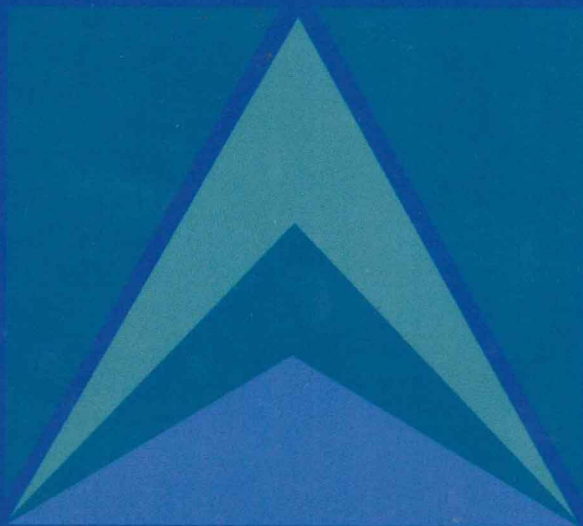


MISSING THE BOAT

The Failure to Internationalize
American Higher
Education



Craufurd D. Goodwin
and
Michael Nacht

Missing the boat

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American higher education

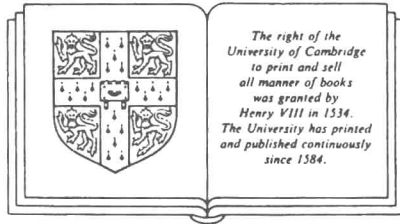
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MISSING THE BOAT

For many faculty the desire and need to go abroad are inherent in the nature of their discipline. For others the thought of going abroad for scholarly purposes is completely alien. This book, which was sponsored by the Council for International Exchange of Scholars, looks in depth at the international experience of American faculty. Goodwin and Nacht examine the type of faculty who go abroad and their reasons for doing so, the incentives and disincentives for faculty travel abroad, the attitudes prevalent on U.S. campuses toward such activities, the special obstacles and risks faced by faculty who commit themselves to an international experience, and the effects of foreign experience among the faculty on the internationalization of U.S. campuses. In preparing the book, the authors conducted extensive interviews with faculty at thirty-seven institutions of higher education.

Introduction

For many faculty the desire and the need to go abroad are inherent in the nature of their discipline, and for centuries scholars have traveled far and wide for academic purposes. For other faculty the thought of going abroad for scholarly purposes is completely alien. For many, however, the possibility of time abroad is simply not feasible, for a variety of personal considerations and a multitude of other reasons. To ask faculty whether they would go abroad for academic purposes generates many responses, often conflicting, that reveal the complexity of the role of international experience in their professional careers.

The Council for International Exchange of Scholars (CIES) has played a unique role in the more than forty years that it has worked with the Fulbright Scholar Program. We have sought to attract faculty for Fulbright research grants and lectureships, originally in a handful of countries; today we send approximately one thousand U.S. faculty abroad annually to more than 120 countries. Unlike most other programs supporting scholarly activity abroad, a high percentage of Fulbright grants for faculty are for overseas lecturing opportunities, and CIES has been keenly aware of the obstacles scholars face in going abroad in this capacity. However, all other distinguished fellowship programs for overseas research, as well as U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) funded technical assistance initiatives and campus-based programs that offer opportunities for faculty, have had difficulties attracting applicants at one time or another.

On the one hand, faculty mobility seems more pronounced, but on the other, we have seen clear signs of intransigence, unwillingness, or inability to go abroad. We have understandably

wanted to know more about the international experience of faculty and to understand why so many face obstacles in going abroad or, upon return, encounter little recognition for their experience. At a time when our colleges and universities are espousing the importance of developing a strong international dimension and are reinstating language and international studies courses, it is baffling to us that so many faculty are not attracted to spending one or two terms abroad. Wherein lies the incentive, and what are the obstacles?

With the generous support of The Pew Charitable Trusts, CIES has been able to undertake a study of the international experience of faculty. We were fortunate that Craufurd Goodwin and Michael Nacht, who had already completed four studies on international education issues, agreed to take on this project. Goodwin and Nacht are both internationalists in their academic specialties, and both have held administrative positions within their institutions. Thus, they combined an academic and international perspective, coupled with a good working knowledge of university administration. Their recent studies on international education, begun in 1982, gave them particular insight into student exchange issues, including the relationship of faculty to these activities. All of these studies have been hailed as important instruments to generate reflection and dialogue. They have prepared provocative and analytical essays on topics relevant to policy-making committees, rather than statistically based studies for the scholarly community. It is this same type of approach that CIES chose to use in addressing the topic of the international experience of U.S. faculty.

We asked Goodwin and Nacht to undertake a study that would better inform us on the international experience of U.S. faculty. The questions to be posed were these: What type of U.S. faculty go abroad, and for what reasons? What are the incentives and disincentives for these sojourns? What trends are discernible in faculty experience abroad? What are the attitudes prevalent on U.S. campuses toward such activities? What are the special obstacles and risks faced by faculty who commit themselves to an international experience? What are the effects of foreign experi-

ence among the faculty on the internationalization of U.S. campuses in general? What are the central issues for debate that command further attention?

Goodwin and Nacht approached this report as they had their earlier reports by a system of extensive campus visits and interviews. They went to thirty-seven institutions of higher education in four different regions: ten in the Pacific northwestern states of Washington and Oregon, seven in the southeastern states of Georgia and South Carolina, ten in Massachusetts, and ten in the Rocky Mountain states of Utah and Colorado. Most of the institutions had not been visited by Goodwin and Nacht in the course of their previous studies. (A full list of the institutions visited is contained in the Appendix.) The institutions were selected intentionally for their heterogeneity; they are public and private, urban and rural, large and small, secular and church related. We specifically chose institutions that had a reputation for substantial interest and experience in international programs and those about which we knew very little. Our desire was to seek a cross-section of all types of institutions and not to focus solely on those that are especially active internationally.

Given the financial and time constraints of this study, they spent a day or half a day at each institution. They held discussions with faculty from a broad range of disciplines and with senior administrators, including chancellors, presidents, provosts, deans, and department chairpersons. All of their visits had been prepared by my own contact with the president of each institution, describing the purpose of the study and our interest in sending Goodwin and Nacht. Almost without exception, the campus responses were very positive, and many individuals then worked directly with the authors to make arrangements. The authors met over breakfast, lunch, and dinner, in seminar rooms and less formal meetings. In very few cases they met with only one individual. In most cases they met with five to ten faculty and administrators, and lively discussion ensued.

As the authors approached each campus, they had a series of questions that would help guide the discussion, but they were not bound by them. They encouraged everyone to speak freely and

raise whatever issues were relevant to the subject of faculty experiences abroad. They also shared ideas and perspectives they had heard expressed in places they had visited previously. They purposely sought out skeptics as well as ardent supporters. Upon return they digested the hundreds of pages of notes and organized a report in useful analytical categories. Their study of the faculty issues, which takes the form of their previous reports, is a provocative analytical essay that we believe is timely and relevant to the policy-making community.

To put this report in a larger context, a brief description of the authors' four previous studies on aspects of international education is in order. Their first report, *Absence of Decision* (1983), commissioned by the Institute of International Education (IIE), explored the policy issues associated with foreign students in American colleges and universities. The study included visits to a large number of institutions primarily in Florida, Ohio, and California. In this study they began the pattern of wide-ranging interviews rather than statistical surveys to explore the topic.

Among the principal findings of the first study were the following:

- (a) Most colleges and universities place the subject of foreign students low on their list of priorities, and knowledge and interest in the issue become significant only when the percentage of foreign students within particular departments or schools exceeds 15 or 20 percent of the student body.
- (b) Most institutions have not thought through in much detail the economic, educational, political, and organizational issues associated with the presence of large numbers of foreign students on their campuses.
- (c) The "humanist presumption" that the foreign student is an enriching and social presence on the U.S. campus needs to be supported with stronger evidence.
- (d) The marginal cost of the foreign student body has rarely been computed, although there have been any number of claims as to what these costs might be.

There was not universal acceptance or agreement with all the findings in their report, but the discussions that followed served to help shape lively debate of the issues on individual campuses and within a large national constituency of international education advocates.

This study was followed by two additional projects for IIE that focused specifically on students from developing countries who had studied in the United States. In 1983 they interviewed returned Brazilian students in three major cities, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Brasília. The findings of that study, reported in *Fondness and Frustration*, revealed that although the Brazilians were highly positive about their experience in the United States, they returned home frustrated either because they could not always apply the skills they had learned or because their skills declined over time as a result of insufficient resources and stimulation in the home environment.

To pursue this subject further, they undertook a major comparative study in 1984–5 on the problem of intellectual and professional decay, using three countries, Mexico, Indonesia, and Turkey. Again, they interviewed hundreds of individuals in these three countries who worked in universities, government agencies, and the private sector, all of whom had studied in the United States, mostly at the graduate level. In that report, *Decline and Renewal* (IIE, 1986), they described in detail the programs and techniques that have been developed to maintain the skills and knowledge base of third-world professionals who had studied in the United States. They noted that one shortcoming of the current practices was the lack of consistent alumni contact (except for fundraising purposes) between U.S. academic institutions and their foreign student alumni.

Lastly, in 1987 Goodwin and Nacht examined the phenomenon at colleges and universities of studying abroad. Again, following their methodology, they conducted interviews at diverse institutions in California, Texas, Illinois, and Massachusetts. They examined in considerable detail the incentives and disincentives for American students to spend time overseas. The study highlighted the relative lack of consistency between these programs and the

other principal objectives espoused by the U.S. institutions. For example, it was not unusual, they found, for a college to identify the Pacific Rim as a high-priority area yet continue to maintain study-abroad programs solely in Western Europe.

In addition to these studies, which have prompted much discussion, the publications and research have led to a series of meetings at the National Association for Foreign Students Affairs, the American Council on Education, the Council of Graduate Schools, and other professional societies. It is our hope that this report will continue the tradition of highlighting the importance of the topic and will assist CIES in generating discussion and proposing solutions to the problems documented.

Before the authors began their travels, we had several long discussions that provided me with an opportunity to share dozens of “impressions” of faculty success stories and an equal number about failures or frustrations. Goodwin and Nacht had many of these observations confirmed in the course of their campus visits. Their experience on the campus of Colorado State University (CSU) at Fort Collins was an especially poignant example of this complex subject. Walking down the center mall of the CSU campus, they could not help noticing that a yellow ribbon was tied around each of the massive tree trunks lining the path. These ribbons were a graphic symbol of the deeply felt pain on the campus caused by the plight of Thomas Sutherland, a professor of animal science in the College of Agriculture who, while a visiting faculty member at the American University in Beirut, was kidnapped in 1985. Professor Sutherland’s experience – that of an accomplished agricultural specialist who went abroad to teach and provide technical assistance, only to get caught up in the vicissitudes of Middle East politics – dramatizes the complex subject addressed in this book. Fortunately, the Sutherland tragedy is an exception, rather than the rule. Nonetheless, the profile of faculty observations on their international experience reveals areas that badly need thoughtful consideration from policy makers in our colleges and universities.

We are most appreciative of The Pew Charitable Trusts’ support, which made this study possible. I wish to acknowledge

Helen Cunningham, formerly program officer with the Trusts, a strong believer in the importance of this study and very helpful in the early stages of development. The dozens of colleges and universities who welcomed the authors and the individuals who facilitated their visits are too numerous to mention by name, but collectively they were essential to this effort and we owe them special thanks. Several individuals read the manuscript in early stages and offered especially helpful critique. They included Humphrey Tonkin, University of Hartford; Barbara Burn, University of Massachusetts; Pamela George, North Carolina Central University; and Elinor Barber, formerly at the Institute of International Education.

I also wish to express my personal appreciation to Craufurd Goodwin and Michael Nacht, who have contributed so generously of their time to the ongoing discussion of these issues long after they have completed the study. Through their lively and informed presentations they have already engaged the attention of many as to the importance of the issues raised in their report.

Cassandra A. Pyle

Executive Director
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of Scholars

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Higher education looks abroad: historical trends

Postgraduate training and the grand tour

Faculty members in U.S. colleges and universities have ventured overseas from the very earliest days.* As leaders of a colonial culture, they looked back to their metropolitan heartland for direction. Later, within an adolescent new community they turned still to the Old World for intellectual training, leadership, standards, and inspiration. They went back not only to Britain in search of roots, but to the continent as well for the experience of postgraduate training and a breadth of contacts appropriate to a young developing nation. Continental Europe remained the destination of most itinerant U.S. scholars throughout the nineteenth century. The main exceptions were clerics who set out for mission stations in Asia and Africa or the Holy Land. A few "orientalists" brought back reports from the mysterious East, but mainly in the form of travelers' tales and stories from exotic lands rather than as serious scholarly studies. The dominant posture of these early U.S. scholars abroad was often respectful humility toward their elders and betters; they came primarily to watch and to learn and, except for the missionaries to the heathen, seldom to teach or to contribute. Some of the expatriates were even openly contemptuous and ashamed of the society they left behind, and they apologized for the philistine ways of those who stayed at

* An excellent account of the internationalization of U.S. institutions is Robert McCaughey, *International Studies and Academic Enterprise* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).

home. Scholarly travel was for practical reasons the preserve principally of those with private wealth, and to some degree the study tour of young Americans became associated, in fact and in public perception, with the continental grand tour of young British aristocrats.

Undoubtedly a condition limiting the amount of international travel by U.S. academics in the nineteenth century was an overall sense of the continental vastness of North America and the need to deal with local problems of nation building before taking on the world. The Monroe Doctrine, which confined the United States politically to its own hemisphere, had its less formal cultural counterpart.

From the late nineteenth century on, the main change in the demeanor of U.S. scholars overseas was a growing self-confidence and reduced deference toward their foreign mentors. They continued to travel to the principal academic centers of Germany, France, Austria, or the United Kingdom for advanced training and continued stimulation, but they did so now with the knowledge that they could return to burgeoning research programs at Johns Hopkins, Chicago, Cornell, Wisconsin, Berkeley, and the like. Edwin Gay, who studied economic history at Berlin with Gustav Schmoller and then returned to become the first dean of the Harvard Business School, and who was a major force in the formation of the Council on Foreign Relations, typifies these early transatlantic scholars. John Bates Clark in economics and James T. Shotwell in history and international relations were in the front ranks of their disciplines.

The watershed of war

World War I and to a far greater extent World War II drew U.S. faculty overseas and into the examination of international affairs as never before. It was partly that military and war-related service took them abroad and internationalized them willy-nilly. International travel became a familiar experience for those who had barely thought of going beyond the county seat before the Great War. But in addition, the war raised for the United States the

prospect of new global opportunities and responsibilities as old empires crumbled. The demonstrated unpreparedness of the United States to comprehend the process of which it was a part, both during World War I and at the Peace Conference afterward, suggested to many young Americans the need both to understand other countries better and to reflect on different ways to arrange relations among states. The study of international relations increased in the United States between the wars, with practitioners lodged both in universities and in nongovernmental research institutions like the Council on Foreign Relations, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and the Brookings Institution. The globe-trotting academic peace seeker of this period was typified by the indefatigable Nicholas Murray Butler, president both of Columbia University and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

World War II added far more to the international experience of U.S. scholars than had its predecessor. In this case the conflict brought young Americans to Asia and the Middle East, as well as to Europe. Academics were involved not only in military service but also in intelligence, logistical planning, and, after the war, occupation and recovery. For the first time many of these scholars were faced squarely with the necessity to understand the languages and cultures of both friend and foe and to comprehend the nature of past and potential global systems. No matter whether engineer or economist in their scholarly lives, while on national service they were required to learn about Japanese and German societies, first to defeat the nations in battle and then to think about rebuilding them. If they were going to fight beside the Chinese and the Poles, they had better understand them as well. As the Russians shifted quickly from being allies to adversaries in the years after World War II, they became a special enigma. Consider, for example, that there was no university-based Soviet and Russian studies research center in the United States until 1946. As a consequence of the war, the rest of the world became to U.S. higher education not simply a source of wisdom and an object of cultural curiosity, but a subject of responsibility as well. If the United States was indeed required, as seemed to be the

case, to put the world back together under the United Nations and other multilateral organizations, and if it was required also, as seemed likely by the late 1940s, to lead the countries of the “free world” against the forces of darkness, it was no longer a luxury, but a necessity, to travel the globe to master all of its intricacies. The old European empires had often been the subject of contempt among U.S. scholars, and finally they were now on their last legs. But if it was to be the United States’ role to put new systems in their place, the crumbling imperial structures had to be fully understood and the alternatives carefully crafted.

New styles of academic travel

The kinds of U.S. academic travelers that emerged from the shambles of World War II were in most cases quite different from those who came before. The international relations specialists were almost the only element of continuity. Having moved on from faith in the old League of Nations and World Court, they were devoted now to the strengthening of new international mechanisms, from the United Nations and its component organizations through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade to the European Economic Community. They found common cause with scholars in other countries and they traveled widely to sustain contacts and master institutional detail. Some of them became committed to a “realist” approach based on power politics that was stressed by Hans Morgenthau and Arnold Wolfers, leaving behind the emphasis on collective security that had its roots in the writings and deeds of Woodrow Wilson.

With most of the great cities in ruins, for a time at least, U.S. scholars after the war did not have a well-established travel path. Furthermore, the massive migration of intellectuals from Europe to the United States just before the war had substantially eviscerated most of the great European university centers, and there was no longer the need to sit at the feet of a far-off master. The master now was likely to be at Princeton, Chicago, or MIT. As one