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## INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION FROM A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE: A SPECIAL SERIES

Mary Ann Bodine Al-Sharif\* University of Alabama at Birmingham, [drbas@uab.edu](mailto:drbas@uab.edu)  
Birmingham, Alabama, USA

Hugo A. García Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas, [hugo.garcia@ttu.edu](mailto:hugo.garcia@ttu.edu)  
USA

\* Corresponding author

### ABSTRACT

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| Aim/Purpose                       | This preface presents the papers included in this Special Series of the Journal for the Study of Postsecondary and Tertiary Education.   |
| Background                        | This special series was put together in an effort to show the interconnectedness of our world through globalization and internationalization within higher education.  |
| Methodology                       | A qualitative conceptual analysis of the themes and insights of the selected submissions of the works for this special series is presented.  |
| Contribution                      | Though a move toward internationalization has occurred across the globe within higher education, there is still a gap in the amount of available relevant research within the field. This special series seeks to help fill this gap.                      |
| Findings                          | The works found in this special series challenge us to view the practice and profession of higher education through a broader and more globalized lens in order to expand our vision of what higher education is today and can be for the future.          |
| Recommendations for Practitioners | Researchers and practitioners are encouraged to broaden and diversify their methodological approaches to cross-cultural research and practice in order to aid the higher education community in meeting the needs of an ever growing diverse student body. |
| Recommendation for Researchers    | Researchers are encouraged to embrace international research, as well as the impacts of globalization and internationalization upon higher education and society.  |

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| Impact on Society | By embracing the impact of globalization within higher education, we become a stronger society that is more accepting and prepared for diversity and diverse learning environments.  |
| Future Research   | The conceptual analysis of these selected works may provide researchers with insight and direction for future work that examines programming, curriculum, international partnerships, and student and faculty experiences from a global perspective. |
| Keywords          | transnational education, globalization, internationalization, higher education, international research, study abroad, global responsibility, diversity, interfaith; campus worldview; campus climate   |

## INTRODUCTION

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Due to globalization effects, the world is much more interconnected than ever before from an economic, political, and higher education perspective (Altbach, 2004b; García & Villarreal, 2014; Knight, 2006). College and universities espouse to be global institutions with part of their mission statements indicating that they develop global citizens to participate in a world that is more interrelated (Altbach, & Knight, 2007; Altbach & Peterson, 2008; García & Villarreal, 2014). These intended goals have promoted the internationalization of programs, curriculum, and recruitment of international students and faculty (Altbach, 2004a). The internationalization of colleges and universities is not simply a U.S. and European phenomenon, but postsecondary institutions across the globe have also attempted to internationalize their campuses (Altbach, 2004a; García & Villarreal, 2014; Knight, 2006). While there has been a growth of internationalization across the globe within higher education institutions, international higher education is still in the periphery of most researchers in higher education. Thus, there is a need for more scholarship in the area of international higher education from a more global perspective.

In this special series for the *Journal of the Study for Postsecondary and Tertiary Education*, we attempt to contribute to this area of scholarship by including articles that help us better understand the internationalization on postsecondary institutions and the experiences of international students on campuses globally, not just regionally.

## SELECTED WORKS

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This section presents the selected works for this special series of the *Journal for the Study of Postsecondary and Tertiary Education*. This series begins with two works focused on internationalization within higher education and then moves to a study addressing international research output. This is followed by a study addressing a transnational collaborate higher education experience. The fifth article presented brings us to a more personal look at the study abroad experience in student identity development and professional growth at the graduate level. Finally, we close out this special series with a study that gives insight to and emphasis on global responsibility in creating a global social good in higher education.

The first study by B. Ashley Staples, Laura S. Dahl, Matthew J. Mayhew, and Alyssa N. Rockenbach compares domestic and international students' experiences with campus worldview climate in their work entitled, "Worldview Climate and the International Student Experience: Internationalization Strategies Overlook Interfaith Necessities". Specifically, this work explores the experiences of international students coming from non-dominant Christian-based worldview countries and how they and their domestic peers engage across worldviews. Utilizing data from the Interfaith Diversity Experiences and Attitudes Longitudinal Survey (IDEALS), Staples et al. (2019) explore the differences between domestic and international students, their engagement in interfaith opportunities, and any changes experienced within their first year of college. This study advances current understanding of how international students perceive an engage within higher education based on their campus

worldview climate. The authors' found that international students are more often engaging in cross-worldview interactions and are reporting that they find their campuses less welcoming than their domestic peers. Staples et al. (2019) provide suggestions to address these issues through interfaith initiatives and encourage researchers to continue to explore and expand understandings of worldview as a relevant component of cross-cultural experiences.

The second study by Lisa Unangst and Nicole Barone in their work entitled, "Operationalizing 'Internationalization' in the Community College Sector: Textual Analysis of Institutional Internationalization Plans" evaluates three community college's plans for internationalization. Specifically, Unangst and Barone (2019) address the gap in the literature between four-year institutions and two-year institutions in addressing internationalization on their campus. They found that a critical factor in determining internationalization activities for the three community colleges examined was financial resources. Likewise, they note that amongst the three institutions examined optimizing existing resources – human, cultural, community and financial – is key. In addition, the authors noted that the implementation of internationalization plans may also be dependent upon an institution's developmental stages of internationalization and is often fragmented across the institution. The authors provide important recommendations for further research in internationalization at the community college level while also emphasizing the importance of individual nature and culture of each institution.

The third study by Younus Ahmed Mushtaq Ahmed, and Nurazzura Mohamad Diah looks at two distinct Muslim countries, Saudi Arabia and Iran, in terms of their research output in the work entitled "An Analysis of Research Productivity in Saudi Arabia and Iran". Both nations aspire to be both social and economic leaders within their regions with a focus of moving toward a knowledge-based economy. The authors utilized a qualitative thematic analysis with secondary data taken from the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the World Bank, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (IECD) to exam publications and patents produced by both countries. The results of Mushtaq Ahmed and Mohamad Diah's (2019) work show that, despite the large investment that Saudi Arabia has placed on education, they still trail behind Iran in article publication and patents filed, while Iran who spends far less of their GDP on education produces more than double of that of Saudi Arabia. Their work is significant in showing the transitional processes between these two nations as they move from resource-based to knowledge-based economies.

The fourth study titled, "English as Lingua Franca: Exploring the Challenges and Opportunities of English Language on Vietnamese Graduate Student Learning", by Christina W. Yao, Crystal E. Garcia, and Courtney Collins examined the learning experiences of graduate students enrolled at a transnational collaborate university where English serves as the common language, or lingua franca. The authors examined through case study the experiences of 24 participants at Vietnamese-German University. Participants noted that, though they intentionally selected VGU due to the use of English as lingua franca, they experienced difficulty with communication/language in the classroom. To overcome language barriers, participants spoke with their professors, worked with their peers, recorded class sessions, and spent additional time researching concepts that they were not familiar with. One particular challenge for many students was that just as English was not their first language, it was also not the native language of many of their professors. Yao, Garcia, and Collins (2019), provide important contributions for practice in terms of innovative ways faculty can support students in navigating language barriers and encouraging peer work in and out of the classroom.

In the fifth study, Brittany M. Williams and Raven K. Cokley utilized collaborative autoethnography in their work entitled "#Ghanataughtme: Graduate Study Abroad Shifting Two Black American Educators' Perceptions of Teaching, Learning, and Achievement" to explore their shared experience as doctoral students studying abroad in Ghana. Positioned within the United States as Black first-generation graduate students in an educational system whose centrality is based on whiteness, these two women understood Ghana as a space that would allow them to re-envision their own identities and who they could become within their fields with the knowledge that would be gained from their Ghanaian experiences. Williams and Cokley (2019) discovered that the Ghanaian educational process

provided them with a new way of viewing and understanding the practice of education both within and outside of the context of whiteness. They noted that Ghana taught them “how to breathe, trust in ourselves, and hold each other and those around us accountable for contributing to a stronger, better, more prosperous U.S. education system for Black children...” (Williams & Cokley, 2019, p. 242).

Finally, in “Global Responsibility in Finland: Egalitarian Foundations and Neoliberal Creep”, Tiffany Viggiano examined how practitioners of higher education address the challenges associated with the pursuit of global equity in Finland. Viggiano’s (2019) study was part of a larger research project funded by the Fulbright Finland and the Lois Roth Endowment. Through the utilization of a conceptual framework, Viggiano (2019) engaged in ten months of participant observation and interview collection across multiple Finnish institutions of high education in an effort to define and operationalize global responsibility. The author emphasizes the importance of recognizing one’s global responsibility within the research process in order to better assess contributions and barriers to global social good within higher education institutions. In particular she notes that “global responsibility is the universities’ guiding ethical mission to address the global problems of the world” (Viggiano, 2019, p. 258).

The six studies presented for this special series embrace the impact of globalization and internationalization within higher education. These works broaden and diversify our methodological approaches to cross-cultural research and practice while aiding the higher education community in preparation for meeting the needs of an ever growing diverse student body.

## CONCLUSION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This special series in the Journal for the Study of Postsecondary and Tertiary Education focuses on themes relevant to both research and practice in international higher education. The papers carefully selected for this series demonstrate the importance of this research and give call for more research to expand our knowledge in what is becoming a more globalized world. In addition, these works challenge us to view the practice and profession of higher education through a broader and more globalized lens in order to expand our vision of what higher education is today and can be for the future.

We strongly encourage researchers and practitioners alike to broaden and diversify their methodological approaches to cross-cultural research and practice in order to embrace our growing international community, as well as the impacts of globalization and internationalization upon higher education and society.

Finally, we are honored to be a part of this special series and would like to express our deepest gratitude to Dr. Sydney Freeman the Senior Editor-in-Chief, as well as Dr. Crystal Chambers the Associate Editor both for the Journal for the Study of Postsecondary and Tertiary Education. Their constructive feedback and guidance, as well as their ongoing support for this series has been priceless. In addition, we thank Betty Boyd for her dedication and publishing work.

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## BIOGRAPHIES

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**Mary Ann Bodine Al-Sharif, Ph.D.** is an Assistant Professor of Higher Education at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She completed her B.A. in Religious Studies at Randall University, M.A. in English at the University of Central Oklahoma, and M.Ed. and Ph.D. in Adult and Higher Education at the University of Oklahoma. Her research interests focus on exploring the lives of students who define themselves as living between worlds across issues of ability, race, religion, gender expression and the like. Specifically, her work focuses on current global movements in educational reform, international higher education, student development, and issues of social justice and advocacy within higher education.



**Hugo García, Ph.D.** is an Assistant Professor at Texas Tech University. He obtained his B.A. in international relations from UC-San Diego, M.Ed. in higher education administration and student affairs from the University of Southern California, and a Ph.D. in Education with an emphasis in higher education from Claremont Graduate University. His research interests pertain to access and equity in higher education, retention of underrepresented students at two- and four-year postsecondary institutions, international higher education, diversity in higher education, and the P-20 education pipeline. Specifically, his work focuses on conducting research on community colleges and their impact on underrepresented students' academic success, student transition to community colleges and four-year institutions, institutional responses to globalization and the internationalization of higher education, and educational outcomes for students of color throughout the educational pipeline.

