

1 *From locally focused institutions intent on access and affordability to higher education, workforce preparation, and community engagement, the contemporary community college is poised as a global partner for the democratization and development of a global workforce.*

Resituating the Community College in a Global Context

Tod Treat, Linda Serra Hagedorn

Community colleges were never designed to be international education centers. In fact, colleges were renamed “community” in lieu of “junior” to specifically highlight the college’s role in serving the needs of the local community. Community colleges’ missions have been traditionally locally focused: meeting the needs of students in transfer, career and technical, developmental, and community education. Importantly, community colleges have had the responsibility to train the community citizenry to meet the needs of local employers, thus creating local workforce development for economic prosperity. Many community college systems contain a local element of funding, such as local property taxes or sales taxes. At the same time, community colleges have historically focused on access, affordability, and convenience that have served their geographic service areas well.

Community needs and demands have driven community colleges to enhance instructional delivery to accommodate busy lifestyles coupled with economic downturns and uncertainties; to build new partnerships; to expand outreach; and to create systems that are highly innovative, flexible, and adaptive. Community colleges have also developed capability to effectively utilize technology for learning, including learning management systems and social media.

The world of the 21st century is very different from what existed when community colleges were established. Today, postsecondary institutions of all kinds can no longer be insulated from global concerns. Nor can students be educated without at least some global knowledge and the expectation of

living in a globalized environment. There is an acute need for increased access to relevant, responsive, socioeconomically progressive international education. The community college is uniquely situated to pivot as a key global partner for the democratization and development of a global workforce. In this introductory chapter to this volume, we revisit the development of international education in the community college and posit that U.S. community colleges, and the community college model in general, are poised to play a crucial role in the evolving global economic, social, and educational environment, should we meet the challenge.

Community College International Education in Three Acts

The concept of a “flat” globalized world in which technological and economic interconnectivity leads to a reduced state or geographical isolation (Friedman, 2005) can be contrasted with the concept of a “spiky” world in which intellectual capital (talent), technology infrastructure, and tolerance create magnets for growth (Florida, 2005a, 2005b). For community colleges, the world has gone from spiky to flat.

Act One: Pre-9/11, a Spiky World. Prior to September 11, 2001, globalization was largely an economic discussion, not a lived experience. International education as a concept was rooted in notions of a liberal education, not global skills or global security. For community colleges intent on meeting local needs, the level of global outreach was largely determined by the nature of the local district. Institutions that resided in districts with a culturally diverse population or global companies, or that were influenced by global economic exchange, may have developed considerable capacity for international activity. For institutions in districts that lacked these elements, however, the story was quite different. The combination of local mission and local funding exerted tremendous pressure to remain locally focused, leading to low interest by college leadership and others toward international efforts, as well as a lack of trustee board and community support for international endeavors that predictably resulted in low international student populations. Pre-9/11, the community college world was spiky, not flat, meaning that while a few community colleges were very internationalized, most were firmly committed to local interests.

In 2007, New Directions published *International Reform Efforts and Challenges in Community Colleges*. The editors, Rosalind Latiner Raby and Edward J. Valeau, devoted the volume to three issues: leadership; institutional development and impact of international education; and, finally, international education as a “catalyst for educational revitalization” (Raby & Valeau, 2007, p. 3). In addition to providing a historical development of international education, the volume was persuasive in making the case for international education’s value; the importance of leadership, faculty, curricula, and assessment focused on international aims; and institutional approaches, such as aligning competing interests and taking an integrated

approach. These issues remain relevant today; strands of continuance between Raby and Valeau's volume and our own are evident.

Act Two: Post-9/11, a Flat World. Raby and Valeau's volume was produced with September 11, 2001, as its backdrop. As a consequence, the authors addressed the need for increasing understanding of other cultures, as well as hinting at societal fears of particular cultural groups driven by 9/11 and post-9/11 conflicts. In short, the post-9/11 context for community colleges was very different from the pre-9/11 context. Strategic interests in international engagement increased international activity in the form of development work intended to advance stability and exchange for cultural understanding. Increased participation through consortia, study-abroad opportunities, and inclusion of specific global learning outcome goals defined a post-9/11 *flattening* in which both internationalized and localized community colleges were affected by global events. Whether urban or rural, community colleges everywhere now feel the effects of globalization and are compelled to address these effects at some level.

While increased efforts to enhance international education subsequent to September 11, 2001, may have been motivated in part as a response to the event, international educational activity in recent years has been influenced by additional drivers: globalization, technology, and global demographics. In *Young World Rising*, Salkowitz (2010) warns that dramatic global population increases are unequally distributed. The developed world is aging while that of the developing world is young. Three billion of the 6.7 billion people on the planet are under 24 years old. Countries like India, Nigeria, Mexico, Brazil, Indonesia, Colombia, South Africa, the Philippines, and Vietnam are currently very young, with low per capita incomes but high technology adoption rates. These countries have the potential to gain significantly in a global economy in which traditional economic powerhouses in Europe, North America, and Japan are graying.

Salkowitz (2010) identifies and espouses a new kind of economic movement, which he refers to as "young world entrepreneurship," that is both economic and social (2010). Young world entrepreneurship is collaborative and creative, utilizing the unique blend of public, private, and non-governmental resources available to communities and individuals. Young world entrepreneurship recognizes the economic potential of a flat world in which individual knowledge and skills can be used to find market niches in local villages or across the globe. Salkowitz sees great potential in the emergence of this young world economy, stating that "globalization unleashes talent without borders" (p. 21).

In some regions, however, the promise of economic prosperity fostered by young world entrepreneurship has been largely suppressed due to long-standing autocratic regimes, low business investment due to regional instability, and high unemployment. The Middle Eastern context, in particular, has been an area of concern due to both the inability of youth to find meaningful work and the high levels of religiosity. In many cases, the unem-

ployed are highly educated but have received a traditional liberal arts and sciences education without employable skills. These youth lack economic agency. Armed with cell phones, Internet access, and time, legions of youth in such situations have the potential for large-scale crowdsourcing directed at simple disruption or political engagement (Herrera, 2010).

Act Three: The Post Flat World. In a post flat world, the opening of areas to trade and communications leads to conditions in which talent, technology, and tolerance become conceivable *if* an educational system like a community college is available to provide skills development. Friedman (2013) is now observing a rise of a “virtual middle class” in developing nations in which a “massive diffusion of powerful, cheap computing power via cellphones and tablets over the last decade has dramatically lowered the costs of connectivity and education—so much so that many more people in India, China and Egypt . . . now have access to the kind of technologies and learning previously associated solely with the middle class.” The potential for U.S. community colleges to engage in this world has never been greater, whether in delivering programs or in advancing development of community college systems in other nations.

The community college, positioned as it is to be flexible, adaptive, open, and focused on student success, is poised to contribute across the world, but, to do so, it must engage while building capacity to advance the work for the betterment of students and communities. Inevitable forces driving globalization can allow individual talent to be leveraged through social networking for collective action or engagement independent of the geographical constraints conceptualized by Florida (2005a, 2005b). The post flat world is one in which freedom from time and distance constraints leads to new dynamics for growth and attraction of talent. Community and economic growth across a post flat world can create a new form of spiking in which local communities that fail to engage in the world lose. Providing global opportunity with local impact is thus the challenge before *all* community colleges.

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TOD TREAT is vice president for Student and Academic Services at Richland Community College in Decatur, Illinois, and adjunct assistant professor in the Department of Education Policy, Organization, and Leadership at the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign.

LINDA SERRA HAGEDORN is professor and associate dean in the College of Human Sciences at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa.

