in general and liberal arts colleges in particular, as discussed in other chapters. Sharp decline in student enrollment coupled with ensuing financial difficulties, among other challenges, has hit small private liberal arts colleges more seriously than most, resulting in considerable cuts and changes to their courses, programs, and personnel. Despite such difficulties, there have been, perhaps surprisingly, promising opportunities for liberal arts colleges that would not have arisen or would have arisen only very slowly if the COVID-19 crisis had not happened.

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16.1.1 Increased Faculty Awareness and Competencies with Technology Use

With the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, many universities and colleges around the globe began to offer emergency remote teaching (ERT). Faculty members were confronted with the challenges of adapting to online teaching. Several studies examining faculty experiences with ERT during the pandemic have reported that faculty had a difficult time with online technology and the new way of teaching at least at first, but then, they began to adopt online teaching and adjust their teaching strategies for a virtual mode of teaching and gradually came to perceive technology as an essential tool for pedagogical innovation (e.g., Johnson et al., 2020; Shenoy et al., 2020). Jung et al. (2021) reported similar findings in an in-depth auto-ethnographic study examining the ERT experience of five faculty members in a small liberal arts college during the pandemic. They revealed that during the early stage of ERT, faculty members mostly utilized their past experience in face-to-face classroom teaching when solving a range of problems, they faced during online teaching. With more online teaching experience, they became more flexible in mobilizing other references, such as help from their students and findings from research on online education and more confident in handling online technologies, leading to their trying out different pedagogical and technical approaches to problem-solving.

Studies reporting faculty members' online teaching experiences during the pandemic, along with my own experience, tell us that COVID-19 has increased faculty awareness of both the benefits and challenges of online education and contributed to the advancement of technology competencies needed to address the challenges while taking advantage of online technologies in their teaching. In liberal arts colleges especially, where the application of online technologies to teaching has been slower compared with larger universities (Jung & Bajracharya, 2016), changes in faculty members' perception of, and skills with, technology use in liberal education during the pandemic bring opportunities for further changes and transformations after the pandemic is over.

Biswas (2020), a professor at a small liberal arts college in the USA shared his story of creating and implementing an online class with other faculty members from various majors for a well-rounded education. While he believes that in-person teaching is more conducive than online teaching in promoting creative and critical thinking skills, he has shown the great possibility of online education through developing an interdisciplinary course involving more than twenty faculty members, bringing multiple perspectives to the topic, and applying online learning strategies with an aim to promote students' active engagement and creative and critical thinking. He argues that online education offers an opportunity to strengthen the values of liberal arts education and makes it possible for liberal arts colleges to expand their education to a wider audience in future.

16.1.2 Improved Infrastructure and Institutional Resilience

As Lake and Buelow (2021) pointed out, that considering the urgency of the pandemic situation, higher education institutions (HEIs) around the world have been, by and large, successful in adapting to the situation, bringing innovations in instruction, and making tireless efforts to address small and big issues. While trying to address the continuous challenges needed to react to changes during the pandemic, the universities and colleges have undertaken massive restructuring. They have restructured their operations, improved technology infrastructure, introduced conferencing and communication tools for online education, revised policies and regulations to make teaching and learning more flexible and resilient through reduced teaching/learning loads, alternative assessment and evaluation methods and criteria, flexible curricular structures, and the like. In addition, they have prepared manuals and guidelines for emergency situations, to name but a few innovations. Bozkurt et al. (2020) analyzed responses of k-12 schools and HEIs to COVID-19 across 31 countries and concluded that the institutions that were able to quickly adapt and address challenges caused by the pandemic make suitable adjustments in education and administration, provide care and emotional support for the members, and high-quality learning experience online have been able to keep existing students and recruit new ones.

Small liberal arts colleges have also invested in upgrading their technology infrastructure through purchasing new tools such as Zoom, training academic, and general staff members and students in their use and explored innovative online teaching approaches such as creating an online seminar which simulates an in-person seminar class but engage students and experts from different cultures. Further, they have begun utilizing games for online learning; offering career coaching, linking students with alumni working at different places, and experimented with flexible curricular models, despite budget cuts and other difficulties. Examples can be found at Cornell College and Colorado College's Block Plan, which allows students to take one course at a time, San Diego Christian College and Japan's International Christian University (ICU)'s HyFlex model, which combines face-to-face with online sessions, and Davidson College's flexible curriculum allowing adapted class meetings, assignments, assessments, and offering additional support and lab hours (Anstey et al., 2020). These kinds of liberal arts colleges improved their technology infrastructure and flexibility at the institutional level during the pandemic and now offer a potential to accelerate creation of more innovative models in future.

16.1.3 Accumulated Digital Contents, OER, and MOOCs

The pandemic has compelled many university educators to create digital materials for their online classes and find open educational resources (OER) to be employed in the online classes. Faculty members in liberal arts colleges have also developed video lectures, discussion topics, assessment questions, and assignments in digital

formats so that they can be shared with other educators and/or the public as OER; as seen in the case of Whitman College and the Claremont Colleges (Biswas, 2020; Zalite & Zvirbule, 2020). The Claremont Colleges in the USA, which comprise of five liberal arts colleges and two graduate schools, have promoted the use of OER, including providing open textbooks and OER guides for their faculty and students. A similar example can be found in resources for online teaching at ICU in Japan which list directories for OER by disciplines and shares OpenCourseWare (OCW) developed by ICU faculty members and guest speakers.

Massive open online courses (MOOCs) have been exponentially adopted in higher education. The 2020 report by Class Central revealed that one third of all MOOC learners registered did so during the pandemic, and that MOOC providers launched more courses, degree programs, and micro-credentials in 2020 compared with past years (Shah, 2020). Since MOOCs were first introduced in 2008 and made the headlines in the international media between 2011 and 2012, they have been introduced and promoted in higher education across all regions via several global and local providers, including Coursera/USA, edX/USA, FutureLearn/UK, Swayam/India, Udacity/USA, K-MOOC/Korea, JMOOC/Japan, Miríadax/Spain, MéxicoX/Mexico, EduOpen/Italy, ThaiMOOC/Thailand, XuetaangX/China, Chinese University MOOC/China, Edraak/Jordan, OpenHPI/Germany, IndonesiaX/Indonesia, the list goes on. Wesleyan University was the first USA liberal arts college to offer MOOCs globally through Coursera and edX. However, in general, small liberal arts colleges were reluctant to join the MOOCs movement as seen in the story of Amherst College rejecting an invitation to join edX at the early stage of MOOC development (Anderson, 2013), not having enough resources to invest in MOOC development. Jung and Bajracharya (2016) reported that no liberal arts colleges from Europe or Asia developed MOOCs for the global MOOC providers until 2015. This situation has not changed much, probably because liberal arts colleges have, in general, a lack of human resources or budget to invest in MOOC development and high membership fees. But there are a few exceptions such as Davidson College, Colgate University, Hamilton College, and Wellesley College in the USA (edX), Pontifical Catholic University of Chile (Coursera), Handong Global University in S. Korea (K-MOOC) and Lingnan University in Hong Kong, China (InfoLit for U MOOC with eight universities in Hong Kong) which have actively participated in MOOC development and use. Moreover, two noticeable changes have been observed during the pandemic. First, the number of MOOCs on liberal arts subjects such as arts and humanities have been increased and attracted more enrollment than ever during the pandemic, whereas those MOOCs teaching computer science, programming, business, and other practical areas were most popular before the pandemic (Shah, 2020). Second, several liberal arts colleges have now begun to offer detailed information on MOOCs on their Websites, deliver up-to-date news on MOOCs (e.g., Amherst College's MOOCs in the News—https://www.amherst.edu/offices/it/about-it/moocs/MOOC_News), and encourage their faculty members and students to use free MOOCs for their online courses (e.g., Amsterdam University College's programs have introduced MOOCs in their Website. One example can be found

at <https://www.uva.nl/en/programmes/pre-masters-programmes/human-geography/human-geography.html?cb>).

16.1.4 Enhanced Collaborative and Sharing Experiences

Bozkurt et al. (2020) in their summary report of 31 case studies on responses of education to COVID-19 concluded that collaboration and sharing among the individuals and institutions, ranging from sharing failures and best practices, to emotional, technical, and pedagogical support to private–public collaboration, were the powerful force which helped schools and universities cope with the first wave of the crisis. The Association of Commonwealth Universities organized a series of events sharing best practices of the commonwealth universities during COVID-19 and observed active engagement and collaboration among the individual faculty members around the world (Association of Commonwealth Universities, 2020). A group of experts in online education has created a venue (see *Silver Lining for Learning Website*) to share ideas and experiences of globally recognized scholars and practitioners via broadcast live on YouTube Live together with promoting interactions between the experts and audience.

At the institutional level, ICU in Japan has initiated *Brown Bag Lunch and Learn* sessions for its faculty and staff members every month and has shared stories and wisdom since the pandemic started and promoted peer support within each department. Effat University, the first private liberal arts college for women in Saudi Arabia, has, during this pandemic period, developed a collaborative partnership with the University of the People (UoP), a fully accredited non-profit online university in the USA and opened the opportunity for their students to take UoP's online courses for credits (Effat University, 2021). The United Board, a network of HEIs committed to whole person education, offers an online course on hybrid teaching to its member institutions, in collaboration with experts from the Christ University in India. Similar efforts have been made at various levels to discuss challenges and share lessons learned during the pandemic along with mutual support.

Through the pandemic crisis, liberal arts colleges that are often disconnected from real-world problems have been able to observe how those problems are addressed and solved via collaboration and sharing. This first-hand experience of collaborative problem-solving and knowledge sharing at individual, institutional, national, and international levels will offer an opportunity for liberal arts colleges to become more robust and innovative in facing the post-pandemic era with different sets of problems.

16.2 Possible Scenarios for Future Liberal Arts Colleges

While no one can foresee crises similar to the COVID-19 pandemic happening again HEIs, particularly liberal arts colleges need to explore a range of scenarios that will

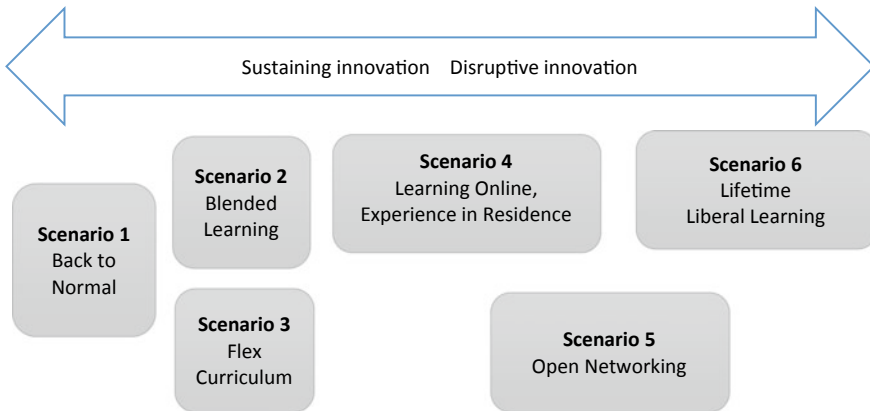


Fig. 16.1 Possible scenarios for future liberal arts colleges

make them more resilient and adaptable in future. These scenarios can be placed on a continuum, with the *back to normal* model at one end and the *lifetime liberal learning* model at the other end, and in between some scenarios related to changes in curriculum, method, mission, and target audience. Each of the scenarios may be used, alone, or in combination, with necessary adjustments. It is to be hoped that thinking about possible scenarios or options will help leaders, policy makers, and educators in the liberal arts colleges make better informed decisions in an uncertain future.

One of the key dimensions used to propose the scenarios is the **extent of disruption** that is how far an institution is willing to make changes in its vision, goals, curriculum, pedagogy, policies, and technology. At one end of the axis, there exists the *back to normal* model, which refers to a type of institution resuming their courses and learning activities on campus after the pandemic with minimum level of changes in the whole system; at the opposite end, there is the *lifetime liberal learning model* which refers to a type of institution making disruptive changes in their whole system including vision, target population, technology use, policies, and so on in future (see Fig. 16.1).

16.2.1 Scenario 1: Back to Normal

In this scenario, a liberal arts college returns to ‘normal’ after the pandemic. As Maloney and Kim (2020) predict, classes will be offered on campus as usual, resident students will return to campus, co-curricular and club activities will occur on campus as they used to, and university facilities and services will all be open as usual. Perhaps faculty members will use the university’s learning management system (LMS) more often, try out different technologies during the class, invite external experts, via Zoom

or a similar technology, to their class, etc., which is likely to be the ‘new normal’ in most liberal arts colleges.

While digital technologies are more widely integrated into education compared with the pre-pandemic period, the liberal arts colleges in this *back to normal* scenario will not make any disruptive changes in the way they teach and work despite accumulated digital contents, improved infrastructure, faculty competencies with online education, and improved institutional resilience. The overall mission, institutional structure, and pedagogical approach go largely unchanged. Technology is mainly used to support and incrementally improve the existing system, that is, in sustaining technology.

16.2.2 Scenario 2: Blended Learning

In this scenario, a liberal arts college strategically integrates online and face-to-face instruction. Due to flexibility and well-documented pedagogical benefits, blended learning, also called hybrid learning, has been adopted in many HEIs around the world over the past two decades. Generally, blended learning is found to be effective in improving students’ learning achievement and satisfaction (Dziuban & Moskal, 2011; Graham, 2013), developing students’ sense of community (Rovai & Jordan, 2004), and increasing access to education and thereby improving success rates for both minority and non-minority students (Dziuban et al., 2018) once it progresses toward clear course objectives, utilizes technology in an effective and innovative way, and promotes active communications.

Farmer (2020, pp. 2–4) proposed six blended learning models, ranging from highly supported to self-directed, considering both physical and pedagogical features of blends: (1) flipped classroom; (2) guided lab time; (3) integrated lab time; (4) capstone/independent learning; (5) project-based; and (6) self-directed. From among these models, the following three appear to be better suited to liberal learning contexts where both independent and collaborative activities are promoted, and close faculty-student interactions are valued.

16.2.2.1 Flipped Classroom Model

In this model, students study content by watching lecture videos, reading materials, engaging in online activities, and taking practice tests asynchronously; then attend synchronous instruction in a classroom setting for interactions with the instructor and peer students. The instructor prepares learning materials for students’ asynchronous, independent learning part, and facilitate interactive activities during synchronous classroom hours. Examples of this can be found in several liberal arts colleges in Asia: Yale-NUS College in Singapore, ICU in Japan, Handong Global University in Korea all have been adopting flipped classroom approach to promote student-centered learning. More details on what flipped classroom is and how it can be designed and

implemented for effective and engaging learning can be found in several publications including Talbert (2017, 2021), Bergmann and Sams (2014), and Bergmann (2012, 2017).

16.2.2.2 Capstone/Independent Learning Model

This model is similar to the above flipped classroom model but differs in that students engage in individual or group activities asynchronously after which they are offered scheduled Q&A sessions with the instructor or other experts in a classroom setting at the specified time. Farmer (2020) argues that this model works better for autonomous students with independent and collaborative learning competencies.

16.2.2.3 Project-Based Model

This model is similar to the capstone/independent learning model but students engage in a more organized project with real-world problems asynchronously either as a group or individually. And after the asynchronous work, they gather synchronously in a physical classroom, present the progress of their work, engage in peer review, and get help from the instructor, rather than having a Q&A session with the instructor. This model would be beneficial for more advanced students with both independent and collaborative learning skills.

COVID-19 has increased the variety of blends in teaching and learning being explored in higher education. One of the more popular blended models is the HyFlex model that concurrently involves both synchronous online and in-person students in an instructional environment (Beatty, 2019; Irvine, 2020).

16.2.2.4 HyFlex Model

In this model, the same instructor teaches his/her courses both face-to-face and online at the same time. It is also called dual mode instruction or blended synchronous instruction. Students can choose to attend a face-to-face classroom setting or study online. While the instructor focuses on teaching students in the classroom, a teaching assistant is usually assigned to support online students. Some institutions have built classrooms intentionally designed for the HyFlex model, while others have installed technologies needed for synchronous online instruction in the regular classrooms. An open book by Beatty (2019) offers useful guidelines to design and implement HyFlex courses and support students with 11 cases of the HyFlex instruction in both large research universities and small colleges.

16.2.2.5 Bichronous Model

This model blends synchronous and asynchronous online instruction (Martin et al., 2020) to provide more flexibility in teaching and learning compared with the blend of online and face-to-face instruction. In the asynchronous online learning part, students study and participate in learning activities anytime and anywhere, while for the synchronous online learning parts, students meet their instructor and engage in real-time activities online. This model allows students to work at their own pace during asynchronous sessions and yet provides an opportunity to get feedback and interact with other students synchronously. The previous studies (e.g., Asterhan & Schwarz, 2010; Badawi, 2017; Yamagata-Lynch, 2014) reveal that if an asynchronous online class is meaningfully and purposefully blended with synchronous learning components, it can improve students' sense of belongingness, promote engagement in group activities, and increase learning achievement.

16.2.3 Scenario 3: Flex Curriculum

In this scenario, a liberal arts college arranges its curriculum in a variety of ways and blends traditional ways of teaching with new technologies to offer flexibility in its education and organizational structure.

16.2.3.1 Split Curriculum Model

In this model, faculty members can choose to offer their courses online or in-person and in this way can work with a single modality of instruction—either in-person or online teaching depending on their preference and level of competency, but also considering their institution's strategic plan. Maloney and Kim (2020) argue that a split curriculum allows students to decide the number of face-to-face or online courses considering both their preference and major requirement. Some students may prioritize a residential learning experience for certain classes and online courses for other classes, while other students may prefer the flexibility of online learning for most classes. Liberal arts colleges that adopt this model can keep their residence courses and learning experiences as they used to be and focus their time and resources on online course development and implementation without major organizational changes. However, they need to consider the changing needs for physical classrooms and housing facilities and offer learning support for both classroom and online learning modes.

16.2.3.2 Focused Curriculum Model

This model prioritizes resources for focused curriculum which includes core courses for liberal learning, signature courses for experiential learning, or high-impact learning activities, and offer these courses and activities on campus. Study areas or courses that are not a part of the focused curriculum can be merged or redefined and developed as an online curriculum. Unlike the split curriculum model, decisions for curriculum changes are made at the institutional level. Similar to the split curriculum model, this model does not require major transformational changes but instead decision-making to select, design, and develop a focused curriculum which will strengthen an institution such as a liberal arts college but will need a strategic approach with a clear vision for the future.

16.2.3.3 Block Curriculum Model

Block curriculum or block teaching has been used widely in secondary and higher education settings as it allows students to study a maximum of two modules in an intensive block of time, often three to four weeks, while the conventional mode of teaching consists of 15 weeks of student class attendance for the semester system (10 weeks for trimester system), with students taking 4 or more courses at a time. The advantages and challenges of block teaching are relatively well-documented, especially in the USA. Rettig and Canady (2013) argue that block teaching in secondary schools offers greater flexibility for self-directed learning and promotes more intense, deeper, connected, and collaborative learning experiences. Dixon and O’Gorman (2020), Nerantzi et al. (2021), and Swain (2016) report similar benefits of block teaching in undergraduate courses. They also reveal that students in a block curriculum show a higher degree of enjoyment, a lower level of stress, and better learning achievement, and that they feel more connected with their instructor and peers. Several studies such as Glazer (2020), Maloney and Kim (2020), and Nerantzi and Chatzidamianos (2020) point out that block curriculum can be an effective strategy for liberal arts colleges to bring both concentration and flexibility to the curriculum and adopt blended or fully online teaching rather efficiently without major re-organization even though it requires changes in teaching practice and administrative processes. A few liberal arts colleges in the USA such as Cornell College, Colorado College, and Spalding College have implemented block curriculum and their Websites boast focused learning, flexibility, and experiential learning as major benefits as a result.

16.2.4 Scenario 4: Learning Online and Experience in Residence

In this scenario, a liberal arts college teaches most of its courses online but offers experiential learning opportunities in residence. To provide diverse experiential learning experiences to students, the liberal arts college can organize an alliance with other liberal arts colleges located in different countries. Each college can organize and provide a unique experiential learning program to students in the same alliance.

One example case is Minerva Schools at KGI, a non-profit university program at undergraduate and graduate levels, headquartered in San Francisco, USA. At Minerva, all courses are offered via Minerva's virtual learning environment called Forum™ that facilitates synchronous discussions, debates, and collaborative tasks. No long lectures, no campus buildings, and no conventional exams exist at Minerva. Instead, Minerva courses are designed to promote students' active learning and an achievement of pre-determined learning outcomes (Fain, 2018; Goldberg & Chandler, 2021). Students begin the first year with four cornerstone courses aiming to build four core competencies of critical thinking, creative thinking, effective communication, and effective interaction that are applicable to their specialization area (Kosslyn & Nelson, 2017). While taking their courses online, students, in the first year, stay in a residence hall in San Francisco and move around six different cities around the world (Seoul, Hyderabad, Berlin, Buenos Aires, London and Taipei) in subsequent years. In each city, students explore various resources necessary for their learning, attend work sessions, engage in collaborative projects with civic organizations, and interact with prominent researchers and cultural figures via carefully designed Minerva's experiential and practical learning programs (Clarke, 2020). Minerva's achievement as a new liberal arts college is yet to be seen but Pasquerella, president of the American Association of Colleges and Universities, has praised Minerva's education model for integrating flexible online learning with experiential and applied learning based on highly structured and project-based curriculum and four core competencies in liberal learning (Fain, 2018).

16.2.5 Scenario 5: Open Networking Model

In this scenario, a liberal arts college shares the responsibility of creating and implementing courses and other learning activities with other liberal arts colleges, research universities, and even MOOC providers. Courses can be developed as modules in different sizes and in different modes. Similar to the Lego model proposed by Orr et al. (2020), students in this model are allowed to study learning units in various sizes (e.g., 1 unit, 2 units, 3 units, etc.), various lengths (e.g., 4 weeks, 10 weeks, 15 weeks, etc.), and modes (e.g., fully online, blended, in-person, etc.) offered by their own college and partner institutions. This model assumes that students are self-motivated and independent, and want to work on their own learning path, and not

with a standardized curriculum. But at the same time, this model allows students to broaden their learning space by promoting interactions with students from other collaborating institutions around the world.

The focus of this model is on open collaboration and sharing, flexibility in policies, and advanced technology infrastructure. The first step is to develop open networking with HEIs and share educational services and experiences. Such institutions include liberal arts colleges, research universities, cyber universities, MOOC providers (e.g., edX, Coursera, Udemy, FutureLearn, etc.), and other education providers that have established strong global brands. For flexible open networking, it is necessary to revise existing policies, especially policies related to academic affairs and student support as current time-based advancement and calendar-driven scheduling would not work. Unlike the above-mentioned scenarios, the open networking model needs disruptive reform in the university policies and support systems to allow individualized learning paths adaptable to students' needs and circumstances. Depending on the scale of the adoption of the model, it may also require disruptive reform of the general structure of accreditation and recognition and higher education policies at the national and international level. Moreover, advanced technology infrastructure is essential to manage and support students' individualized learning paths and recognize learning in collaboration with partner institutions around the world. A blockchain-based decentralized network and storage system provides a cost-effective and efficient consensus mechanism for all participants involved in the open networking arrangement.

At the time of writing, there was not a single case which has fully adopted this open networking model among liberal arts colleges. However, MicroMasters programs, offered by several top universities including MIT, the University of Pennsylvania, Purdue University and University of Michigan (see edX Website) via a global MOOC provider, edX, present a partial application of the open networking model. It allows students to complete a series of online courses developed by faculty members in those universities and pass an exam to get MicroMasters in a certain field from one of those universities. Each program consists of courses of various durations from as short as a few months to a year or more. MicroMasters programs are recognized as a learning achievement by many large companies such as IBM, Volvo, Walmart, Adobe, pwc, Bloomberg, and the like, as well as universities in several countries, and can be built toward a BA or MA degree in other universities. MicroMasters programs mutually recognize learning achievements via online courses offered by other universities. Orr et al., (2020, p. 32) present an example of an MIT MicroMasters which can be used to apply for 69 other MA programs at 22 universities around the world.

16.2.6 Scenario 6: Lifetime Liberal Learning Model

This scenario is an attempt to transform a traditional liberal arts college from an elitist teaching institution to a universal education institution. There is still a belief that liberal arts education is for elites, not for the mass public. Many of the liberal arts colleges around the world, which operate on small scale with high tuition, have

focused on elite education by emphasizing explicitly excellence (Jung et al., 2016). However, as discussed in Chap. 1, values, knowledge, and skills developed through traditional liberal arts education need to be reevaluated and redefined to be real-world competencies that are needed for creative problem solvers and global citizens in today's world and the future. Core values of liberal arts education such as problem-solving, leadership, diversity, communication, creative and critical thinking, collaboration and teamwork, service mind and the like are more valuable and practical than ever before in our society, where everyone needs to be constantly re-educated and reskilled. In this scenario, the vision is to provide students with an opportunity to achieve lifetime liberal learning, and the students include both young adults in undergraduate and graduate levels, adults with working experiences, in-service professionals, and those who wish to continue to engage in liberal learning throughout their lifetime.

Implementing this scenario full scale will take time and may not be welcomed or needed in many liberal arts colleges for the time being. Thus, a limited scale adoption of the lifetime liberal learning model is recommended, allowing for the exploration of this model's possibilities in expanding target population via diverse contents and modes of liberal learning, and the building of the organizational competencies needed for disruptive changes that this model requires. For example, a new degree program which develops core competencies of liberal learning can be created. Students apply when they are ready—some earlier, and some much later than age 17. There will be no fixed four-year (or two-year for a M.A. degree) rules of residential learning. Students will be able to choose to study mostly online while sometime in residence over an extended period of years while doing internships or having an early career. They can leave the program to take gap years or get a job and come back again at later stages of their life.

To adopt this scenario on any scale, transformation leadership and creativity of top leaders are essential to ensure policies, curriculum, and organizational structures are reformed to accommodate a range of different learning paths. In addition, full understanding and support from key stakeholders including students, alumni, parents, faculty/staff members, trustees, and others must be sought. To develop online courses and experiential learning opportunities, it is important to use accumulated digital contents during the pandemic and existing OER/MOOCs and build partnerships with other liberal arts colleges and institutions.

16.3 Conclusion: Recommendations for Policy Leaders and Practitioners

There has been an overwhelming consensus for innovative change in liberal arts colleges over recent years, and many liberal arts colleges have reformed their system to attract more and better students and improve effectiveness and efficiency of their programs. While the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed how fragile those reforms

are, it has helped the liberal arts colleges strengthen their infrastructure and develop institutional resilience and member competencies. In their recent book, ‘The Post-Pandemic Liberal Arts College’, Volk and Benedix (2020) urge small liberal arts colleges to not just respond to the financial and social pressures of the pandemic, but to critically review their exclusionary strategies and reinvent themselves to provide students with the skills necessary for the global society and for the post-pandemic world.

This chapter, based on the discussion of four emerging opportunities for the future of liberal arts colleges, explored six possible scenarios for the post-pandemic era that liberal arts colleges may consider in future when reforming their systems. In examining a scenario or a combination of scenario and making decisions on future reform, policy leaders and practitioners in the field of liberal education should consider the following potential strategies.

- When planning for the post-pandemic future, assess resources (e.g., technology infrastructure, time, budget, etc.), capabilities (e.g., faculty and student competencies, institutional resilience, etc.), and experiences (e.g., domestic, and international collaborations, development of online courses, etc.) that your institution has accumulated during the pandemic.
- In selecting and adjusting a scenario or a combination of scenarios, carefully examine the extent of disruption that your institution is willing and able to undergo for changing the future. During this process, voices of various stakeholder groups should be heard, especially for disruptive innovations.
- Review whether the national policies support your institution’s disruptive innovations. In some cases, any significant institutional changes may not be possible due to restrictions in government policies.
- Discuss and decide on how technology will be used in the process of making your institution anew. Remember that technology can be used for sustaining or disruptive; as Bower and Christensen (1995) argued, sustaining technology is the technology used to improve or support the already existing system such as integrating an improved version of LMS in the existing curriculum, while disruptive technology is the technology that disturbs the existing system and creates a new value and market system, i.e., allowing the taking of online courses in various sizes from partner institutions for credit and managing the process using blockchain.
- Discuss and collaborate with your institution’s partner institutions who might have a similar plan for the post-pandemic future. Several scenarios suggested above call for open networking and collaboration with other liberal arts colleges and various types of institutions: As the old saying goes, collaboration is the key to success in sharing resources and maximizing the benefits of online technologies.

Lastly, when planning for the post-pandemic future, it is crucial for leaders and educators to make decisions that lead to strengthening, not weakening, whole person education and dynamic, creative, and international *approaches* to learning, cores of liberal arts education.

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Chapter 17

Conclusion: Nurturing Caring Leaders with a Global Vision for the Post-COVID-19 Pandemic Era



Ka Ho Mok and Insung Jung

Abstract This chapter provides conclusions drawn from the preceding chapters in this volume which address current and upcoming issues of liberal arts education through various perspectives and in diverse contexts while exploring unique approaches to redefining liberal arts education for the future. There is a unifying theme of the critical importance of nurturing future leaders with caring minds and a global vision for the post-pandemic era. This chapter envisions a bright future for liberal learning but only if the values and roles of liberal arts education are redefined and possibly reinvented to adapt to uncertain times, and if institutional leadership is developed to manage future crises. Most importantly, this chapter shows the significant role of liberal arts education in nurturing future young generations who can think globally but act locally, committing to co-create a better world.

Keywords Digital divide · Reinvention of liberal arts education · Caring and global leaders · Post-COVID-19 pandemic era

17.1 Introduction

When this volume was written, the contributors had conceived, developed, and completed their chapters with critical reflections on the value and significance of liberal arts education not only in their own countries/regions but also for future higher education development. This chapter concludes the discussions presented by different authors in this volume, highlighting, in particular the uniquely special role that liberal arts education plays in nurturing caring leaders with a global vision for the post-COVID-19 pandemic era. Part of the materials presented in the chapter is adopted from Mok (2022).

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© The Author(s), under exclusive license to Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2023
I. Jung and K. H. Mok (eds.), *The Reinvention of Liberal Learning around the Globe*,
Crossing Cultures: Liberal Learning for a World in Flux,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-8265-1_17

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The chapters' authors have touched upon major challenges confronted by institutions practicing liberal arts education, and examined the diverse developments of liberal arts education across various parts of the globe. Central to their discussions is the unique role of liberal arts plays in educating and nurturing talent with global vision and a sense of service leadership. The critical reflections on the value of liberal arts education in this book are of relevance and value when the whole of human society has experienced the disruption caused by the sudden outbreak of the COVID-19 in late 2019.

17.2 The Impact of the Pandemic: Widening Gaps Across Higher Education Systems

The unprecedented global health crisis has humbled not only world leaders but also higher education leaders around the world. All teaching and student learning were forced into emergent online learning, while many higher education systems were simply unprepared to adopt the online platforms for engaging students and faculty in teaching, learning, research, and related activities. Although virtual learning and technology-enabled platforms have gradually adopted and developed as a mode of delivery in higher education, international, and comparative research has clearly shown the widening gap between countries with more advanced infrastructure to provide online learning and other countries which simply do not have the appropriate systems in place. According to UNESCO (n.d.), as of April 14, 2020, 188 countries around the world had closed their schools nationwide with over 1.5 billion learners affected, representing more than 91% of the total enrolled learners. Figure 17.1 clearly shows educational inequality being intensified with school closures during the pandemic. Students were offered different forms of remote learning, but diverse learning experiences were reported across different income groups (Vegas, 2020). Countries with sufficient resources were able to offer online learning for their citizens, while only 36% of residents in lower-middle income countries could access online learning (UNESCO, n.d.).

According to a recently published report by McKinsey & Company, the pandemic has adversely affected learning for all students, especially students of color among the Black, Hispanic and Indigenous communities (Dorn et al., 2020). In the Global South, online and distance education programs have tended to be concentrated in urban centers, further intensifying disparities in education (Devkota, 2021). Meanwhile, other research reports the level of disruption in higher education does indeed vary across regions. Nursamsu et al. (2021) reveal that educational quality differs in relation to the regions' development level. It is, perhaps, not surprising that regional disparities in education were found across provinces when online learning was conducted. In Indonesia, for instance, urban areas, when compared with their rural counterparts, would have enjoyed better online learning because of resources concentrated in the former but disadvantaging the latter (Nursamsu et al., 2021). Similar

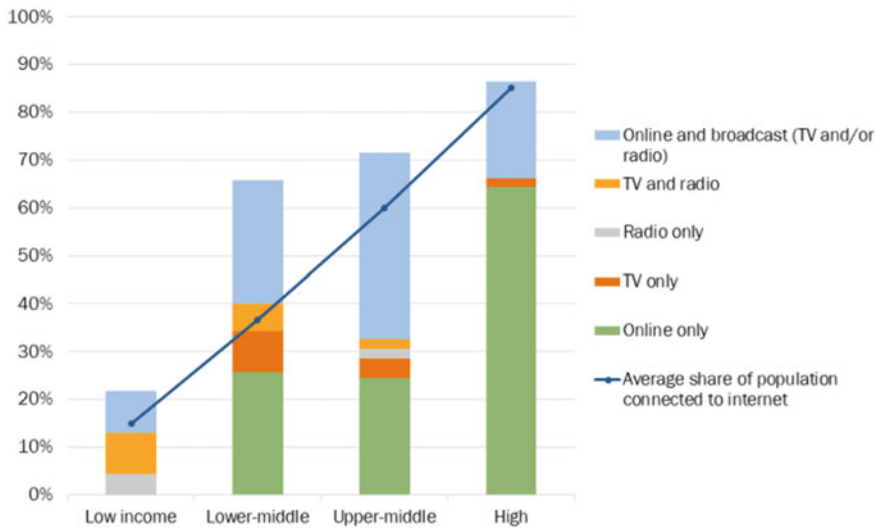


Fig. 17.1 Share of countries responding to school closures with differing forms of remote learning, by income group. *Source* Vegas, E. (2020, April 14). School closures, government responses, and learning inequality around the world during COVID-19. *Brookings*. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/school-closures-government-responses-and-learning-inequality-around-the-world-during-covid-19/> Copyright 2020 by Brookings

experiences can be easily found in other countries with less-developed socioeconomic status (Belay, 2020; UNESCO, n.d.). In addition, rising rates of depression and anxiety due to the loss of student learning and worsening personal well-being have been widely reported during the crisis period (Amoah & Mok, 2022; Mok et al., 2021).

The pandemic has also affected intercultural experiences of students differently depending on their institution's infrastructure and readiness for virtual events. Travel restrictions and social distancing measures have meant digital and online methods being used to replace previous face-to-face events, with virtual student mobility using technology to support cross-border communication, intercultural understanding, and knowledge exchange during the pandemic. With the support of information and communications technology, virtual student mobility is increasingly being used to support international and intercultural learning. This is reflected in a joint statement signed by 33 universities worldwide in support of student mobility, and over 60% of HEIs around the world increasing their virtual mobility during the pandemic (UNESCO, n.d.). Virtual student mobility eliminates the cost of international travel and is more accessible for students with lower socioeconomic status. Virtual student mobility can also be accessed by students who are unable to undertake international travel for assorted reasons such as physical disability. Nonetheless, the intensified educational inequality across different higher education systems and

concerns relating to access to such events remain. To support students' intercultural experiences, institutions need to overcome barriers to virtual student mobility, including infrastructure limitations, concerns relating to the quality of the program and the certificate, if any, different administrative measures between home and host institutions, language barriers, and access to information.

The above discussions tell us that while celebrating how effective has been the introduction of technology-enabled platforms for enhancing students' virtual learning and mobility, we need to be aware of the digital divide between developed and developing countries, and the haves and the have nots. Of course, well before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, deep disparity in higher education existed; recent research, however, suggests the educational inequality has become increasingly intensified during the COVID-19 era (Mok, 2022). The widening gap between the haves and the have nots, in terms of access to the technology-enabled learning and research platforms, must affect students and faculty members' access to such programs and thus further worsen the educational stratification between rich and poor. Chapter 1 points out that small, less-resourced liberal arts institutions have been more seriously affected by the digital gaps.

17.3 The Need for Change in Liberal Arts Education

It is safe to say that the challenges raised by the pandemic are not new at all but have simply amplified existing problems and concerns about liberal arts education around the globe, however, in addition to widened inequality in higher education, other important issues of liberal arts education are identified by our chapter authors. They are.

- Changes in educational trajectories, brought about by major developments in the internationalization and globalization of higher education via such trends as the 'massification' of higher education, online education, cross-border school-enterprise cooperation and certification, student and teacher mobility, and MOOCs (Jiang's Chap. 2; Ke & Zhang's Chap. 13; Einfeld's Chap. 15)
- Pressures for liberal arts institutions to develop advanced technology infrastructure and faculty/staff capacities for technology-intensive teaching and learning environments (Mike's Chap. 5; Zalles, Montúfar, & Velasco's Chap. 6)
- Pressures for quality education to contribute to the development of both workforce skills and whole person leadership for the nation and beyond (Mike's Chap. 5; Al-Lail's Chap. 9)
- Pressures to balance teaching and research (Xiong's Chap. 10), and occupational interests and liberal arts values (Schneider's Chap. 4; Lee's Chap. 7)
- The costs of liberal arts education, with both public and private sectors cutting budgets and leaving liberal arts colleges to find their own resources (Jung's Chap. 1; Abraham's Chap. 11)

To address these issues within liberal arts education, several suggestions are made by the chapter authors. Schneider emphasizes three key themes in Chap. 4: (1) cultivating intellectual development or the powers of the mind; (2) fostering civic and societal responsibility; and (3) helping students integrate, adapt, and apply their learning across multiple contexts. The third, in particular, adds a new responsibility of liberal arts colleges, that is, to focus on integration and application of learning across a wide range of subjects and in various contexts.

Mok, in Chap. 8, concurs with Almendingen et al. (2021) and Lingnan University (2020) that liberal arts colleges should work together to set clear learning outcomes and goals for virtual exchange programs and develop a transparent method for the evaluation and recognition of such programs. Similarly, several authors highlight the importance of deepening inter-university collaboration and cooperation among higher education institutions promoting liberal arts education. Mok succinctly shows how the Alliance of Asian Liberal Arts Universities could enrich not only student learning but also faculty research. Other chapters (Abrahám's Chap. 11 on European Consortium of Liberal Arts and Sciences and Hastings' Chap. 12 on a partnership between a liberal arts college and an educational foundation) also offer relevant experiences highlighting inter-university and cross-border cooperation among liberal arts institutions and with other types of organizations. If institutions with strong liberal arts orientation work together to co-promote liberal arts education; education that is relevant for nurturing young people with leadership qualities and a service mind and an ability to manage the growing pressures of an uncertain future, then we would achieve better outcomes of liberal learning and wider recognition and support from society as a whole.

Gigliotti, in Chap. 14, points out the importance of a values-driven approach to crisis leadership; an approach that reinforces and reflects the core values of liberal arts education. His argument being that "crisis leadership (in the context of liberal arts education) requires a commitment to the preparation of leaders across an institution, an awareness of the power of perception in shaping impressions of an organization, and an unwavering and steadfast commitment to the principles and values that unify the members of a diverse community."

17.4 Implications for Future Liberal Learning

Liberal arts education has evolved, with the liberalization of higher education, to the point that it has much to offer higher education institutions of any kind. As Yonezawa and Shimauchi argue in Chap. 3, there is no one global trend or one direction that all liberal arts institutions are obliged to follow. Instead, our chapter authors have shared their experiences and knowledge about what does or does not work for liberal learning in their own unique context. Several implications for further improvement of liberal learning in the uncertain post-COVID-19 pandemic era can be drawn from their chapters.

Firstly, building leadership and faculty competencies should be regularly, consistently, and systematically promoted. Flexible and competent leadership and faculty capacities have been indicated across several chapters, as a success factor that profoundly impacts the adaptability and prosperity of liberal arts institutions. In essence, the success of liberal arts education depends heavily upon the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the policy makers, administrators, faculty and staff members, and other members involved, whether full- or part-time. Jiang (Chap. 2) and Gigliotti (Chap. 14), in particular, emphasize the importance of leaders' vision and vision sharing in order to be a leading institution, especially in uncertain times of crises. In addition, Zalles, Montúfar, and Velasco, in their Chap. 6, point out the importance of the leaders' global view for the success of a liberal arts institution in a highly internationalized and interconnected world. As Jung et al., (2016, p. 189) argue, the improvement of students' liberal learning can be only achieved by means of "continuous professional development and peer support" and leaders' "trust in, and support for," innovations and experiments.

Secondly, collaborations and partnerships with different types of organizations, such as high schools, colleges and universities, private companies, non-profit organizations, international organizations, and the like, at the individual, institutional, national, regional, and global level across a wide range of areas; credit exchange, study abroad, online course design and sharing, student and faculty research, publications, civic projects, internships, entrepreneurship, should be promoted to strengthen liberal arts institutions and achieve liberal learning goals more effectively and strategically. Several chapters in the volume, including Chaps. 8, 9, 11 and 12, offer useful guidelines for this by examining different types, activities, and purposes of inter-institutional, regional and international collaborations and bilateral partnerships.

Thirdly, there is an urgent need for liberal arts institutions to specify and apply learning outcomes to both ensure and communicate the quality of their liberal arts education. Chap. 4, in particular, offers valuable guidelines and resources for essential learning outcomes of liberal education across all fields of study. The most powerful quality indicator for any institution is whether students have actually developed the competencies specified in the intended learning outcomes. For a long time, liberal arts institutions have focused more on learning processes while ignoring clarifying and measuring learning outcomes. To communicate their success, or indeed or failure, in achieving quality liberal learning, such institutions need to gather data on students' liberal learning outcomes in addition to their inputs and efforts to promote liberal learning.

Fourthly, liberal arts institutions should consider applying various digital options to empower each of their students and provide them with transferrable skills along with a broad knowledge-base for the future. A common thread across several chapters is the argument for integrating digital technology and various digital resources in the liberal learning environments to provide flexible and cost-effective ways of learning. Chapters 13 and 15 discuss the possible options, benefits, and limitations of digital technology and share good practices for liberal arts education. Jung shows in Chap. 16 models of liberal arts education in the future are closely related to the adoption and

integration of digital technologies into the liberal arts curriculum and pedagogy. The extensive experiences with digital technologies gained during the pandemic make now the best of all times for liberal arts institutions to think more proactively about digital integration into their education.

Finally, while liberal arts institutions do indeed need to exploit every opportunity to integrate digital means in their teaching and learning processes, they also need to consider bridging the digital divide that exists between well-resourced and less-resourced countries, institutions, and homes. As argued above and in preceding chapters, exclusion from technology-enhanced liberal learning for reasons of poor infrastructure, gender, income levels, or other circumstances will further exacerbate already existing social-economic and digital divides. There is an overwhelming need for deliberate policies and strategies to lessen the digital divide in liberal learning contexts.

17.5 Concluding Remarks

17.5.1 Conducting Rigorous Research and Developing Theories in Liberal Arts Education

While the chapters in this volume have presented several newly emerging models of liberal learning; online and blended learning, virtual exchange programs, integrating the entrepreneurial spirit and development mind in liberal arts curriculum, and collaborative course design and sharing, they have also raised some important questions. Can online education deliver liberal learning outcomes? Which pedagogical strategies are more effective than others? Are there any changes in the cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes of liberal arts education, both before and after the pandemic? How effectively can vocational interests be reflected in a liberal learning curriculum? Have the hypotheses of liberal arts education been verified? How can liberal learning advance our world? How can research in liberal arts education advance relevant theories? These questions can only be answered by rigorous research as argued in Chap. 2.

Rigorous research is designed based on a theoretical framework, grounded in relevant literature, and carried out with good data collection and analysis methods with an intention to solve meaningful problems. As indicated in Einfeld's Chap. 15, we need more research involving the asking of specific questions, especially those related to effective ways of bringing about liberal learning in both face-to-face and online contexts. We also need empirical evidences on the effectiveness of leadership and policies through rigorous research, as suggested in Gigliotti's Chap. 14. In order for liberal arts education to be widely accepted, highly valued and well-resourced, there is a need for empirical qualitative and quantitative data on the quality of outputs and outcomes and their impact on individuals, local, and global communities as well as on economies. There will, perforce be new and perhaps more serious problems

in the post-pandemic era that need to be solved and therefore, it is time to reform, reimagine, and reinvent liberal arts learning, while being guided by proper theories and rigorous research evidence.

Lewin (1952) said, “There is nothing so practical as a good theory” (p. 169). As Hoover and Donovan (1995, p. 40) summarized, in the social sciences;

- (1) Theory provides *patterns* for the interpretation of data.
- (2) Theory *links* one study with another.
- (3) Theories supply frameworks within which concepts and variables acquire *special significance*.
- (4) Theory allows the interpretation of *larger meanings* of findings for other theorists, researchers and practitioners.

Unfortunately, the field of liberal arts education is short of theories. Theory in liberal arts education can help us organize, summarize, and explain our accumulated knowledge, see where we are, what we need to do and where we should go. It helps us identify meaningful research questions and interpret research across a broad perspective. It can also help us prescribe optimal strategies for and make future predictions of liberal arts education, and thus inform and lead practice in liberal arts education. The field of liberal arts education has been, compared with other fields in education, a theoretical or at best under-theorized. Various theories and models of education can be applied in explaining liberal arts education, but theories which consider unique features and practices of liberal arts education will help us understand our field in a more meaningful way, and move the field forward with a clear purpose. Facing uncertain times, we need theories to cater for the changing landscape in liberal arts education.

17.5.2 Nurturing Global and Caring Leaders for the Post-COVID-19 World

Going through the challenges and difficulties during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, the global higher education community has begun to more clearly realize the value of liberal arts education. Our young leaders completing higher education, quite naturally, care about their professional development and personal career futures but more importantly, higher education systems across various parts of the globe need to find productive ways to nurture future leaders who care not only for their own personal development and domestic issues, but also who can think globally with a caring mind and yet find solutions appropriate for addressing local and regional issues. As Schneider argues in Chap. 4, “the world’s shared future will be in our students’ hands.”

While this volume was undergoing editing, higher education was being influenced by new geo-politics, especially the worsening diplomatic relations between China and the USA and their allies, and the war between Russia and Ukraine, all creating

adverse impacts, not only on the global political economy environment but also on the development of higher education internationally.

Our discussions above have already highlighted the possibly significant contributions of liberal arts education to peace education. Against the background of a highly unstable world, with warfare already happening in several places, leaders in higher education need to pay more attention to the promotion of peace education by integrating liberal learning activities. Engaging students in cross-cultural understanding, immersing them in international studies and comparative research, and exposing them to evidence-based and problem-focused learning and research environments are becoming even important in preparing students for the uncertain future. Aspiring to produce caring leaders with a global vision, appropriately responding to local and regional development needs, our future curriculum and pedagogical models need to be reorganized and reinvented to provide young people with a broad array of curriculum; engaging them in interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, trans-disciplinary, and international learning and research.

It is imperative that we offer our students learning and research opportunities, not only within classroom contexts, but also with diverse and alternative learning modes, such as online classes and virtual exchange programs, which need to be creatively developed to encourage students to become engaged learners in diverse and open learning environments. It is our strong belief that amidst the global health crisis and the unstable political and economic environments, leaders and educators in liberal arts institutions should diligently work together for peace and solidarity for human betterment.

We would like to draw readers' attention to the concluding remarks of Thomas Bach, the president of the International Olympic Committee, made when closing the 2022 Winter Olympics, held in China during the challenging time of the COVID-19; a call upon leaders around the world to follow the spirit of the Olympics:

We are all equal regardless of what we look like, where we come from or what we believe. The unifying power of the Olympic Games is stronger than the forces that want to divide us..... You give peace a chance. May political leaders around the world be inspired by your solidarity and peace (Bach, 2022).

As leaders and educators in higher education, we should respond positively to this call and focus on nurturing our future generations to be socially and globally responsible, adopting comparative and international perspectives in analyzing problems encountered and act appropriately to promote a better and peaceful world. For this purpose, our book chapters, we believe, offer highly relevant insights from international and comparative perspectives.

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