From the Editors

The community college, positioned as it is to be flexible, adaptive, open, and focused on student success, is poised to contribute across the world. To do so—to advance the work for the betterment of students and communities—it must engage internationally while building capacity. The purpose of this volume of *New Directions for Community Colleges* is to explore the community college in an international context. The authors address the needs and interests of scholars in the field and leaders on the front line of educating students in a globalized world. The contributors are deeply committed to the essential work of community colleges in the world, addressing global ideals, values, competencies, and understanding in a local context. To this end, they reflect on how individual community colleges have internationalized, how models and partnerships can aid progression to comprehensive internationalization, and how international systems consider adoption and adaptation. They point to a crucial vision for the future: Globalization has moved the U.S. community college steadily from international education as an add-on to international education as a choice, and now to international education as a crucial, integrated mission that has drawn increased interest from other nations intent on an educated, skilled citizenry. The community college is no longer about the United States; the community college is for all of us, a world phenomenon.
The Community College in a Global Context

Tod Treat
Linda Serra Hagedorn
EDITORS

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CONTENTS

EDITORS’ NOTES
Tod Treat, Linda Serra Hagedorn .......................... 1

1. Resituating the Community College in a Global Context
Tod Treat, Linda Serra Hagedorn
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. .......................... 5

2. Building Support for Internationalization Through
Institutional Assessment and Leadership Engagement
Bonnie Bissonette, Shawn Woodin
This chapter presents a model illustrating the progression of interna-
tionalization at community colleges using high-level indicators for
evaluating institutional efforts in charting strategic plans for deeper
global engagement. ........................................................................................................... 11

3. International Students as a Resource for Achieving
Comprehensive Internationalization
Michael Brennan, Donald A. Dellow
This chapter describes how the American higher education system is
about to witness unprecedented growth in the number of foreign stu-
dents studying on U.S. campuses. Presidents and governing board
members are challenged to leverage this threshold moment to achieve
comprehensive internationalization. .................................................................................. 27

4. Internationalization and Faculty-Led Service Learning
Geoffrey W. Bradshaw
This chapter examines faculty-led study-abroad programs as a strategy
for increasing the breadth and depth of internationalization in com-
munity college education and uses the case study of Madison Area
Technical College to examine the role of comprehensive international-
ization in community college education. ........................................................................... 39

5. Transforming International Education Through Institutional
Capacity Building
Jack Bermingham, Margaret Ryan
This chapter is a story about one community college and how it trans-
formed itself through comprehensive internationalization within the
context of globalization. ...................................................................................................... 55
6. Strategic Partnerships in International Development
*Tod Treat, Mary Beth Hartenstine*
This chapter provides a framework and recommendations for development of strategic partnerships in a variety of cultural contexts. Additionally, this study elucidates barriers and possibilities in inter-agency collaborations. Without careful consideration regarding strategic partnerships’ approaches, functions, and goals, the ability to successfully implement international development projects is compromised.

7. The History and Future of Community Colleges in Vietnam
*Anh T. Le*
This chapter describes the status of community colleges in Vietnam in the current context of the Vietnamese higher education system. Historical background and suggestions for the future development of Vietnamese community colleges are also provided.

8. Bringing Community Colleges to Tunisia
*Linda Serra Hagedorn, Wafa Thabet Mezghani*
This chapter focuses on the country of Tunisia and explores the possibility of bringing aspects of the American community college to the country to bring about needed reform and relief from unemployment.

9. U.S. Community Colleges and a Response to the Arab Spring
*John W. Shumaker*
The tumultuous events of the Arab Spring have challenged higher education systems throughout the Middle East and North Africa to become more responsive to citizens who are impatient for change. Community colleges in the United States can play a vital role in supporting much-needed reforms. This article looks at the possibilities and the challenges that community colleges in the United States must anticipate as they develop new partnerships in the region.

INDEX
Editors’ Notes

The purpose of this volume of New Directions for Community Colleges is to explore the community college in an international context in an effort to address the needs and interests of both scholars in the field and leaders on the front line of educating students in a globalized world. The contributors to this volume are deeply committed to the essential work of community colleges in the world, simultaneously addressing global ideals, values, competencies, and understanding in a local context.

In Chapter 1, we reframe the U.S. community college in a global context. Our premise, which is supported throughout the volume, is that international education is core to our mission, that the community college is rapidly becoming less about the United States and more about all of us. Internationalization through people, planning, and partnerships has a dramatic impact on learning, on workforce preparation, and, in a few notable cases, on burgeoning democratic identities worldwide.

Chapters 2 and 3 provide models for planning and implementing international education. Bonnie Bissonette and Shawn Woodin provide a model for enhancing internationalization at community colleges that attempts to address both the community college context and a developmental approach that moves from isolated to integrated activities. In addition, community colleges should work to develop leadership support beginning with the board of trustees and executive leadership. Michael Brennan and Donald A. Dellow provide a rationale for comprehensive internationalization and create a sense of urgency, illustrating that, if community colleges fail to integrate international education as a core element, they do so to the detriment of their communities and their students.

Chapters 4 and 5 present cases of transformational institutional internationalization. Geoffrey Bradshaw details an “arc of community college internationalization” that leverages regional consortia, obtains external funding to achieve staffing and infrastructure development, generates credibility through continuous assessment and improvement, and builds capacity and involvement of faculty in field studies and service learning to create experiential learning experiences for students. Jack Bermingham and Margaret Ryan provide insight into the Highline Community College strategy for internationalization, which couples deep professional development of faculty and staff and wide-ranging international development projects to transform an institution.

In Chapter 6, Tod Treat and Mary Beth Hartenstine outline a model for strategic partnerships in which resource needs, purpose-driven approaches, cultural dimensions, and social network dimensions all play a role in deter-
mining what partnerships to prioritize, how to assess their success, and how to sustain them.

Chapters 7, 8, and 9 move the focus to developments outside the United States that so dramatically affect the future of international education in community colleges. Anh T. Le outlines the growth and progression of the burgeoning community college system in Vietnam. Linda Serra Hagedorn and Wafa Thabet Mezghani address efforts to bring community colleges to Tunisia, outlining the specific cultural attributes that must be considered for successful adaptation of the community college model. The important efforts in these two countries are but a few of a host of non-U.S. community college systems now in development, illustrating both the recognition internationally of the effectiveness of the model and the deep responsibility of us all to provide support and partnership.

The final chapter of the volume presents a broader perspective addressing the potential impact of community college adoption in the Middle East and North Africa. In Chapter 9, John Shumaker of AMIDEAST suggests that three systemic issues must be addressed as community college models are considered: levels of institutional autonomy, leadership, and student access and enrollment flexibility. Institutionally, these issues are manifest in the degree of stakeholder engagement, level of focus on student success, balance of theory and practice, and methods of teaching and learning.

In the end, this volume’s reflection on how individual community colleges have internationalized, how models and partnerships can aid progression to comprehensive internationalization, and how international systems consider adoption and adaptation points to a crucial vision for the future: Globalization has moved the U.S. community college steadily from international education as add-on to international education as a choice, and now to international education as a crucial, integrated mission that has drawn increased interest from other nations intent on an educated and skilled citizenry. The community college is no longer about the United States; the community college is for all of us, a world phenomenon.

Our appreciation goes out to the authors for their commitment to this international work and for sharing that work through this volume. As with all editorial work, the twists and turns needed to finalize the volume required patience and quick responses on the part of the authors, for which we are grateful. Finally, we wish to thank the editors of New Directions for Community Colleges for their continued commitment to bridging research and practice and for offering a venue for dialogue and professional development that advances the community college mission.

Tod Treat
Linda Serra Hagedorn
Editors
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.
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.

**References**


