

Global Business Education Program

A New Model for Global Business Education Program:
Global Industrial Field Experience

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Introduction

In 2007 the Association of American Colleges and Universities published a report entitled College Learning for the New Global Century. (2007) The Association:

represents over 1,100 colleges and universities of every type and size: large and small, public and private, research and master's universities, liberal arts colleges, community colleges, and state systems. It is the only major higher education association whose sole focus is the quality of student learning in the college years. (Association 2007, page vii)

The report is the culmination of a decade-long initiative called Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP): Everyone as a Nation Goes to College.

Why such an emphasis upon the need for the nation to go to college? Because, suggests the report:

In recent years, the ground has shifted for Americans in virtually every important phase of life – economic, global, cross-cultural, environmental, civic. The world is being dramatically reshaped by scientific and technological innovations, global interdependence, cross-cultural encounters, and change in the balance of economic and political power.

These waves of dislocating change will only intensify. The context in which today's students will make choices and compose lives is one of disruption rather than certainty, of interdependence rather than insularity. This volatility also applies to careers. Studies show that Americans already change jobs ten times in the two decades after they turn eighteen,

with such change even more frequent for younger workers. (Association
2007, page 1)

This volatile world of “global interdependence, cross-cultural encounters, and change in the balance of economic and political power” will demand that colleges/universities rethink every aspect of their business curriculum and educational processes. What essential knowledge and experiences must colleges/universities make available for students who will participate in what the report calls a “New Global Century?” In particular, what will be required from a Christian worldview to prepare students to be ‘salt and light’ in this global, cross-cultural world?

A Global Environment

Much has been written about the global business environment but what exactly is meant by the term 'global?' And, what difference, if any, does it's definition make to those who hold a Christian worldview? The answers to these questions help to forge a vision -- a paradigm -- of how to move forward with the review and design of instructional venues that will equip students to meet the challenges of this "New Global Century."

The concept of 'global' can be considered from a number of different viewpoints. The most elemental, and probably the most often thought of, is from a geographic viewpoint. From this viewpoint the nations of the world are considered from their land area relative size and physical position in the earth. From this viewpoint, the most globally significant regions are Southeastern Africa, Middle East, North America, South America, North Africa while the least important include Central Africa, Southern Asia, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, and Japan. (“Land Area,” 2008) A second viewpoint is that a population. From this viewpoint, the measurement is not

land area but rather population density. Here China, India, and Japan are globally significant countries while countries like Panama, Namibia and Guinea-Bissau are insignificant because of their small populations. ("Total Population," 2008)

Clearly, the viewpoint chosen will affect and shape the types of instructional content and experiences considered as necessary to prepare students to be effective in the "New Global Century."

Although each of these viewpoints, and others, conditions the global business environment none of them captures the essential element of business -- the exchange of goods and services between individuals. Since the foundation of business is transactional, it is important that the concepts guiding the development of the instructional material and experiences for 'global' business education be rooted and grounded in a transactional model.

Such a model is clearly provided in the Bible. The covenant God made with Abram was "And I will make you a great nation. And I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed." (NASB, Gen. 12:2-3) And so from a very early time, the biblical focus was upon "the families of the earth..." -- a global perspective.

Global Competencies Literature Review

As companies are moving from the international to multinational, numerous scholars and practitioners point out the different competencies needed by global managers.

Central to global management for Rhinesmith (1993) was developing and possessing a global mindset, mindset being defined as the filter through which we look at the world. He suggested that people with global mindsets seek to continually expand their knowledge, have a highly developed conceptual capacity to deal with the complexity of global organizations, are extremely flexible, strive to be sensitive to cultural diversity, are able to intuit decisions with inadequate information, have a strong capacity for reflection, are open to exchanging ideas and concepts across borders, and are able to break down provincial ways of thinking. His emphasis was placed on balancing global and local needs, and being able to operate cross-functionally, cross-divisionally, and cross-culturally around the world. Funakawa (1997) considers that trans-cultural management requires these five core competencies: the geocentric mindset, strategic focus, cross-cultural communication skills, culturally sensitive management processes, and synergy learning systems. Spreitzer, McCall, & Mahoney (1997) identify fourteen dimensions to predict international executive potential within the competence theoretical field. These include eight end-state competencies with sensitivity to cultural differences and six learning-oriented dimensions, including: using feedback, culturally adventurous mindset, seeking opportunities to learn, openness to criticism, seeking feedback, and flexibility. DeSimone & Harris (1998) identify international future competencies including: knowledge, international experience, self-management skills, integrity, and flexibility. Gregersen, Mosison, & Black (1998) discovered in their research of global companies across Europe, Asia and North America that global leaders needed to exhibit character, embrace duality, and demonstrate savvy. Inquisitiveness is a central force underlying these three characteristics. They also listed four strategies that, when properly used, are effective at developing global leaders: travel, teams, training, and transfers. Petrick, Scherer, Rrodzinski, Quinn, & Ainina (1999) identified four global management practices as ne-

cessary for improving an organization's strategic competitiveness: global leadership skills, executive oversight responsibilities for global corporate reputation, an annual global reputational audit, and global awards and rankings. In addition, excellent global leaders have a leadership style that generates superior corporate performance by balancing four competing criteria of performance: profitability and productivity, continuity and efficiency, commitment and morale, and adaptability and innovation. Maznevski & DiStefano (2000) emphasized the importance of global leaders being team players. Marquardt & Berger (2000) in their survey of 12 global leaders identified eight common attributes: an ability to develop and convey a shared vision, a service servant orientation, commitment to risk-taking and continuous innovation, a global mindset, comfort and confidence with technology, competence in systems thinking, recognition of the importance of ethics and spirituality in the workplace, and a model for lifelong learning. McNally & Parry (2000) identify necessary skills of the transnational manager include global perspective, local responsiveness, synergistic learning and cross-cultural interaction. Caligiuri & Santo(2001) define global competence in terms of eight specific dimensions of knowledge, abilities, and personality characteristics: Ability to transact business in another country, ability to change leadership style based on the situation, knowledge of the company's worldwide business structure, knowledge of international business issues, ability to network of professional contact worldwide, openness, flexibility, and personality to reduce ethnocentrism. Goldsmith & Greenberg (2003) show why the skills of today's global leaders won't be enough and why tomorrow's leaders won't resemble today's. They try to identify five new "factors of leadership" and their implications: global thinking, appreciation of diversity, technological savvy, willingness to partner and openness to sharing leadership. Then they explain what it will mean to lead in an era where intellectual capital is the dominant source of value; how to lead people whose backgrounds and values

may be radically dissimilar from yours; and why achieving personal self-mastery is now a fundamental prerequisite for leading others.`

Overview of Selected International Programs

Creating globally competent citizens capable of thriving in the twenty-first century workforce is an undeniable thrust of global education. But most universities provide only a menu of options: international studies courses, language courses, study abroad and internship opportunities.

Smaller number offer unique programs such as interdisciplinary and work on or experiment oriented global studies. In the recent past, many scholars have pointed out the weakness of traditional global education programs.

Pfeffer & Fong (2002) insisted that most leadership development programs, whether corporate or academic, global or domestic, have been ineffective and expensive. McNulty & Canty (1995) identified the weakness of traditional leadership development program are caused by a number of factors, most notably: separation existing between the learning and action, little transference of learning to the workplace, rapidly changing business environment and slow changing format of the development programs, and finally the absence of reflective thinking in the education process. Dilworth (1998) wrote that global leadership development, as practiced by most organizations "produce individuals who are technologically literate and able to deal with intricate problem-solving models, but are essentially distanced from the human dimensions that must be taken into account. Leaders thus may become good at downsizing and corporate restructuring, but cannot deal with a demoralized workforce and the resulting longer-term challenges". Lynam (2000) pointed out typical leadership development programs provide little of the social and interpersonal

aspects of the organizations and tend to focus on tactical rather than strategic leadership. Conner (2001), in her discussion of global leaders at Colgate Palmolive as well as Neary & O'Grady (2000), in their case study of TRW, noted that developing global leadership skills requires combining local-based classroom teaching with real life learning experiences from often-uncomfortable locations around the world. Mintzberg and Gosling (2002) observed that contemporary business education focuses on the function of business more than the practice of managing.

These limitations and shortcomings in global leadership development programs have caused educational organizations to seek more effective ways to develop global leaders. Followings are some good examples of global leadership development programs.

Work on Projects of the University of Washington

At the University of Washington, programs at the undergraduate and graduate school level pair teams of students with local businesses to work on international business projects. The MBA Field Study Program and the International Projects class offer business school students and undergraduates the opportunity to work on projects with local businesses. The teams develop recommendations to increase their competitiveness and to help them take advantage of business opportunities overseas. Some students even conduct research for Washington businesses while they are studying abroad. The University of Washington boasts the participation of over one hundred companies, including Microsoft and Starbucks.

Global Service Learning Project of CIEE (Council on the International Educational Exchange)

Global Business Education Program

Service-learning is a pedagogy in which students engage in activities designed to enhance learning by integrating appropriate community-based projects into their coursework, and by reflecting on the experience in order to promote their own development (Jacoby and Associates, 1996).

Service Learning is a new model, now applied to international management education. It is new, but not discipline bound. Instead of a classroom-based learning context. It maintains reciprocity with the community, an extra-university, community based activity, and a student reflection component necessary for solidifying the learning experience. One modification is found at the University of St. Thomas in MN. UST has offered courses in engineering, communication studies, and French which have been structured to include interdisciplinary collaborations with a global Service Learning component in the developing world. UST has provided the classes as a part of the regular course work associated with each discipline and are conducted as regular classes. The only structural difference is that the subset of students involved in the international community based project meet weekly for a seminar-style meeting and the three groups of ten to fourteen days students travel to an international destination. Senior capstone and independent study classes have been used and lend themselves to the project. The supplemental seminar meetings are used to study the country's culture and current political and economic situation, to exchange project information between teams, and to discuss trip logistics.

Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) of The Georgia Institute of Technology

GT has selected two initiatives for QEP to strengthen the opportunities for the undergraduate students to be well prepared to practice their disciplines in a global context and to strengthen the opportunities for them to enhance their skills in scholarship and innovation through research. The first initiative, referred to as the International

Plan, seeks to increase the number of undergraduate students who graduate with global competence in the international practice of their major. This initiative involves a unique degree-long program that integrates international studies and experiences into any major. Graduates of the program will be proficient in a second language; be knowledgeable about comparative international relations, the world economy, and the socio-political systems and culture of at least one other country or world region; and be able to practice their discipline within an international context. Students completing the program will receive the degree designation “International Plan” on their transcripts and diplomas to signify the depth and breadth of their global competence in their major.

The second initiative seeks to increase the number of undergraduate students participating in research and encourage more students to pursue a research career.

This effort is based on two programs known as the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) and the Research Thesis Option. The Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program seeks to facilitate the participation of more undergraduate students in research, encourage longer research experiences, and improve the quality of these experiences through faculty mentoring. The Research Thesis Option is designed for those students who seek an intensive research experience and possibly a research career. Students completing the Research Thesis Option will receive the recognition “Research Thesis Option” on their transcripts to signify the extra depth and breadth of their research experience.

Centers for International Business Education and Research

The Centers for International Business Education and Research (CIBER) were created through the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988. These centers are located at 30 universities across the country, with more than 900 programs geared toward increasing the international competitiveness of U.S. firms. Their mission is to serve as a resource for the business and academic communities on international business issues. CIBER institutions teach business techniques and strategies with an international component, provide instruction in foreign languages critical for U.S. business, conduct research and training in the global aspects of trade and commerce, provide an outstanding international business education for students, hold events of interest to local businesses, and serve other regional higher education institutions and faculty.

A New Model of Global Industrial Field Experience

In 2008, Handong Global University in Pohang, South Korea and LeTourneau University in Longview, Texas initiated a joint venture called: Global Industrial Field Experience in America (GIFEA). The purpose of this joint venture was to create an environment where students from the two universities could interact with one another while applying their knowledge and skills in answering a specific set of questions provided by a company facing global business questions. The concept of 'global' guiding this activity is not one of the geographic or population dimension but an interpersonal one. The principles underpinning the joint venture were the biblical concepts of service and evangelism.

Background

The genesis of GIFEA arose from the early interactions between faculty from Handong Global University (HGU) and LeTourneau University (LETU). LeTourneau University faculty first began to visit Handong Global University in the 2006-2007 academic year. These early interactions lead to the formulation of a plan that would provide an American industrial field experience for HGU students. The plan would be a new, innovative, bold initiative of HGU that would bring HGU students to America for a month long industrial field educational experience.

Framework

The framework for GIFEA, in its simplest form, reflects the concept that "a cord of three is not soon broken;" in its broadest form, it consists of three essential elements: HGU, LETU, and American industries. The uniqueness of GIFEA arises from a design that stresses an interactive, dynamic exchange between these three elements. This interactive, dynamic design permeates and conditions all aspect of the GIFEA framework. This results in significant 'added value' for each of the elements.

GIFEA Envisioned

Business, computer science, and engineering students from HGU were to join with their counterparts at LETU where they would work together on a 'live' project for one of the major international manufacturing businesses in Longview, Texas. The GIFEA framework called for them to be placed in mixed teams (with HGU students as leaders); share a common housing facility ('the International House') on LETU's campus; and, participate in a variety of daily educational activities both on and off LETU's campus. Educational activities include lectures by HGU and LETU faculty, guest speakers from industries in Longview, moderated group discussions, assigned readings, and 'hands-on' work as teams. The teams would strive to answer a set of specific ques-

tions posed by an international manufacturing business participant. For 2008, the questions supplied by the business participant focused upon the areas of general business, computer science, and engineering as they related to the participating company's growth in the Chinese market.

Expectations

First and foremost, it was expected that the GIFEA experience would significantly challenge the students who participate. It would require them to reflect upon many different aspects of their knowledge and skill. For example, do HGU and LETU students have the same understanding of a question / problem or does one's individual cultural background condition one's understanding? Is the engineering solution the same in every cultural setting? It would challenge them as they work in teams as leaders and team members. How do I as a LETU student relate to the leadership of my HGU counterpart? How is the communication within a team affected by the different language and cultural backgrounds of the members?

Second, it was expected that the GIFEA experience would broaden and deepen the present beneficial relationship between HGU and LETU. This would occur at both institutional and faculty levels. The GIFEA initiative would require the participation of additional faculty and administrators at both universities providing a venue where mutual trust and respect could grow.

And last, it was expected that the GIFEA experience would yield meaningful results for the American industry participants. Since the framework for GIFEA specifies that the student teams will work on a 'live' problem posed by an industrial participant, it was expected that the industrial participant would derive direct benefits from the work of the student teams.

Summary

The “New Global Century” will demand much from the business programs at colleges/universities in both America and around the world. This will be particularly true for Christian colleges/universities. There are even now many voices declaring the meaning and significance of ‘global’ It is essential that one of these voices be one declaring a meaning based upon a biblical worldview. The educational experiences and content required as a foundation for the students who will be ‘salt and light’ in this dynamic new environment must provide for a understanding based not upon geography or demographics but rather upon Christian service and love. The great need is for these new century students to be ‘salt and light’ in business enterprises around the globe. The GIFEA initiative between Handong Global University and LeTourneau University provided valuable knowledge about how to best structure both content and field experiences for students in this “New Global Century.” It is a solid foundation from which to launch new global business education program initiatives.

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Global Business Education Program

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