

**ACADEMIC GLOBALIZATION: RESULTS OF  
A PARTICIPATORY STRATEGIC PLANNING EXERCISE**

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A report on an exercise conducted at the World Multi-conference on  
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## INTRODUCTION

On July 10, 2007, Stuart Umpleby conducted a demonstration of the Participatory Strategic Planning procedure developed by the Institute of Cultural Affairs. The participants were people attending the World Multi-conference on Systemics, Cybernetics, and Informatics. The Participatory Strategic Planning (PSP) process involves five steps:

1. Operating Vision
2. Underlying Contradictions
3. Strategic Directions
4. Systematic Actions
5. Implementation Timeline

Each step of the PSP process uses the Consensus Workshop method. This method entails five steps:

1. Context
2. Brainstorming
3. Clustering
4. Naming
5. Resolve

About twenty people participated in the exercise. The introduction and explanations were provided by Stuart Umpleby. The purpose of the exercise was to demonstrate group facilitation methods, to learn what faculty members are thinking about the subject of academic globalization, to illustrate how participatory methods can be used to improve the performance of universities, and to begin using these methods in the World Multi-conference. The planning activity took place in two afternoon sessions, from 1 to 3:30 and 4 to 6:30 p.m.

The focus question was, **How can we facilitate the improvement of the global educational community?**

When a planning exercise is conducted with a business or government agency, usually it is conducted during a weekend, often in a "retreat" setting, when there is more time. Ideally people from outside the organization are also involved, particularly during the final parts of the planning activity. These people can relate their experiences with similar problems, suggest alternative actions, and provide sources of needed materials or skills. In addition outside observers may be impressed with the planning exercise and decide to conduct one in their organizations.

## RESULTS OF THE PLANNING EXERCISE

### Vision

| <i>Practical Vision question: What do we want to see in place in five years?</i> |  |   |   |  |  |  |
|--|--|---|---|--|--|--|
| 1. Awareness of Resources  | 2. A technical and administrative platform for global education                    | 3. Specification of elements of the platform      | 4. Increased access to the global educational community       | 5. Maintain and validate cultural difference                     | 6. Recognize successes                     | 7. Keep options open                                   |
| A leader forum to mobilize resources   | A web portal   | Better capability of administrative processes     | Global system of teaching and research at university level    | Long tail meshing mechanism (link people with common interests)  | Document successful stories                | Increase skepticism                                    |
| Resourceful global funding organizations   | A platform of technical means and administrative infrastructure                    | Common, transferable assessment and credentialing | Undergraduate and graduate international programs and degrees | Joint research outside your country and field                    | Umbrella projects well-defined and running | Do not be dominated by utility as a decision criterion |
| Open competition for resources   | Effective international distance learning  | A global knowledge database                       | Access to research resources and results from anywhere        | Global collaborative research activities                         | Define success                             | <i>Keep talking about this</i>                         |
|  | An organization to coordinate activities of others, resources, new activities      | Language no barrier to understanding              | Inventory of exchange programs                                | Evidence-based subjectivity (allowance for cultural differences) |  | Continue rather than end                               |
|  | Collaborative projects among universities of different sizes                       |   |   | Transdisciplinary approaches to messy problems                   |  |  |
|  | Well-structured e-learning methods   |   |   | Critical thinking  |  |  |
|  | Sharing ideas – students working on common projects (structure, function, process) |   |   |  |  |  |

## Obstacles

| <i>Underlying Contradictions question: What obstacles or contradictions are preventing us from achieving our vision?</i> |   |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| 1. Attitudinal obstacles   | 2. Cultural differences   | 3. A damaging epistemology                             | 4. Centralized curriculum changes                 | 5. Lack of resources   |
| Insufficient commitment  | Language barriers   | Current education destroys curiosity, initiative, etc. | Government intervention in the educational system | Lack of money  |
| Lack of open-minded generosity   | Holding on to tradition   | Malformed education (see Friedrich Froebel, 1830s)     |   | Insufficient resources   |
| Insufficient humility  | Lack of understanding of education and research approaches                  | Institutions seek to prepare students for careers      |   | Insufficient time (focus of attention is elsewhere)              |
| Lack of appreciation of value of ignorance   | Lack of standards (ISO, etc.)   | Insufficient critical awareness                        |   | Funding through research "success" (UK and elsewhere)            |
| Lack of motivation   | Each country has different needs  | Wish to be tidy  |   | Some institutions do not have technical support                  |
| Difficulties in achieving a common vision in a large group   | Nationalism   |  |   | Technology not advanced enough                                   |
| Unwillingness to share   | Cultural fragmentation, resistance to integration, "clash of civilizations" |  |   | Lack of open resources due to domination by commercial interests |
| Rewards of cooperation are not seen  |   |  |   |  |
| Closed-shop mentalities regarding resources  |   |  |   |  |
| Absence of higher education as a major goal of international organizations   |   |  |   |  |
| People do not know how to do something and do not try to find out  |   |  |   |  |

## Strategic Directions

| <i>Strategic Directions question: What innovative practical actions will deal with the contradictions and move us toward our vision?</i>     |   |  |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| <b>1. Build and find new sources of motivation for academic globalization</b>  | <b>2. Recognize cultural differences</b>  | <b>3. Promote a debate on epistemology</b>   | <b>4. Share resources</b>  | <b>5. Make HE on international priority</b>                                  |
| Attract new /junior faculty members to the "Globalization" concept   | Reward non-research-related university activities   | Make explicit a not damaging epistemology  | Open national research funding to international participation thru in-country prim investigators                               | Add higher education to millennium development goals                         |
| Create role models and make them available through international meetings / conferences / publications                                       | Recognize service learning  | Encourage learning and treat the teacher as learner  | Exchange of faculty/students<br>- Allow faculty from small prestigious school's to teach temporarily in big/well known schools | Write op-ed article on adding HE to millennium goals                         |
| Be persuasive in getting more peers interested.<br>- Talk/emphasize advantages<br>- Write/publish papers<br>- Brainstorm, start the archives | Recognize community service (extension activities)  | Froebel Education  | "Affirmative action" towards international programs and projects   | Start NGO to promote HE as millennium goal                                   |
| Explore the benefits for the person  | Implement endowments  | Promote innovative/new approaches through personal experience rather than reading someone's textbook | Team up with foreign Universities  | Find possible sponsors<br>- Alumni<br>- Local businesses<br>- Agency funding |
| Announce on Listservs with invitation to form sigs.  | Learn how to act with cultural differences  | Ask: Is it worth doing this?   | Look for gaps that are easy to fill (i.e. need a bridge) and explore them in detail  | Encourage WB to increase support to Universities                             |
| Explore implications   | Investigate machine translation capabilities  | Argue against teaching   | Encourage funding agencies to favor projects with international collaboration<br>Design multinational research projects        | Get NGO registered in the United Nations                                     |
| Formulate roadmaps and explore them  | Find some cultural differences  | Integrate an interest group in the theme   |  | Close Universities   |
|  | Find information about endowments in US Universities  | Argue for learning   | Apply for shared funding and matching funds  |  |
|  | Encourage Faculty to work in at least one international language  | Present the main ideas regarding globalization discussed / learned here to our colleagues / students | Propose action to fill gaps in research  |  |
|  | Browse literature on creative potential of cultural awareness, differences  | Design a document and assign people to write to each part  | Encourage colleagues to follow suit  |  |
|  | Start a collaboration with one or more Universities in the same or different countries<br>- Present/get ideas from regions to increase motivation | Distribute preliminary articles to the group   | Seek funding   |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
|  | Practice listening (understanding)   | Invite international cooperation                                 |  |  |
|  | Look for benefits in difference  | Organize a virtual debate in order to integrate a final document |  |  |
|  | Develop a good/viable model for an international team to work on a significant educational project | Shared learning activity on focus question                       |  |  |
|  | Lobby to get capabilities in machine translation for Universities<br>Live it                       |  |  |  |
|  | Take information to both the college president and dean  |  |  |  |
|  | Talk to faculty about endowments   |  |  |  |
|  | Faculty resolution calling for establishment of an endowment (hire an endowment officer)           |  |  |  |