Globalizing the Liberal Arts: Provocations for the Future

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AAC&U Annual Conference, January 2017
Overview

- Provocation I: Global Learning and Liberal Arts – Jeffrey Belnap
- Provocation II: Globalizing Knowledge and the Epistemology of Liberal Arts Education – Rebecca Hovey
- Provocation III: Intentionally globalizing the liberal arts in a context of limited resources – Patrick Hagen
- Summing up and discussion
What is Global Liberal Arts Education?
Two Answers:

- GLAE prepares students with multi-disciplinary knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to be effective in a simultaneously interconnected and increasingly conflict-ridden world.
- It is an upgraded version of classical liberal arts education.
- GLAE also refers to the adoption of American-style liberal arts education by non-US institutions around the world. It leads to the integration of the traditional forms, formats and values of liberal learning into local and regional contexts.
- Almost 200 non-US institutions have been identified as having adopted some version US-style liberal arts education.
Work Shop Objectives

- Share strategies and best practices across institutions and institutional kinds so as to promote global liberal learning on our campuses.

- Shine a light on the emerging, world-wide community of practices made up of institutions committed to the ideals of liberal learning.
The Forms of Global Knowledge

- Theories of (Cosmic) Totality: philosophical & theological
- Contemporary Theories of Global Studies & Globalization
- The Liberal Arts & Sciences Disciplinary Ideal (systems & lifeworld)*
  * Jürgen Habermas

The Globalization of Forms**

- Constitutions & Governments
- The Corporation
- Forms of leisure, mass-mediated/digitized subjectivity
- School Systems & Universities: institutions for socializing the young and generating knowledge

**Arjun Appadurai
The Forms of Global Knowledge

- Theories of (Cosmic) Totality: philosophical & theological
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- The Liberal Arts & Sciences Disciplinary Ideal

The Globalization of Forms

- Constitutions & Governments
- Corporate organization
- Forms of leisure, mass-mediated digitized subjectivity
- School systems & Universities
• A range of disciplinary lenses for looking at the world
• A commitment to communication, inquiry, critical thinking, problems solving, innovative thinking
• Rigorous academic skills
• Commitment to the whole person
• Pedagogical innovation/experiential learning/entrepreneurial thinking, etc…
• Arts & Sciences battle ground over faculty resources
• Struggle between “pure” and “careerist” disciplines
• Non-status service teaching

• Stale entry-level courses that also serve as gateways to major
• Clusters of courses on a distribution list united only by ritualistic outcomes statements
Scarce institutional energy to ask important questions about how research-led teaching should be used most effectively to prepare students for the emerging world that they will inhabit.
“American” Universities & Liberal Arts Colleges
Global [Liberal] Learning VALUE Rubric

Global learning is a critical analysis of and an engagement with **complex, interdependent global systems and legacies** (such as natural, physical, social, cultural, economic, and political) and their **implications for people's lives** and the **earth's sustainability**. Through global learning, students should:

1. **become informed, open-minded, and responsible** people who are attentive to diversity across the spectrum of differences,

2. **seek to understand how their actions effect both local and global communities**, and

3. **address the world's most pressing and enduring issues collaboratively and equitably**.
Global Liberal Arts Education: Understanding and Engaging with Global Challenges

Disciplinary Knowledge
- Complex global systems and legacies.
- Implication for lives and the earth’s sustainability.

Values and Dispositions
- Informed, responsible, & attentive to diversity.

Problem Solving Skills
- The effect of actions global community.
- Find solutions to global challenges.
- Global Self-Awareness
- Perspective Taking
- Understanding Global Systems
- Cultural Diversity
- Personal Responsibility
- Applying Knowledge to Contemporary Global Contexts
Provocation I:

Is the Global Learning Value Rubric a viable framework for General Education at all institutions?
Globalizing Knowledge and the Epistemology of Liberal Arts Education

Rebecca Hovey
Knowledge is socially constructed.

Global higher education is a network of social institutions responsible for the production and dissemination of knowledge.

These institutions are also shaped by the social, political, and cultural environments in which they are regulated:

- academic disciplines
- national and local oversight administration
- private philanthropy
- market-based forces that drive enrollment and research funding.
“Globalizing the liberal arts” raises epistemological questions regarding the structures of knowledge production

- Are liberal arts an export model, which reproduces dominant power paradigms across peripheral or non-hegemonic regions; and/or
- Are they an inclusionary model, with increased, global access to the liberal arts educational model;

Or,

- Can the globalizing of knowledge through liberal arts result in transformative, possibly even emancipatory, knowledge that challenges hegemonic social & cultural relations?
How do we assess the structural factors of the production of global knowledge through the liberal arts?

- **Epistemic communities** and the construction of knowledge in context
- “*Gnosis*”, or alternative ways of knowing: can these result in integrated constructions of knowledge through the liberal arts
- How is a locally specific liberal arts model understood within a global ecology of learning?
Provocation II:

- Who are the knowing subjects or members engaged in a specific liberal arts “epistemic community”?
- How are emergent, marginal or indigenous voices engaged in liberal arts learning; how are their knowledges integrated into the curricula?
- How does the representation of these subjects reflect a globalized liberal arts? Where are the gaps? Are specific cultural practices or communities missing?
- At an institutional level, who is included in reconceptualizing the liberal arts in the process of globalization?
Intentionally Globalizing the Liberal Arts in a Context of Limited Resources

Patrick Hagen
Context

- Thanks to Yale-National University of Singapore College
- University of Wisconsin System—my background
- University of Wisconsin-Richland: a two-year, open access, public liberal arts transfer institution granting an associate’s degree, 500-student headcount, severe budget cuts
- University of Wisconsin-Platteville: a four-year, public, regional comprehensive university with a 9000-student headcount, severe budget cuts
- UW-Platteville and UW-Richland state that they provide graduates with a global perspective
Concept

- Conference Theme: Building Public Trust in Higher Education and Equity
- “Providing students with a global perspective”
- Helping students develop their human capacities in a global world/David Killick
Case Study 1: UW-Richland

- November Headline Sunday Wisconsin State Journal: “Tiny Campus, Global Footprint”
- Enrollment in fall 2014: 52 international students from six continents, 20 countries and territories, 12% of student populations, 278% growth in 4 years
- Context: RCM and budget cuts
- Introducing international students to the liberal arts
- Introducing all students to cross-cultural communication and understanding---1-credit intercultural introduction to college
- Project: team-based learning in multicultural groups
Case Study 2: UW-Platteville

- Education abroad has increased 77% in the past five years
- Self-study of international programs based on ACE criteria—recommendations quantitative in nature, add-ons—no changes in course content or structure or new pedagogies
- Critique—need for qualitative assessment of programming already in place and making global perspectives inherent to learning as opposed to add-ons
- Recommendation: signature programs—branding UW-Platteville’s definitional degrees for success in the 21st century
- Example: short-term study abroad course for spring 2017: “Cycling Infrastructure in the Netherlands.”
- Critique: Make the global and humanistic elements of the course explicit—a way of erasing the boundaries between liberal arts and vocational education—conference summary
Provocation III:

- This is a time of significant budget cuts in public higher education. In this context, institutional mission statements and strategic plans at public universities across the country state that we graduate students with a global perspective. This approach tends to be provider-focused, not student focused.

- Our students inhabit a global society where communication with others is essential to their survival and success.

- Are there no-cost or low-cost ways we can globalize the curriculum and help develop the global student?
Summing up

“Temporary Home”, Romania, Madalina Paunica, Carnegie Council 2016 International Photography Competition