

ESTABLISHING NEW UNIVERSITIES IN THE ERA OF GLOBALIZATION: ISSUES OF CURRICULUM, NATIONAL LANGUAGE, AND HISTORY

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1. Globalization of Higher Education on the U.S. model

The world is currently witnessing a rapid expansion in university-level education across the globe, especially in the areas of engineering and technology. Countries as different from one another as India, China, the various emirates of the United Arab Emirates, and Panama (to name just a few examples) have decided that their future lies in a knowledge-based economy. There are numerous models for how to pursue a knowledge-based economy and I will briefly survey some of these models below.

Some countries have invited one or more foreign universities to open a branch campus in their own country. The best-known example of a single university opening a comprehensive branch campus teaching a broad range of fields is New York University, which has opened a branch campus in Abu Dhabi. The construction of the campus and its operations are supported by the royal family of the emirate. The goal of this strategy is a high level of global integration, with faculty teaching in Abu Dhabi regularly spending time at the mother campus in New York City. Students can also transfer between the two campuses. Not all examples of comprehensive branch campuses on this model have been successful. George Mason University, which was one of the earliest examples of this model, opened a branch campus at Ras al-Khayma in the United Arab Emirates in 2005, but closed it down in May 2009. Other universities have been established in collaboration with a single partner institution. One example of this is the Gulf University of Science and Technology (GUST) in Kuwait, with the

University of Missouri serving as their strategic partner. So far this university has had a limited English-language curriculum emphasizing computer science, English literature and language (various specializations), communication, and business.

Another model is for multiple institutions to collaborate in a single campus. A notable example of this is Education City in Doha, Qatar, which began its first program in 1998. Education City is supported by the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development. At present Virginia Commonwealth University is participating in the Qatar School of the Arts; Cornell University is participating in the Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar (at present the only institution offering doctoral-level programs); Texas A&M University at Qatar offers degrees in engineering; Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar offers degrees in business, computer science, and information systems; Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar offers a degree in foreign service; and Northwestern University in Qatar offers degree programs in journalism and communication. There is also a Faculty of Islamic Studies as well as additional new programs run by French and British institutions of higher education, HEC Paris (École des Hautes Études Commerciales de Paris) in the area of graduate executive education and University College London in the fields of museum studies, conservation, and archaeology. One strong disadvantage of this model is that each individual university's program is like a separate «silo», with no integration between the programs run by different universities. Cross-registration by students enrolled in one school in courses

offered by another school is not a part of this model. This is a strong obstacle to creating a unified comprehensive institution of higher education based on this particular model.

Another notable variation on this model is offered by the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), established in Thuwal, Saudi Arabia in 2009. This university, which offers instruction in English, is exclusively a graduate institution offering programs in the life sciences, engineering, computer science, and physical sciences. Aside from the fact that this will be a mixed gender institution in a country where mixed gender education is otherwise prohibited, what is significant about the model offered by this institution is that individual departments partner with individual departments at universities such as the University of Texas-Austin, the University of California-Berkeley, and Stanford University.

Most recently, Yale University announced that it will establish a new residential liberal arts college in collaboration with National University of Singapore. Yale-NUS College will be an autonomous college of National University of Singapore and aims to offer a new model of liberal arts education for Asia. This new development highlights the significance of a U.S.-model liberal arts education, to which I will return below. At the same time, many countries are attempting to develop new universities specializing in science and technology without including the kinds of general education courses (including some courses in the humanities) which would be a standard feature of an education in science and technology (including schools of engineering) in the U.S. This should be seen as an inherent weakness of such new universities.

2. Personal experience in the Middle East and Central Asia

As director of the Middle East studies program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison I have visited a number of new institutions of higher education in Dubai, Sharjah, and, of course, Turkey. In 2009

I visited a series of campuses in the Middle East, including Koç University. While I have been familiar with the model of Koç University since it first opened in the early 1990s, I am impressed at how it has developed. Of course, now there are other new English-language universities in Turkey based on the U.S. model such as Sabancı University. I also visited the American University of Sharjah, the newest such university of its kind in the Middle East. AUS together with the American University of Beirut and the American University of Cairo are leading American-style universities in the Middle East. Although these universities are not related to each other, they are U.S.-model institutions of higher education with instruction in English accredited by an accreditation organization within the United States. Finally, in Dubai I visited the satellite campus which Michigan State University had opened in Dubai International Academic City in 2008. This campus, which had the same admissions criteria as for international students applying to MSU in East Lansing, Michigan, offered eight separate undergraduate and graduate professional degree programs. Unfortunately this campus was shut down in 2010 after enrollments plummeted owing to the international financial crisis, with students who had begun at MSU-Dubai transferring to the main MSU campus in Michigan.

As director of the Central Asian Studies Program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, I have also had the unique experience of being involved with our University's project to advise Nazarbayev University in Astana, Kazakhstan on the development of a School of Humanities and Social Sciences. (I will have more to say about that below.)

I would observe based upon my experiences that the universities participating in the globalization of higher education tend to be institutions of higher education in the United States, with a few notable institutions in Europe (especially in the United Kingdom but also France). In Dubai I also observed the presence of institutions based in other English-speaking countries such as Australia opening smaller branch cam-

poses, in part to meet the high demand for learning English and gaining a university degree in an English-speaking academic setting.

In conclusion, while there is a rapidly growing demand for education on the U.S. model, there is no demand for the Russian model of higher education on the global market of which I am aware.

3. The liberal arts:

The U.S. model of higher education

The U.S. model of higher education is based on the liberal arts education. The principle underlying this approach is the belief that a broadly based education in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences with additional courses in certain skills such as communication in English, quantitative skills, and foreign language offers a university graduate better preparation for the future. Rather than learning a set of facts, the student learns to how to collect data, analyze data, and to synthesize data. In the U.S. there is the belief that such preparation will train the student to enter the work force and continuously learn new skills and to adapt to various changes over the course of his or her career. This is especially important in today's world, since it is believed that students will have many different jobs over the course of one's working career. In the U.S. corporations value students with liberal arts backgrounds because they will adapt more readily to the workplace. Many CEOs (chief executive officers) of corporations have an undergraduate education in the liberal arts, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison has produced the highest number of CEOs of top 500 U.S. companies of any university.

A liberal arts education is based on the credit system, meaning that you have to take a certain number of credits to meet a range of requirements. (One course is usually 3 credits, and students are usually required to take approximately 120 credits to graduate.) Each college has its own specific requirements, since there are no national requirements. These courses are distributed over specific general education

requirements (including English composition, quantitative skills, foreign language, humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and sometimes additional areas such as athletics). About one-third of a student's courses are in general education requirements, another one-third of a student's courses are in a major (specialization), and roughly another one-third of a student's courses are in electives of the student's own choosing.

Students choose their own major from a broad list of majors. Most colleges will offer common majors such as English, History, Economics, Political Science, Psychology, Anthropology, or Sociology. Colleges which are part of a larger university, such as is the case at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, may offer more specialized majors not usually found at smaller colleges. Students may begin taking courses towards their major even in their first year, but they generally do not declare a major until the end of their second year or the beginning of their third year. Some students take advantage of the opportunity to take elective courses to declare a second major (or a certificate program) rather than taking unstructured electives. This is possible because each student's program is unique, they choose what courses they take (in consultation with an adviser), they can usually decide when to take them, and often there is no requirement for a specific sequence of courses, especially in the humanities. (There is more likely to be certain required courses which one must take in some social science disciplines and especially in the natural sciences.) For this reason, the U.S. model liberal arts are very flexible and allow each student to explore his or her own areas of interest. Cohorts are rare and usually only in highly specialized technical programs.

Another feature of the U.S. model is that most professional education is at the graduate level. It is only after completing a liberal arts education that one enters medical school, law school, a graduate business program, or a different graduate program. One can study German poetry as an undergraduate and still attend medical

school. One can also study one field as an undergraduate and pursue graduate degrees in another field. While it is true that some students study business as an undergraduate, undergraduate programs still include significant general education requirements. This is also true of undergraduate engineering programs. Nevertheless, one of the current issues in engineering is the importance of increased training in the liberal arts and increased internationalization. This inclusion of the liberal arts (or «general education») is because of the belief that this encourages critical thinking. As I tell students in my own classes, each one of my courses emphasizes critical thinking, and if I have not taught critical thinking skills in my course, then I have failed as a teacher.

4. The College of Letters & Science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

Let us talk the undergraduate curriculum in the College of Letters & Science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison as a good example of a school providing general education courses to a university with a strong profile in science and technology. Students in Engineering and other schools will take a smaller number of credits in general education. At the same time, students studying the humanities, social sciences, and the natural sciences enrolled in the College of Letters & Science all have to meet the same higher number of credits in general education forming the basis of a liberal arts education, whether they major in English, Political Science, or Physics. These general education requirements are as follows:

- Communication A (3 credits) – This is usually the first college-level course in English composition. Students who score high enough in a placement test are exempted from this requirement.

- Communication B (3 credits) – This is a course focused on any topic, but it includes at least four major writing assignments, including practice revising papers.

- Quantitative Reasoning A (3 credits) – This will typically be a college-level

course in algebra or trigonometry, but it can also be a course in logic.

- Quantitative Reasoning B (3 credits) – This could be a course in mathematics such as calculus, but it can also be any course which incorporates quantitative reasoning such as economics, chemistry, statistics, or even ecology.

- Humanities (12 credits, including 6 credits Literature) – This would usually be four courses in fields such as History, Philosophy, English or world literature, or other fields. Given the fact that the University of Wisconsin-Madison has many foreign language departments, there is a rich offering of courses in English on many world literatures.

- Social Sciences (12 credits) – This would usually be four courses in fields such as Political Science, Sociology, Anthropology, Economics, etc.

- Natural Sciences (12 credits, including 3 credits Biological Science and 3 credits Physical Science) – This would usually be four courses in fields such as Biology, Chemistry, or Physics, but there are also many additional options such as Astronomy, Atmospheric Science, and other fields.

- 4 semesters Foreign Language (usually 16+ credits) – The most popular language is Spanish, but the University of Wisconsin-Madison regularly teaches dozens of languages which one can use to meet the foreign language requirement, including Turkish or Kazakh.

- Ethnic studies (3 credits) – This is a course which must focus on the study of an ethnic minority within the U.S.

Courses can fulfill more than one requirement. There are additional requirements as well. For example, at least half of a student's courses should be at the intermediate or advanced level. In addition to these general education requirements, each student must choose a major.

In my own teaching, I teach a number of courses which can fulfill these requirements in various ways. I teach a writing course on «Culture and Imperialism Along the Silk Road» which meets the Communication B requirement. I also teach a course

on «Literatures of Central Asia» (with readings in English translation) which meets the Literature requirement. Finally, most of my other courses in Central Asian history or Turkic linguistics will also meet the humanities requirement.

5. UW-Madison as the Strategic Partner for the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Nazarbayev University

As I have already mentioned, I have had the honor of being the faculty team leader for the University of Wisconsin-Madison's project for collaboration with Nazarbayev University (NU), a new university being established in Astana, Kazakhstan with the support of the government of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Nazarbayev University is being established as an elite English-language university on the U.S. model.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison is serving as the strategic partner for developing the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Nazarbayev University. The other strategic partners are University College London for the Foundation Year (an intensive program in English and academic subjects) and the School of Engineering, Carnegie (a subsidiary of Carnegie Mellon University) for the School of Science and Technology, Duke University Fuqua School of Business, the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (National University of Singapore), and other partners for the various researches being established at NU. In 2010 the Foundation Year admitted its first class of almost 500 students from the best schools through a highly competitive recruitment process. Students completing the Foundation Year successfully continued their programs at the various schools beginning in fall 2011.

Just like the College of Letters & Science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Nazarbayev University will provide general education courses in the humanities and social sciences to students enrolled in the other schools. While all the schools at Nazarbayev University are based on the credit system, at present only

the School of Humanities and Social Sciences offers its students flexibility in terms of the when they can or should take which courses. Because of complicated staffing, space, and scheduling issues, at present the other schools teaching laboratory-based courses have highly structured programs reminiscent of the cohort system. This may change in the future once the facilities are completed and there is more flexibility in the scheduling of classes.

6. Special Kazakhstan requirements at Nazarbayev University

Although Nazarbayev University is exempt from the state regulations of the Ministry of Education governing other universities in Kazakhstan, it is the intention that this will be the most prestigious institution in Kazakhstan, meaning that it will also train the future élite of Kazakhstan. Since Kazakhstan has a requirement for knowledge of Kazakh language for employment with the government, it is important that graduates of Nazarbayev University also have a good knowledge of Kazakh language and other subjects relevant for a university based in Kazakhstan. To address these important considerations, Nazarbayev University requires all its students to take the following additional courses:

- One course in the «History of Kazakhstan».
- One course in Ethics, Philosophy & Religion.
- One course in Kazakh language (1 credit each semester).

The School of Humanities and Social Sciences will provide the courses in Kazakh language, the history of Kazakhstan (a requirement which could be fulfilled by a variety of courses), and additional courses in Kazakh culture in addition to providing general education courses for the other schools in Nazarbayev University.

7. Kazan Federal University: Credit system with or without cohorts?

This discussion leads me now to a consideration of the new Kazan Federal Uni-

versity which has been established on the basis of Kazan State University, the Tatar Humanities and Pedagogical University, and other institutions of higher learning in Kazan and elsewhere in the Volga region. The establishment in the Russian Federation of such new federal universities is intended to create powerful new research universities through the consolidation on existing institutions of higher education with additional support from the central government. It is clear that these institutions are expected to reach out to international partners and become world-class institutions with new degree structures which can integrate better into the European and global system of higher education.

The first question the establishment of the new Kazan Federal University raises is on what model is it based. Is it an international model, a new Russian model, or a continuation of the earlier system? Might it even be similar to the U.S. model? Based upon what I have read over the past year as well as my recent visit to the Kazan Federal University, it appears that—so far—it does not represent a break with the past, except perhaps for moving to a «credit system» (*ballovaya sistema*). In my discussions with colleagues in Kazan, it appears that the credit system as it is being applied at the new Kazan Federal University does not represent a break with the cohort (*gruppa*) system. Rather than introducing a flexible new system for taking courses, rather than introducing new methods of instruction to encourage critical thinking as opposed to the system which is based on presenting of facts, and rather than trying to integrate with European and global systems of higher education, it appears that the new Kazan Federal University represents a continuation of earlier practices.

The second question is how the Kazan Federal University will address the fact that it is situated in Tatarstan and that it may have many students interested in studying Tatar language, history, and culture. It would be difficult to imagine that the Russian Federation would all the Kazan Federal University to require students to study Tatar language. This may be possible in Ka-

zakhstan, but not in the Russian Federation. We know that students studying Tatar philology will be able to study Tatar language, but will students studying political science, economics, public administration, physics, or medicine also be able to study Tatar language as well? Well, the short answer is that in the credit system in the U.S. model, this would be possible, but in the cohort system, in which all courses are highly structured and offer no possibilities for flexibility, this is impossible.

The situation is actually far worse. The consolidation of Kazan State University with the Tatar Humanities and Pedagogical University and other institutions will actually result in a **decrease** in the number of faculty offering courses in Tatar language, history, and culture. This is not what was hoped for in the establishment of a new federal university in Kazan of all places! If the Kazan Federal University is to have any chance of succeeding, it can look to European and global models (including the U.S. model) for examples of how to restructure its curriculum to introduce greater flexibility. This is what the purpose of introducing the credit system should be, i.e. the introduction of flexibility in what courses students can take.

Through the introduction of a flexible curriculum, one can make it possible for students studying political science, economics, public administration, physics, or medicine to study Tatar language. If the Kazan Federal University is to produce the future elite of Tatarstan, it makes sense that they should be familiar with Tatar language and culture. (If the Kazan Federal University is to produce global leaders, they should be able to learn German, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, or Japanese for that matter, too.) Indeed, one can even create incentives for them to study Tatar language, history, and culture, even if it cannot be required.

This leads to the next question of whether there is a designated institutional home at the new Kazan Federal University for Tatar language, history, and culture or for a broader interdisciplinary approach to Tatar Studies. Unfortunately it seems that the establishment of a Kazan Federal University

has been a major step backwards for the study of Tatar language, history, and culture. It may be that the only way to ensure the survival of instruction in Tatar language, history, and culture in the future may be to institutionalize it through the creation of a Center for Tatar Studies within the structure of the new Kazan Federal University. This must offer the possibility for students in a wide range of faculties to take courses in Tatar language, history, and culture, not just future teachers of Tatar language. Perhaps this can be funded by the Republic of Tatarstan as well as through private donations.

In fact, I would go so far as to propose the establishment of an honors college within the new Kazan Federal University which would offer instruction according to the credit system on the U.S. model. The language of instruction would be English, with an additional curriculum in Tatar language, history, and culture. It should also offer the possibility for the study of other world languages and cultures and draw upon international faculty. This would be a prestigious college designed to prepare the future élite of the Tatar people and of Tatarstan. It would train students across all fields in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences on the basis of the U.S. model for a liberal arts education. It would attract the best students because it would offer the best education in English and Tatar for meeting the challenges of a globalizing world in the 21st century, not a second-class education for Tatars. I made a similar proposal for a national university (*milli universitet*) which I submitted to President Shaymiev in 2001. This was also published in *Zvezda Povolj'ya* (trans. Damir Isxakov, *Zvezda Povolj'ya*, August 30, 2001).

8. Need to study and publish works which are critical for the history of Tatar culture

Finally this brings me to my final topic, preserving the Tatar cultural heritage and

making it available for a new generation. First of all, there is an urgent need to study and publish the sources of Tatar history, literature, and culture. There is much yet that is to be done and — especially with the passing of Professor Mirkasym Usmanov — there is a vacuum of leadership in producing a new generation of scholars sufficiently well versed the primary textual sources necessary for understanding the bases of Tatar cultural. (For example, the sources for studying the history of Sufism in the Volga region are still inadequately researched.) Some of the most important work in the publication of texts important for understanding the history of the Volga region is being done in countries such as Hungary rather than in Tatarstan. Another element related to this is the importance of reviving Turkology in Tatarstan and throughout the territories of the former USSR. It is impossible to understand the history of Tatar language and culture — not to mention sources written in Tatar — without a broader understanding of the problems of the history of the Turkic languages. This also involves the need for adequate training in Islamic Studies. How many scholars in Tatarstan are sufficiently well trained to work with Tatar historical sources written in Tatar? How many of them can work with Tatar historical sources written in Arabic, too? How can we claim to know our own past when the works of great scholars such as Shihäbeddin Märçani remain inaccessible even a century after his death? Finally, there needs to be a greater emphasis on producing new teaching materials within Tatarstan itself, perhaps in collaboration with foreign scholars. How many textbooks for teaching medieval history at the university level in Russia reflect a professional view of the past, without portraying Tatars, the Golden Horde, or the Khanate of Kazan matter from the perspective of an anti-Tatar bias? It is incumbent upon ourselves to address this last issue, since we cannot expect that others will address this issue for us.