

TRENDS

Influencing Higher Education and the Imperative for Global Studies to Advance Sustainable Innovation and Development

It is important to highlight a few dramatic shifts taking place worldwide that are affecting higher education and, in particular, global studies and the imperative for mainstreaming globalization – advancing diversity, inclusion and cooperation for sustainable innovation and development - across all disciplines. Mobility of talent through multiple paths of migration has led to a global amassing of cultures adding both vitality and uncertainty in national identities and contributing significantly to global innovations. The global landscape is becoming increasingly technological, robotic, virtual and expansive, and extending into all corners of the world, from land to the seas and into outer space. In addition, mass communication through social media is the new reality for public policy dialogue and expression. The economic platform is currently shifting east and south of North America and Europe creating a flatter global environment for trade, prosperity and development while increasingly investments are reaching into the infinite frontier of the universe. At the same time, there is a growing sense of national and global insecurity. Climate change along with other serious and life-threatening issues are being experienced worldwide and in North America at an alarming rate.

The magnitude of global issues facing the sustainability of humanity is not the problem or responsibility of one or more countries any more than are the solutions. These are universal issues requiring all to be involved. Recognizing this, in 2015, the United Nations and its 193 member countries unanimously adopted a universal policy agenda for addressing 17 sustainable development goals referred to as the UNSDGs. Global cooperation is the foundation of success in achieving the UNSDGs for ensuring Earth's sustainable development for the benefit of all. Notably, the 19th century "perceptions of the universe as one interacting entity", as adeptly noted by Alexander Humboldt, are being realized.

Along with such dramatic and sometimes conflicting global developments, the competition for talent, and their ideas and innovations, to engage in all of these developments has led to the substantive growth and competitiveness of higher education worldwide. Talent, not energy, is today's most important natural resource. In this current paradigm, like the STEM disciplines, area and regional expertise, language, global connections, and multiple disciplinary/sector cooperation are essential to all countries, including the United States, in order to offer leadership in advancing global and sustainable development and innovations for the benefit of all.

21st century development, innovation and cooperative decision making requires interdisciplinary engagement from all disciplines. It is intriguing, however, to witness an over-emphasis on the growth of the STEM and professional disciplines at the expense of the social sciences and humanities, including global, area and language studies. Experience manifests repeatedly that multi-disciplinary approaches that combine science with humanity and an eagerness to make a world of a difference is what leads to sustainable innovation.

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“Step out boldly...the science is there and you can have every possible skill set. But it’s the people and their boldness that will make the difference”

Mary Stoertz p. 44, *Hope and Hard Times* by Ted Bernard

Over the past 50+ years, there has been an increased number and variety of international studies programs offered across the country, around the world and within OHIO’s academic community. This community of academic leaders in global and area studies is providing a critical foundation for complementing the social and technological sciences.

“Policymakers do want scholarly expertise, challenging the scientific purists’ strict separation of science and policy. On both sides of the theory/policy divide, the majority of voices clamor for a bridge... The [social science] approaches that the most policymakers identified as “very useful” included area studies, contemporary case studies, historical case studies, and policy analysis.... the thing that policymakers most want from scholars are frameworks for making sense of the world that they have to operate in.”

Paul Avey and Michael Desch (2014)¹

Advances in educational resources and scholarship in global and area studies, languages and cultural competencies are increasing the capacity for sharing understanding and innovations in policy and practice in governance and technology development. This includes the opportunity to foster greater cooperation among countries and communities and across disciplines around the world and increasingly into the universe. At the core is the desire for innovation to occur with a lens of social, economic, and community justice so that all members of society gain from progress and development and actively participate in this universal cultural change.

What is assuring is to see that graduates with social sciences and humanities degrees, on average, fair better economically in the workforce² than their STEM and professional counterparts and fair competitively in leading project management roles³. This is simply an important indication of the critical role all disciplines play as partners in innovation and sustainable development.

¹ Avey, P. and Desch. M. (2014). What Do Policymakers Want From Us? Results of a Survey of Current and Former Senior National Security Decision Makers. Retrieved on September 5, 2017 from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/isqu.12111/epdf>

² Humphreys, D. & Kelly, P. (2014). How Liberal Arts and Sciences Majors Fare in Employment: A Report on Earnings and Long-Term Career Paths. Association of American Colleges and Universities.

³ Report on How Much Canadians Earn According to Their University Major, August 10, 2017, Retrieved from http://dailyhive.com/calgary/canadians-university-major-salary-indeed-2017?utm_source=Academica+Top+Ten&utm_campaign=9237b51886-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_08_11&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_b4928536cf-9237b51886-47759129