



**CRITICAL  
INTERNATIONALIZATION  
STUDIES  
REVIEW**

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## Acknowledgements

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The area in which we work as an international community would not exist were it not for the mobility of individuals and ideas across national borders. While recognizing the importance of international mobility to our work, we also acknowledge the historic and current violence that such movement of people causes. In this spirit, we invite members of the Critical Internationalization Studies Network to research and reflect on those who have come before them on the land that they inhabit while also recognizing the impact that the movement of people around the world has had on these communities. Much of the work of the Critical Internationalization Studies Network takes place in Turtle Island (modern day settler colonies in North America—USA and Canada). We would like to acknowledge the traditional lands of diverse Indigenous groups from where we are engaging. We also recognize the tradition of knowing, teaching, and learning on this land goes beyond the histories of settler education.

We are grateful to Dr. Chris Glass, Dr. Sharon Stein, and Dr. Tiffany Viggiano for their contributions to this project, which certainly would not have been possible without their critical feedback and support.

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## Table of Contents

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### Content

1. Editorial  
*By Dr. Melissa Whatley and Dr. Santiago Castiello-Gutiérrez*

### Critical Voices

2. Internationalization and Hegemonic Practices  
*by Dr. Shazia Nawaz Awan*
3. From “Foreign Languages” to “World Languages” within U.S. Institutions:  
Abandoning Misleading Terminologies  
*by Dr. Roger Anderson*
4. Redesigning Internationalisation with Beginner’s Mind  
*by Dr. Kalyani Unkule*
5. Spiritual Dimensions in Co-Curricular Spaces as an Approach to  
Internationalization  
*by Punita Lumb*
6. Learning Self Through Shosin in International Education  
*by Yuka Jibiki*
7. Balancing International Education and its Carbon Footprint  
*by Dr. Pii-Tuulia Nikula and Adinda van Gaalen*
8. Considering Globalized Christian Supremacy in our Discourse about Higher  
Education Internationalization  
*by Dr. Sachi Edwards*
9. Exploring Tensions in Decolonization of Internationalization of Higher  
Education  
*by: Abu Arif, Punita Lumb, Milad Mohebali, and Anushay Irfan Khan*

### Practice Briefs

10. Community Colleges and Global Equivalents: Increasing Visibility  
*by Dr. Rosalind Latiner Raby*

### Research Briefs

11. Operationalizing ‘Internationalization’ in the Community College Sector:  
Textual Analysis of Institutional Internationalization Plans  
*by Dr. Lisa Unangst and Nicole Barone*

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## **Introduction to the Critical Internationalization Studies Review**

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As founding members of the Critical Internationalization Studies Network (CISN) Newsletter's editorial team, it is with great pleasure that we publish this first issue of the *Critical Internationalization Studies Review*, a periodical publication that collates content published in the CISN Newsletter in 2021. When we began brainstorming the CISN Newsletter in mid-to-late 2020 along with Dr. Tiffany Viggiano, another founding co-editor, we had no idea what to expect from the network or its subscribers. With the desire to foster critical conversations and collaborations and to operate as a counterspace to the neoliberal academy, we only knew that we needed to do things differently from more normative academic publication spaces. In this regard, we considered fundamental questions that pushed us to challenge and critique the epistemic hierarchies that inform many current academic publication spaces, consider issues of power in the publication process, and confront the complexities that come from bringing together diverse theoretical approaches in the same academic space. These questions included, but were not limited to:

- How do we define critical in the context of an informal academic publication?
- In what context would a submission be considered not critical enough for inclusion in this space?
- How do we approach the continued privileging of English as the language of publication in academic spaces?

Over the course of the past year, the CISN membership has grown substantially, and the content that we have had the pleasure of publishing has challenged our thinking, required us to approach our work in new ways, and brought complexity into the academic space that we curate. We have been especially pleased with the contributions of graduate students and early-career scholars, including ourselves, who seem to have found a comfortable space within the CISN. Moving forward, we continue to apply a critical lens both inwardly and outwardly so as to confront the neoliberal forces within the academy and create new spaces for internationalization studies.

In this first compilation, our readers will find essays of the same three types that the CISN publishes through its newsletter. First, ‘critical voices’ are brief opinion pieces on current topics or events related to the internationalization of education written from a critical perspective. Some of these essays are also critiques and opinions about the future of our field. Second, ‘research briefs’ are essays intended to summarize recent research aligned with the objectives of the CISN with the twofold purpose of communicating this research to a broader audience and highlighting the work of scholars within the Network. Lastly, ‘practice briefs’ are texts intended to bridge research and practice; these contributions communicate ideas about how to apply recent and on-going research in critical internationalization studies, connecting it to the work that practitioners do in the field.

Eight critical voices are included in this first issue of the Critical Internationalization Studies Review. These essays can be grouped into three broad themes that collectively show 1) the hegemonic practices of international education and the challenging tensions of navigating them; 2) the role of religion and spirituality in perpetuating or addressing current inequities within internationalization; and 3) the complicity of internationalization in climate disaster.

Regarding the former, Shazia Nawaz Awan (2022) explains how a Western hegemonic portrayal of the process of internationalization of higher education is being exported and adopted globally. She calls instead for the implementation of internationalization as a process that is counter-hegemonic to the currently prevalent education system. Then, Roger Anderson challenges us to think how the common use of the term “foreign language” is misleading and promotes otherness. In his essay, Anderson (2022) suggests the adoption of a more inclusive term such as “world languages.” Finally, through an innovative collective writing exercise, Abu Arif, Punita Lumb, Milad Mohebali, and Anushay Irfan Khan (2022)—four doctoral students—reflect on the inherent tensions and complexities of centering their work around decolonization. Their essay is a reflection of the CISN’s goal to sit with unsettling and uncomfortable ideas in hopes to gesture to a higher education otherwise (Stein et al., 2020).

On the second topic related to understanding how spirituality and religion impacts internationalization, Edwards (2022) show how Christian culture dominates not just the global landscape but also the academic world. From a different perspective, Kalyani Unkule (2022) uses her essay to present her book, *Internationalising the University: A Spiritual Approach*, and to call for internationalization practitioners to respond with ways in which the Majority World can enter an “intercultural dialogue and understanding... rather than continue as an accessory to the hegemonic enterprise of knowledge creation” (p. 6). In response to Unkule’s call, Punita Lumb (2022) highlights how a spiritual dimension can be applied to internationalization in practice in co-curricular spaces. Similarly, Yuka Jibiki (2022) responds to Unkule’s essay by highlighting and exemplifying the utility of Shosin—or beginner’s mind—for international educators.

Lastly, building upon their talk to the CISN, Nikula and van Gaalen (2022) write an essay posing critical questions that remain under-researched regarding the intersection of international education practice/policy and the climate crisis. A key aspect of aspiring to an ever-growing internationalization must be acknowledgement of the toll that it has on the planet’s finite resources and its complicity in our current climate catastrophe.

Another important part of the CISN Newsletter are the practice and research briefs that explore critical research in a way that can transform practice. This issue presents two briefs related to the same topic. Both Raby (2022) and Unangst and Barone (2022) make a case for the valuable internationalization work being conducted at Technical and Vocational institutions such as the US's community colleges and other global equivalents. Hegemonic international education practices happen both between and within countries as power disparities are not exclusive to the Nation-State.

We hope you enjoy reading this first (of hopefully many) issue of the CISR. Most importantly, we hope that the arguments presented here, thanks to their brief and assertive nature, can help us in our collective journey towards a different international education; an otherwise future that is more equitable for the diverse populations we serve, more respectful of the different ways of being and knowing that we so prominently highlight as cornerstones of our global endeavors but that oftentimes get neglected in our daily practice, which is inevitably embedded in the current neoliberal and (neo)colonial academe.

We also invite our readers to engage with the works of the many members of the CISN. Besides reading these short essays, we invite you to enroll in the complimentary Critical Internationalization Studies Masterclass—an open-access online library of 16 video lectures from educators across the globe that address different dimensions of international education (<https://criticalinternationalization.thinkific.com>). Just as with this new publication, the goal in crafting these videos is to facilitate interesting and challenging conversations and to center historically marginalized peoples and knowledges. We also invite anyone interested in contributing to these critical conversations to submit an essay to be featured first in the CISN Newsletter and then in an upcoming issue of the *Critical Internationalization Studies Review*. Instructions for how to submit are found at the end of this publication.

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## **Internationalization and Hegemonic Practices**

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*“Internationalisation of the curriculum is concerned with preparing graduates to live and work effectively and ethically in an increasingly interconnected world.” – Betty Leask –*

As a teacher, a researcher, and in my current role as an educational developer, I really connect with this definition given on Betty Leask’s IoC website. I find it quite comprehensive in the sense that it depicts internationalisation as a process (preparing students); it situates the process of internationalization in the whole world, and it promotes global citizenship (living) and employment (work). And the best part of the definition is responsible, effective, and ethical internationalization.

Internationalization in higher education is generally understood in terms of student and faculty mobility in ways that when students and faculty move to the Northern hemisphere, it is to acquire knowledge, and when they move to the Southern hemisphere of the world, it is to disseminate knowledge. These understandings have created an intellectual imbalance where there are binary divisions between the ones who give and the ones who receive. This division between the dominant and the dominated, the giver and the receiver, and the East and the West is reinforced by the assumption that “Western values, pedagogies, and English language is best, or at least better than the ‘rest’” (Sperduti, 2017, p. 10) as internationalization is exported with a focus on Western education systems, specifically in higher education. This mindset of domination has created a sense of hegemony in the West where practices—such as the way of teaching and assessing—can be exported, and where the language of knowledge is mostly English.

In her article, “Making the case for responsible internationalisation,” Luciane Stallivieri (2019) outlines five elements as the core components of ethical and responsible internationalization: balance, accountability, sustainability, inclusion, and compliance. She advocates for a balanced partnership, which offers mutual opportunities for learning. If I connect the dots from Leask’s definition quoted at the beginning of this piece to what Stallivieri refers to as ‘internationalised eco-system of knowledge’, it becomes clear that internationalization is about more than making global connections and opportunities for exchange; rather, internationalization is about giving back to the societies where these experiences have been gained.

I feel it is important to understand the process of internationalization before it becomes the proprietary ownership of one hemisphere of the world, and to look at this process critically. Additionally, we cannot just point out the gaps, but it is also important to propose and take action. Let's conceptualize, define, and implement the process of internationalization as counter-hegemonic to the currently prevalent education system that "has been exemplified in a limited range of cultural perspectives represented in curricula..." (Schoorman, 2000, p.5), and to unpack the process to prepare students for a more interdependent world allowing the creation of more mutual relationships and dependencies globally.

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## **From “Foreign Languages” to “World Languages” within U.S. Institutions: Abandoning Misleading Terminologies**

*Dr. Roger Anderson*

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In the U.S., the social unrest and pandemic-induced hardships of 2020-21 implore Americans to critically examine our relationship to society’s most vulnerable or marginalized members. We must be honest in our assessments about how our identities and positions impact them. Educators who seek to internationalize their learners are not exempt from such self-reflection.

“Foreign language” learning is a crucial component of an internationalizing education, yet the term itself is highly problematic, particularly for people living in a multilingual country like the United States of America (USA). Dictionary definitions never fully capture the range of societal values embedded within a word. A general meaning of “foreign” is that something is not *of* that place; it somehow does not belong there, not wholly, or legitimately.

Turning then to “foreign” language, it becomes clear that “foreign” is reflective of and reinforces an epistemological hierarchy in which English is positioned as native and all other languages are positioned as foreign. Not only does this hierarchy marginalize the millions of citizens and residents of the U.S. who use languages other than English alongside it, but it constitutes a historical inaccuracy. Modern English is not native to North America; it developed out of Old English, which developed out of Germanic languages in Europe. Moreover, the USA has never been a monolingual country, not before or after removing Indigenous peoples from their land or importing enslaved humans to work these lands. To imply the (non-English) languages of Indigenous peoples were—and remain—foreign seems self-contradictory.

The U.S. has no official language, despite the actions of individual states. As some states have adopted measures that officialize English, others have taken steps to repeal such measures (Kaur, 2020). Officializing a language, of course, does not render all other languages foreign, only non-official. Neither is a language native by virtue of it being spoken by the majority of a given country’s citizens. Were this the case, French would be non-native, i.e. foreign, to Canada, and Mayan dialects would be foreign to Mexico, given that these languages are spoken by a minority of these countries’ respective populations – both laughable propositions in those countries.

Positioning non-English languages as foreign within the U.S. context also implies that monolingualism is normative for membership in this nationality. Any second language – other than English in this case—is non-native, and thus positioned as alien and extraneous to the national identity. In other words, in this configuration, monolingualism is native and natural, and bilingualism is un-native and unnatural. Bilingualism then becomes something foreign rather than a legitimate identity of millions of Americans. It also communicates to learners of a “foreign language” that languages other than English have no application inside the U.S. This implication assaults reality and would mislead our learners.

“Foreign” languages are spoken abroad, but not *exclusively* abroad. Most glaringly, the USA may move up from its second-place ranking to become the country with the world’s largest Spanish-speaking population within the near future (Grajales-Hall, 2011). According to the 2010 U.S. census data, 350 different languages were spoken in homes across the USA (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). In this view, the constructs of “foreign” and its companion “native” need to be problematized as more political constructs than ones reflecting a historical or cultural reality. Otherwise, it would seem the only non-foreign (native) languages of the USA would be Cherokee, Ojibwe, Sioux, etc.

Thinking critically about “foreign” languages within the USA connects with global issues of nationalism, cultural diversity, and initiatives to impose homogeneity on societies. The same nativist impulse behind efforts to position English as the sole native language of the USA can be found elsewhere, of which learners should be aware. Locally, unpacking these terms reveals their harmful implications on bilingual individuals living in the USA and on English Language Learners (ELLs). If, for example, a language that an Arab-American speaks and the identity enveloping it, Arabic, is “foreign”, then either the speaker is also somehow foreign, or they perform a foreign action every time an Arabic word leaves their lips. Rather than discouraging bilingualism, governments and institutions need to recognize multilingual individuals and ELLs as sources of rich skill sets and knowledge and find ways to involve their contributions into the development of their and their peers’ intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006). Hopefully, more respectful relationships will result in a more inclusive society.

Educators promoting internationalization should take great pride in the service they provide their communities. Yet we must continue to grow and to become better versions of ourselves. Institutions in the U.S. that offer the study of “foreign” languages should critically reevaluate the terminologies used throughout their institutions. Those that choose to continue using the terminology of “foreign languages” will continue to ignore complex linguistic realities and become complicit in the promulgation of inaccurate and damaging perspectives. More inclusive terms could be adopted, like “world language”, a term defined by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL, 2017). Institutions should seize this historic moment and rethink inherited epistemologies that had previously escaped critical evaluation.

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## **Redesigning Internationalisation with Beginner's Mind**

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I wrote the book *Internationalising the University: A Spiritual Approach* on an invitation from the editors of the Spirituality, Religion, and Education series of Palgrave Macmillan. As a scholar based in the global south, I felt that the time had come to stand up and say: “listen, we too have something to contribute to on-going discussions about the future of education. If years of teaching and practicing higher education internationalization in a part of the world that was perpetually dismissed as a “sending region” and as a passive recipient of “capacity building” is what it takes to find your voice and summon your courage, then so be it.” And so, I channeled Tagore’s message that it is not the parched desert that receives the bounty of the rain but the flowing river, dug deep into my training in political economy, international relations and global history, and got to it.

Since my foray into internationalization practice was owed to a passion for intercultural dialogue and understanding, the key motivation for me was to free up the practice to actually achieve that, rather than continue as an accessory to the hegemonic enterprise of knowledge creation. Within this broad framework, establishing the link between the politics of globalization and neo-imperialism on the one hand and the hegemonic and homogenizing stance of Eurocentric science on the other was imperative, as was demonstrating how internationalization of education was harnessed throughout the twentieth century to serve these agendas – something I attempted in the chapters called Anitya (the impermanence of joy and sorrow) and Jian’ai (universal love or impartial concern). One frequently falls into the trap of resurrecting episodes from history to support the claim that “it was in fact we who came up with these bright ideas,” all the while not realizing that we are undermining diversity and impoverishing thought. When I give the cultural exchanges between ancient China and ancient India their due place in the annals of internationalization, I try my best to avoid this pitfall. The jump from science to spirituality is slightly easier to make than it used to be but for me, ideas from religion and spirituality were really a proxy for “other ways of knowing.”

The chapter Ilm (knowledge) delves into the intersections of Science and Spirituality and outlines the overlap and divergence between varied understandings of the terms “Religion” and “Spirituality”: not to indulge in pedantic hair-splitting but to take stock of what is gained and what is lost when we sacrifice other ways of knowing at the altar of rational positivist science.

The final chapter of the book is titled Shoshin (beginners' mind) in the hope that those who see promise in the internationalization project will go back to the drawing board with a beginner's mind, recognizing that the significance of their mission demands intentionality and dynamism. I call on us to roundly jettison a superficial and instrumental view of intercultural competence which essentializes and stereotypes other cultures (and to the critical mind smacks of a deep-seated coloniality). I remind us that nurturing a pluriversal knowledge commons requires first and foremost that we take the trusteeship of our local particulars seriously, put to rest those tired associations of "global" which no longer serve us, and open up our practices to be suffused with the eccentricities of the glocal. The spiritual approach to internationalization cares more about self-discovery through study abroad and triggers the radical realization that we share so much though we may all value different things.

The book was published in 2019, the year before the COVID-19 pandemic shocked the dominant model of the international education system, and for that reason is possibly receiving greater attention now. As tickled as my inner nerd is about having added to the world's stock of things to read, my hunch is that this work will help establish the great potential of practice to contribute to discourse, and in that spirit, I look forward to reactions and feedback from my fellow-practitioners.

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**Kalyani Unkule, Ph.D.**, is an intercultural dialogue trainer and Associate Professor at Jindal Global University in India. She is also a visiting professor at ISDE Law and Business School in Spain, the Erasmus Mundus MARIHE programme at Tampere University, Finland, and Stockholm University Faculty of Law in Sweden.

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## **Spiritual Dimensions in Co-Curricular Spaces as an Approach to Internationalization**

*Punita Lumb*

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**This essay is a response to Dr. Kalyani Unkule's essay "*Redesigning Internationalisation with Beginner's Mind*"**

Dr. Kalyani Unkule offers a creative way for educators to consider a spiritual dimension that is often missing from intercultural education and internationalization practice. In particular, Unkule offers insight into how including a spiritual approach can open a gateway to deeper engagement that focuses on knowledge creation, whose knowledge is valid and decolonization of knowledge. I assert similarly to Unkule that engaging a spiritual dimension offers an opportunity to hold space for onto-epistemological diversity that allows students to explore the borders of their beliefs and identity. I question however, where and how these explorations can happen when the modern university, which operates largely on neoliberal logics, focuses on competition and commodification of knowledge. The university can be imagined as a mechanistic system that functions and moves towards neoliberal goals. What types of spaces, however, can act as ruptures in this system?

While Unkule writes about various spaces and opportunities, such as study abroad programs and internationalizing curriculum, I think co-curricular spaces in higher education are uniquely placed to decolonize knowledge and our understanding of ourselves, including spiritual dimensions. As a practitioner in the higher education system, I have discovered small tears in the system where students can explore dimensions of experiences that are beyond any materialistic sense. Working with a multi-faith center within a secular university, the work I do offers an interruption to the frenzy of competition, rankings, publications and other activities of pursuing excellence as defined by our neo-liberal context. This is also a space where intercultural and interfaith activities can focus on personal learning and development rather than on competencies for graduates to compete in the global economy.

Similar to concepts presented in Unkule's chapter 5, Shoshin, holistic student development, negative capability and non-dichotomous thinking are taken up wholly in a co-curricular environment with the bringing together of students from various backgrounds, knowledge and experiences, including international students.

Spaces such as the one where I work are an important focus given COVID-19's impact on student mobility and learning abroad. Even before the pandemic, however, international study abroad programs were not accessible to many students. Furthermore, being situated in a diverse metropolitan area, the categorization of students as international or domestic sometimes makes little sense at my institution and lines become blurry when there are also high numbers of newcomer students. The co-curricular environment is an important space that can deeply support domestic and international students and all of the diversity of identities and experiences they bring. The question is, though, how can practitioners take up this task and find these tears in the neoliberal system to cultivate nurturing spaces? As a practitioner who tries to tap into these spaces, I have heard many comments from students expressing appreciation for the opportunity to learn more about themselves and also to think more deeply about how they relate to others and the world around them. There are various approaches to incorporate spirituality and epistemological diversity into internationalization practices. Exploring spiritual dimensions as part of the human experience can enrich learning and provide opportunities to think about the world and our ways of being in radically transformative ways.

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## Learning Self Through Shosin in International Education

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**This essay is a response to Dr. Kalyani Unkule's essay "*Redesigning Internationalisation with Beginner's Mind*"**

I was pleasantly surprised to see the idea of Shosin (beginner's mind) introduced in Unkule's *Internationalising the University* and to re-learn this attitude towards life. As an early career professional in international higher education from Japan, I have lots of room to learn and explore in international higher education research and discussion. In other words, my Shosin has always been there. I teach EFL in higher education. I also work with study abroad students at their pre-departure orientation. My main focus with this assignment is goal setting. I discuss the purposeful study abroad experience with students, introduce the SMART goal method, and guide them to reflect and analyze their learning outcomes. This always reminds me of the beginner's mind, taking me back to my very first long-term study abroad experience in college. When I encountered the idea of negative capability, I realized that I have actually lost the beginner's mind, however. Since I was so focused on goal setting, I forgot about my willingness to not know. I should take a step back and reflect on myself to keep reminding myself of the beginner's mind.

Study abroad programs tend to focus on English language acquisition but there is less attention to other soft, interpersonal skills in Japanese higher education (Suzuki, 2017). It is important for higher education institutions to educate and prepare students for the job market in the age of change and uncertainty. It is also important to cultivate them as tomorrow's leaders in the local community. As Unkule states, it is important for universities to make a local impact in this globalized era. It is the time to reflect on ourselves, and to get back our Shosin to identify the uniqueness of each university's role in the community and embrace its diversity. The strategy of internationalization should be focused on the social, local needs and goods.

I started my teaching career during the COVID-19 pandemic and have been teaching online. This book points out the challenges of the loss of social bonds and the loss of commitment, and I face these challenges every single day. I see there is less self-reflection. When classroom discussions are based on knowledge and information, students actively participate. However, when it comes to the discussion of themselves, their own opinions, ideas, and experiences, they go silent. It may be because they are

not used to reflecting on themselves. I see the same challenge in the re-entry phase of study abroad programs. Students have a hard time figuring out what to reflect on.

Shosin is self-reflection coupled with excitement towards the new and openness to the unknown. It makes you see different perspectives but requires knowing yourself. “[T]he spiritual pathway is helping students learn more about the world, simply by discovering more about themselves” (Unkule, 2019, p.150). It is expected that intercultural competence is a skill to work in a multicultural environment, but, as practitioners, it is also about learning about ourselves since we are guiding ourselves into unfamiliar cultures. I believe the value of knowing self and reflecting on self requires more attention in international education.

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## **Balancing International Education and its Carbon Footprint**

*Dr. Pii-Tuulia Nikula*

*Eastern Institute of Technology, New Zealand*

*Adinda van Gaalen*

*Ghent University, Belgium*

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In the era that we first travelled abroad for our studies, there was little discussion about the environmental footprint related to flying. There were also limited alternatives to physical mobility with the internet being in its infancy. Now we know that the carbon footprint of student mobility is considerable (Shields, 2019) and that a number of virtual alternatives exist. But does that mean that these new modes of internationalization are equivalent? And can we expect current and future students to be satisfied with these alternatives? Aren't they entitled to the experiences our generation has had? Are there other caveats to consider?

Personally, we have derived significant value from our international education experiences. Getting to know areas, cultures and people in other parts of the world continues to have great appeal and benefits to individuals, countries and our global community. At best, international education can create global citizens by enhancing tolerance and intercultural understanding—essential skills when trying to solve global issues such as the climate crisis. How do we protect and amplify this impact whilst taking responsibility for our environmental footprint?

A number of greener modes of international education exist. Examples of such modes include better utilization of internationalization at home, transnational education opportunities replacing student travel and enhanced use of online/distance delivery, such as virtual exchanges/collaborative online international learning. For physical mobility, institutions can incentivize more regional mobility, low(er) carbon means of transport, and, as a last resort, compensate for all travel-related emissions.

A number of dilemmas warrant further consideration. For instance, more regional mobility may result in a narrower understanding of the world and different cultures. Also, lower carbon modes of transportation can mean that students will spend less time at their destination. Moreover, it has to be acknowledged that, hitherto, physical student mobility has been an option for a small group of students only (Salisbury et al., 2011). Virtual mobility may break with this inequality by, in principle, offering more opportunities to develop international competencies. However, this option may not be

feasible for students in many countries that still lack stable and widespread internet. Hence, virtual mobility and other alternative modes of internationalization are not unproblematic.

In 2019, the Climate Action Network for International Educators (CANIE) was established as a grassroots initiative to incentivize international education practitioners across the globe to step up and act on climate. CANIE's work has enhanced the sector's understanding of the issue and available solutions. In recent years, there has been a wider acknowledgment of this topic in the media targeted to higher education and international education professionals as well as by a growing number of academics in the field (see also Hale, 2019; Long et al. 2014; Nikula, 2019; Rumbley, 2020; Shields, 2019).

However, more research is required to explore the intersection of international education practice/policy and the climate crisis. To balance the benefits and the footprint associated with international education, one of the areas of future research should focus on expanding the excellent work done by Robin Shields (2019). This could include research measuring emissions of non-degree-seeking mobility, such as study abroad/short-term mobility programs (e.g., Hale, 2019; Long et al. 2014) and international mobility associated with compulsory schooling. In addition, a better understanding of all emissions related to student mobility is required, such as emissions related to other travel by students/family members (Davies & Dunk, 2015), overall home-destination country differences in emissions, and emissions related to different delivery modes, such as virtual versus physical mobility (see e.g., Versteijlen et al. 2017).

A different perspective on this topic is from the educational point of view. Which alternatives to traveling deliver equal learning outcomes for students? Can students be stimulated to adopt greener lifestyles through global citizenship skills development? If that is the case, do these effects outweigh the carbon footprint of developing those competencies? Inclusion and equal opportunities are important values. What is a fair distribution of travel miles among staff and students?

From the organizational perspective: which policy measures are most effective in reducing carbon emissions of international education while posing the least limitations? How can national or institutional policies on internationalization be connected to sustainability policies? (van Gaalen et al., 2020). What role can grant schemes play in greening mobility? How can a change in culture in terms of the choice to travel be achieved? (De Jonge Akademie, 2020; Wynes et al., 2019). The intersection of international education practice/policy and the climate crisis requires further examination. In this post, we have suggested questions that warrant research by those involved in critical internationalization studies. Moreover, we have highlighted a number of dilemmas that practitioners need to consider when designing low(er) carbon international education alternatives.

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## **Considering Globalized Christian Supremacy in our Discourse about Higher Education Internationalization**

*Dr. Sachi Edwards*  
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Earlier this year, I moved from the US to Japan and started a new position at Soka University—an overtly Buddhist institution in a country where Christians make up less than 2% of the population. When I reviewed the academic calendar, I was shocked to learn that our fall semester (which begins mid-September and ends in late January) has a full two-week break scheduled, starting a few days before Christmas. Of course, since I have spent the bulk of my academic career researching how Christian supremacy is embedded in higher education (both in the US and globally), this piqued my interest. I started asking around and learned from my Japanese friends and colleagues that having Christmas off is not common in Japanese universities; after all, it’s not a recognized national holiday, and it’s right in the middle of a semester! “*Ahh, yes,*” many of them said, “*but perhaps it’s an effort to make the academic calendar internationally compatible.*” What they didn’t say, but what I knew all too well, was that (Western) Christian culture is globally dominant and that having a two-week break over Christmas would be pleasing to the kinds of international students and faculty Japanese universities may be trying to recruit.

Indeed, the Japanese government has been actively promoting and funding higher education internationalization initiatives for the last 30 years or so, and concerns about the (in)compatibility of the academic calendar are often cited as a barrier to student and researcher mobility (Ota, 2018). When I dug deeper, I realized that among those institutions receiving special government funding for the express purpose of raising their international profiles (my university is one of them), many of them similarly have a two-week break over Christmas. This is particularly interesting to me because, in discourse about the Christian supremacy embedded in US higher education, the academic calendar is regularly one of the most prominent topics raised. So, how does the example of my Japanese Buddhist university’s Christmas break open up a conversation about how Christian supremacy in higher education is increasingly a global phenomenon, perpetuated in part by internationalization efforts? Where do Christianity and Christian supremacy fit into our discourse about how dominant models of internationalization are entangled with the spread of Westernization, marketization, and neocolonialism? I offered my reflections on these questions in my [recent presentation to the Critical Internationalization Studies network](#), and will summarize

them briefly below.

A core tenant of critical religious studies scholarship is that theistic belief and rules governing behavior are inappropriate metrics for defining religion. Instead, a more inclusive and accurate way to understand religion is to examine the way it shapes a society's norms and values. From this perspective, the Christian cultural worldview is foundational to what we understand as modern Western secularism and science. Sociologists explain this (Durkheim, 1912/1995; Spickard, 2017), decolonial scholars explain this (Mignolo, 2011; Quijano, 2000), and those who approach the study of religion from a non-Christian framework explain this (Deloria, 2003; Masuzawa, 2005). Christian supremacy, then, is the idea that the Christian cultural worldview at the heart of Western secularism and science is superior to other onto-epistemologies; and it is spread around the world in part through internationalization efforts that attempt to universalize Western approaches to teaching, learning, inquiry, mobility, financing and determining quality.

Western models of teaching, learning, and inquiry, for instance, emphasize liberal education and positivist empirical science, along with the assumption that these approaches are culturally neutral and universally applicable. Liberalism and rationalism, however, are products of the Enlightenment—i.e., they developed in a culturally Christian context—and maintain important elements of the Christian worldview such as individualism, universalism, anthropocentrism, and linear time. Yet, we rarely name liberal education and Western science as being Christian. Instead, their supposedly neutral, secular status is used to position them as modern and *superior* to any pedagogy or philosophy deemed religio-culturally rooted.

Likewise, the idea that we can and should develop instruments to compare education systems and institutions across disparate contexts relies on the universalizing logic of the Christian worldview. Tröhler and Maricic (2021) explain how ideas about standardization that began with the Scottish Protestant Reformation were then institutionalized by Christians at Teachers College and the Carnegie Foundation, and eventually led to the creation of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). The same movement led to the creation and popularization of global university rankings that are so influential today—rankings that consistently place Christian-origin institutions at the top; e.g. Oxford, Cambridge, Columbia, Yale, Harvard, and others. As Shahjahan and Edwards (2021) note, those institutions then guide the aspirations of institutions around the world.

The marketization that comes along with the spread of Westernization and competition for high ranking should also be recognized as a Christian export. Capitalism, after all, was developed by the Church and imposed on colonies as a system of labor and economy that would ensure the maintenance of the Church's financial and political power. Both then and now, acceptance of capitalism is seen as a marker of modernity and progress, manifesting in higher education through, among other things, the promotion of innovation and entrepreneurship.

Even the way we understand mobility is shaped by Christianity. Through colonialism, and the process of political decolonization in some places, the Church established nation state borders that did not previously exist and were usually quite arbitrary. The creation of those borders has had extremely violent effects that many

communities around the world are still experiencing; the partitioning of India/South Asia, for example. Yet, these borders are how we define what is (inter)national, erroneously homogenizing diverse communities within those arbitrary borders.

My work in Japan has exposed me to histories and current practices of internationalization within higher education that exemplify both the global nature of Christian supremacy and resistance to it. I encourage others to consider the ways Christian supremacy functions in the forms and contexts of internationalization you operate within. Then, importantly, I encourage you to overtly name Christian supremacy when you write or talk about internationalization. Ignoring it—the way it masquerades as secularism; the way it intersects with White supremacy, patriarchy, capitalism, and colonialism; and the way it perpetuates epistemicide—simply allows Christian supremacy to proceed unchecked. To be sure, there's much more we need to learn and understand about Christian supremacy in higher education internationalization, and we need to be willing to talk about it in order to do that.

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## **Exploring Tensions in Decolonization of Internationalization of Higher Education**

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We are doctoral students who occupy various locations and spaces in higher education. We are “settlers in diasporic communities” (Punita’s essay) and live in borderlands. Our research interests and positionalities brought us together after a CISN sub-group on race and racism meeting. In our conversations, we shared our thoughts on internationalization of higher education, the range of decolonial theories and praxis, and epistemological tensions. We write this piece as a practice of “hungry translations” (Nagar, 2017) that situates the four of us as knowledge producers in an ongoing relational dialogic process toward epistemic justice. By talking in relation to the tensions we face in our scholarly pursuit, we are in dialogue with one another without requiring transcendental conclusions or marginalizing each other’s complexities. We start this piece by replying to the prompt of how we have all arrived at decolonization in our scholarly work. What are some of the tensions we are navigating when talking about decolonization given our positionalities and the places we occupy? We conclude by reflecting together on our narratives and posing critical questions that we hope will invite our readers to reflect deeper alongside us.

### **“Politics of Identity and Location” by Punita Lumb, OISE, University of Toronto**

Some of the tensions I have been contending with are trying to articulate my own positionality and to understand how my work is interpreted and ultimately for whom I speak. I’m not going to list all the pieces of my identity here, which in and of itself can feel like a very colonial and destructive act. I have to break myself down and rearrange myself in categories designed by colonial thought. I do, however, acknowledge that I am positioned between various contradictions of power and marginality. It is contending with all the contradictions of being both marginalized and privileged in academia along with being both oppressed and complicit in this system that I sometimes wonder, who am I speaking for in my work? Which identities and what power dynamics do I centre, mix or ignore in my work? From which place am I approaching my work, one from complicity or one from resistance, or both at the same time? I must take pause at times and work through the disorientation before getting back to my writing and research. I think exploring internationalization from a decolonial lens has heightened

this issue for me as much of this work is within a context of fixing people to places and conceptualizing their belonging based on their national identities. Being a settler within a diasporic community, and not necessarily being able to contain my identity within one national border, poses another set of contradictions and disorientation to work through. I have, however, learned to inhabit these spaces with some comfort and hope as these very contradictions also offer onto-epistemological doorways to pluriversal possibilities; and being able to tap into that is foundational to my approach to decolonizing internationalization in higher education.

**“Internationalization on Incommensurate Grounds” by Milad Mohebbi, University of Iowa**

There is not a week that something worrisome has not happened in Iran during the several years I have been studying in the United States of America as an international student. Multi-million-dollar construction projects have been popping up alongside individuals putting themselves on fire in public and committing suicide; the value of the rial against the dollar has dropped ten times and inflation has soared. Pollution, environmental decay, and global warming are just the cherries on top. Here in the US, I'm looking into theories, disciplines, traditions, searching for answers, anything really, that can give me some hope. From Black feminist thought to ethnic studies, liberatory and transformative education to abolitionist praxis, postcolonial resistance to decolonization, I have found wisdom from those who struggled against various systemic forces. It felt like I was finally getting closer to the “right” answers when this question struck me, “how am I different from settler colonizers who thought their ways of understanding the world were the ‘right’ ways that now needed to be unleashed upon people whose spirituality and cosmologies did not translate into their righteous ways of knowing and being?” I think about this question quite often and I wonder what does an “ethics of incommensurability” (Tuck & Yang, 2012) look like within a landscape of knowledge that is itself abound with territorialization and power? I have come to appreciate, rather than reduce, the complexities of a decolonial world-making. I have come to embrace discomfort as the necessary companion to decolonial research even when I find myself stubbornly entrenched in the metaphorization of decolonization.

**“Internationalization and the Exile of the Self” by Anushay Irfan Khan, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto**

Theories, praxis and the lived realities of internationalization have and continue to develop within the fabric of my life. My experience growing up in Pakistan – a ‘former’ British colony – followed by my arrival in Canada as an international student and, later as a woman of color navigating settler-migrant politics, continue to expose me to the politics of internationalization and continue to have profound impacts on the mind, body, and spirit. Some of these lived experiences have been forms of ‘consensual internationalization’ while others are rooted deeply in the colonial politics and realities of internationalization thrust upon the colonized body, mind, and spirit under the pretenses of an innocent ‘civilizing mission.’ Other experiences with internationalization have been carefully curated under the language of multiculturalism, equity, diversity and inclusion yet have continued to create the conditions for the soul being “disfigured” and “destroyed” (Fanon, 1963, p. 210) while also caught in the web of internationalization. It is this web of internationalization – consensual and violent, past and present – that has led to an ongoing disconnection from my Indigeneity and land – an exile from the most valuable parts of oneself (Somé, 1995 p. 97-98).

Bissoondath (2002, p. 224) describes this disconnect between the self and identity as “psychic surrender” where the mind, body and soul in exile are in constant search of self-restoration and identity (Shahjahan, 2005) while also being deeply entangled in consensual and violent forms of internationalization. How does one survive in the conundrums of internationalization when its careful ‘neutral’ exoticism is facilitated by relations between the colonizer and the colonized? When internationalization’s seemingly innocent portrayal conceals the histories and realities of ongoing violence? How do we collectively navigate the decolonial and anti-colonial while standing firmly and seeking validation from a colonial system? How does one reclaim and resist within structures of internationalization by centering identity and Indigeneity when an exile from the self has injured the mind, body, and spirit?

### **“Unpacking the Master’s Tools...Exploring Epistemological Disobedience” by Abu Arif, Memorial University**

The land in which I am pursuing my doctoral studies and writing this text is the ancestral homeland of the Beothuk. I came to this land via a long journey that started in Bangladesh. As a racialized doctoral student, I find myself walking a thin rope when speaking and writing about applying a decolonial lens to internationalization of higher education in Western academia. In these spaces, like many other racialized bodies, I find myself as both “marginalized by” and “complicit in” the system. My initial desire to pursue doctoral studies was to contribute to the educational spaces that are trying to repair higher education by looking at the connection between knowers and their land relationship. I was encouraged by the idea that we can change the system only from within. However, in my second year of doctoral studies, I contested the aforementioned notion that is best described by Audre Lorde – “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house.” The critical approach is not enough to stop systemic violence. The tension between “repair” and “dismantle” the system also leads to the following question – what are the risks I face and the responsibilities I have when I am working from a decolonial lens? In other words, given the coloniality of epistemologies that operate in Western academia, what are the risks I face by being epistemologically disobedient? Moreover, if I follow the colonial convention of doctoral research, then what am I offering to the discourse on the Western hegemony of knowing and being? Despite the fear that grips me at times, it is the thought that we live in a world of too much wrong, and that one must be courageous to try to minimize these injustices, what gives me the strength to engage in decolonial thoughts.

### **Conclusion**

As emerging scholars, we are navigating these tensions when talking about decolonization given our positionalities and places we occupy. These tensions are complex, multilayered and ongoing. In the process of earning a doctorate, we do not want to lose our most valued parts. We are committed to be there for each other as we navigate these tricky paths, and we believe in each other that we will. We conclude this post with some questions that we hope invite reflection.

1. What kinds of relationships are we nurturing with each other, with our communities, and with the lands we are inhabiting?
2. What are the risks we face and responsibilities we have when we are working on areas like decolonization, internationalization of higher education, and epistemic justice/injustice/diversity?

3. Who do we speak for in our scholarly pursuits?
4. How do we deal with epistemic injustice in our work and how do we use epistemic disobedience as a tool to navigate the doctoral journey?
5. When and how do we refuse to subject ourselves to trauma and/or become sources of trauma consumption in academia?

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## Community Colleges and Global Environments: Increasing Visibility

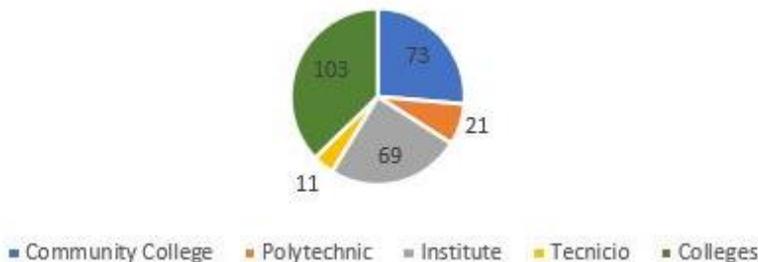
*Dr. Rosalind Latiner Raby*

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The over 150 institutions in the Community College and Global Equivalent sector have long been invisibilized within international higher education discourse. Within this sector are post-secondary higher education institutions designated as International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) levels 4 or level 5, and some institutions that span both levels instruction. These institutions offer:

1. Enrollment options for non-traditional students that foster social equalization via higher education access
2. Investment in local communities as curriculum and job placement aligns with local needs
3. College-to-work pipeline and flexible/transfer pathways for further education, often to a university
4. Skills-based training, higher-level academic focus, and internationalization practices
5. Educational learning to grow economic and social capital for gaining stable employment and learning capabilities skills for improving social conditions

The institutions within the sector include community colleges, further education colleges, polytechnics, technical and further education (TAFE) colleges, technical colleges, vocational educational colleges, vocational training centers, university colleges, university institutes of technology, and universities of applied sciences. Every country offers at least one of these institutions (Graph 1). There is no common name by which the sector is referred.



*Graph 1. Number of Institutional Types Found in Selected Countries.*

## **Critique**

For fifty-years, comparative research has studied how the sector developed, the diversity between the sector's institutional types, and the impact of educational borrowing that reinforces similarities between institutions. Yet, the inconsistency in how the sector is publicly portrayed leads to a constant need for justification of the sector's existence, worth, and impact that it makes to the field of higher education. For example, the terms 'Community Colleges and Global Equivalents', 'Colleges & Institutes', and 'TVET' are not widely applied. Associations also misalign the sector. For example, UNEVOC.UNESCO definitions differentiate HEI from TVET categorically, and in so doing ignores that TVET is included in post-secondary and higher education. The lack of distinction invisibilizes the sector in policy and data collection. In fact, accurate and comparative information about the sector is not widely available, which results in under-reporting in international databases, qualification frameworks, and regional policies. This in turn, results in lower funding in national budgets that impact faculty, staff, and students.

The exclusionary practices position universities as the authorized centers of knowledge which enables hegemonic categorization of the sector and facilitates deficit perspectives of the students who attend these institutions. Hegemonic terms are applied including, 'short-cycle' that denotes a lesser frame of quality based on length of instruction and 'third category', 'sub-baccalaureate', or 'second-tier' that defines the entire sector as lesser-than. The term 'non-university' denotes inequity by defining the sector by what it is not. No institution refers to itself as a non-university. Equally important is that these hegemonic categorizations label students who attend these institutions as 'less able', 'non-traditional', 'less competitive', and 'losers' because they need a second chance.

## **Practice**

An international framework is needed to gather inclusive and accurate data on success indicators, especially from countries where data is under-represented or excluded. Publicizing success enables scholars, policymakers, and practitioners to better position the sector as an equal partner to the university sector:

- Equity by extending the definition of who is a student
- Flexible fee structure and geographic location that enables access
- Enroll over 1 million students in 12 countries and 100,000 students in over 30 countries
- Completion rates between 33% - 58%
- Flexible/transfer pathways within and between sector levels
- Gainful employment in jobs with higher salaries than students who do not attend these institutions and some jobs that have students earn more than university graduates
- Outcomes that are advancing Sustainability Goals

## **Internationalization**

Comparative research on internationalization practices ignores the contributions made by Community Colleges and Global Counterparts. Nonetheless, the sector is defined by international educational borrowing and student and staff mobility, internationalizing curriculum, international development, international collaboration,

and linking international outreach to practical research projects are commonplace. Income disparity remains an issue, and in poorer countries, chronic underfunding negatively affects salaries, professional development, and even the professionalization of the sector.

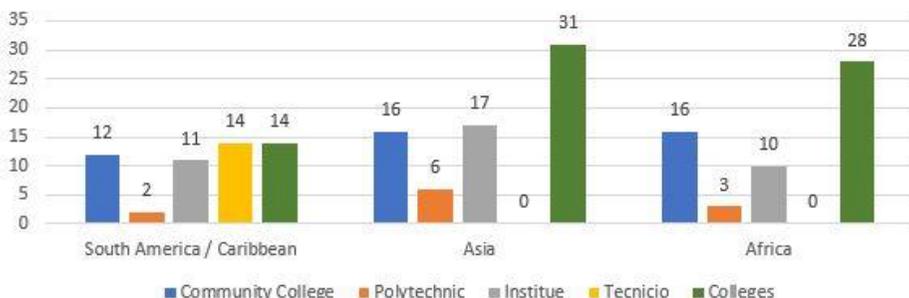
### Moving Forward

To increase visibility of the sector, there is a need to:

1. Build an agreed-upon terminology to reference the sector. As shown in Graph 2, the five primary institutional types are found worldwide. As such, a common term will increase visibility and can be a framework to be used comparatively within and across countries.
2. Reinforce equity of the new classification to dismantle hegemonic structures that disadvantage the minority world. Since the two institutional types, ‘Colleges’ and ‘Institutes’ are equally found in every continent it minimizes ownership by any region.
3. Acknowledge that the use of hegemonic terms ignores the sector for its own merits and reinforces an inequity lens especially when situated against the norm of the university.
4. Use visibility to elevate the field in national and regional qualifications, and position it to create opportunities for non-traditional, lower-income, and disadvantaged student enrollment.

In conclusion, there is no single word that can accurately speak to all 150 different institutions. But the broader categories of ‘colleges’ and ‘institutes’ are now recognized descriptors that as nouns reference the most common institutions in the sector without privileging one institutional type over another. As nouns as well, these terms avoid descriptors that are often grounded in inequities. In fact, by using a common term, all countries can begin to address the inequalities stemming from invisibility.

Comparative Institutes in Designated Countries



Graph 2. Comparative Institutes in Designated Countries

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## **Operationalizing “Internationalization” in the Community College Sector: Textual Analysis of Institutional Internationalization Plans**

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In our 2019 paper, [“Operationalizing ‘internationalization’ in the community college sector: Textual analysis of institutional internationalization plans,”](#) we used the textual analysis tool Voyant to dissect three US community college internationalization plans to explore how the foci of those plans differed. While most literature examining internationalization plans focuses on the four-year sector, little was known at the time about how internationalization is operationalized at open access institutions like community colleges. Research on internationalization in the two-year sector is warranted as these institutions serve more than 25% of all students enrolled across the US higher education landscape (NCES, 2020), as well as a disproportionate share of historically minoritized learners. Our study addressed that gap and was guided by the following research questions:

- How do community colleges operationalize internationalization in their strategic plans?
- What terms and/or concepts are used to indicate international efforts?

We developed these questions with a critical lens in mind. Declines in funding for higher education have, over time, forced public institutions to become more tuition dependent, but open access institutions are, given their mission, less able to buffer loss of government funds in this way (Yuen, 2020). A critical orientation compels attention to power imbalance; in a decentralized higher education system with decreasing public investment, how do open access institutions serving many first generation, lower SES, and BIPOC students approach internationalization? How does internationalization function as a process and strategic goal at the institutions that have been de-centered in the internationalization literature and, frequently, in education policy spheres? Key findings of this study included an emphasis on an optimization of existing resources (human, cultural, community, and financial); the need for a typology of open access institution internationalization plans; and the fragmentation of international efforts at the community college level.

We also indicated the need to consider how educational actors connected to specific community college study options (e.g. state-specific advisory bodies such as Arizona's Emergency Medical Services Council, or disciplinary bodies like the International Digital Media and Arts Association (iDMAa)) can best support open access institutions as they develop internationalization plans tailored to their local contexts and the resources at hand. For example, is there an opportunity to engage mid-level units such as district-level "faculty curriculum councils [that] could dramatically enhance internationalization and create faculty buy-in with a relatively modest financial outlay" (McRaven & Somers, 2017, p. 442)? That is to say, while we acknowledge that two-year institutions are embedded in their local settings, district or even state-level groups may also be well connected to stakeholder needs and resource constraints and be in a position to offer consistent guidance and useful resources in at least some areas. Faculty councils, for example, might be in a position to identify texts or instructional tools appropriate to specific programs, and thereby "flesh out what it means to be international and local at the same time" (McRaven & Somers, 2017, p. 444). Such an approach, if used across a given college's departments, could also address the issue of including international content in "core" or required classes, rather than electives alone (Beelen & Jones, 2015). Similarly, community actors may add capacity and direction to community college internationalization efforts.

Moving forward, we recommend applying quantitative textual analysis to parse a larger sample of internationalization plans and imagine that a cross-national sample might well yield interesting results. We understand close attention to local context as a strength of community college internationalization plans and see here an opportunity to investigate the process of plan development, plans themselves, and the implementation of plans with an eye towards community-campus interactions as nests for locally meaningful internationalization.

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## **Submitting to Critical Internationalization Studies Review**

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The Critical Internationalization Studies Review publishes three types of short essays:

### **1. Research Briefs**

The purpose of a research brief is to communicate about recent and on-going research in critical internationalization studies. Authors may use this submission type to summarize recently published research with the goal of communicating about this work to a broader audience or to share unpublished research results on timely and important topics within critical internationalization studies. Within the brief, please include a summary of the research topic and questions that the research addresses, some information about the data used in the study and how it was analyzed, findings from the study (note that findings may be preliminary), and a brief discussion of these findings.

### **2. Practitioner Briefs**

The purpose of this submission type is to provide a bridge between research and practice. Practitioner briefs communicate the application of recent and on-going research in critical internationalization studies, connecting it to the work that practitioners do in the field. This could manifest as a summary of a thematic concept that is prevalent in CIS literature or as a review of a single piece of scholarship. Authors of practitioner briefs need not be the author(s) of the research itself to write a practitioner brief. Within the brief, please include a summary of the topic, critical perspective, and implications for practice. Given the intended audience for practitioner briefs, please take care to minimize the use of technical or academic language, as this language is often inaccessible for practitioners.

### **3. Critical Voices**

The purpose of a Critical Voices piece is to allow members to share a brief opinion essay on an important topic related to the CIS Network from the personal perspective of its author. We welcome opinions about current events anywhere in the world as long as they are expressed in relation to critical internationalization. We also encourage opinions about the future of our field and of the CIS Network itself. In the spirit of respectful scholarly debate, we also welcome critiques to literature and responses to previous editorials. However, these submissions must be written in a respectful manner that uses informed arguments to contest ideas, and should never be personal critiques to their author(s). These essays should be concise and straightforward; citations should

be kept to a minimum; the use of statistics is encouraged but complex information in the form of tables and graphs should be avoided as much as possible.

For all three submission types, authors should take care to ensure that their submissions resonate with the overarching goals of the CIS Network:

- *Challenging inherited epistemic hierarchies*, by denaturalizing those hierarchies, contextualizing the possibilities and limitations of all knowledge systems, and considering how to bring different knowledge systems into conversation while respecting the integrity of each and the incommensurabilities between them;
- *Thinking/acting trans-locally*, by asking how differently situated communities (near and far) are affected by any particular approach to internationalization, engaging the affected communities, and critically questioning who has the power, authority, and resources to decide which approach is ultimately taken;
- *Fostering respectful relationships*, by working toward producing and distributing resources more equitably, challenging the presumption of singular epistemic authorities, and diffusing the harmful affective responses and projections that often emerge in engagements across communities, particularly those in conflict;
- *Facing complexity and complicity*, by recognizing different theories of change, identifying points of tension between and within them that make rethinking internationalization complex and difficult, and interrupting circularities of critique.

Submissions are typically between 800 and 1200 words in length. Authors should expect to go through at least one round of revisions based on editor feedback.

We review submissions on a regular basis and publish the articles first through the CIS Newsletter. All the published articles in a calendar year will also be included in a yearly issue of the Critical Internationalization Studies Review during the Spring of the following year.

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