



A Regional Strategy for Global Success

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Higher education is globalizing like everything else in today's world. New England's higher education enterprise has the resources and talent to compete in this new global student marketplace, but to be successful, we must have a plan. We must act quickly, and we must act together.

Not only did the 9/11 terror attacks and attendant visa complications chill enthusiasm for studying in the United States, but other factors raise questions about whether New England will continue to attract the best students the world has to offer. Many other nations now boast their own world-class higher education systems. And advances in distance learning bring quality higher education to students in far corners of the world. Moreover, some countries, such as Australia, have launched strategic national efforts to market their colleges to Asian students, more than doubling their foreign enrollments since 2001.

For New England colleges and universities, competing successfully in the global student marketplace will require a collaborative regional effort.

In the 1980s, New England's six states became indifferent to the fact that they were bound together by history, demography and economic reality. A dearth of traditional-age students resulting from the "Baby Bust" sparked unprecedented competition for students and resources among institutions and states. Regionalism was nearly swallowed up by budgetary concerns and separate ambitions. In today's world, New England's competitiveness will depend on how well we work together to share strategies and to "sell" the richness of New England higher education. No single state or institution can do that.

Realizing the power of collaboration, the nations of Europe have now overcome centuries of conflict and cultural differences to create a borderless higher education market. New England states and institutions should put aside competitive impulses and work collectively to:

- Make sure young and adult students in our six-state region learn about our global competitors and potential partners.
- Encourage innovative new ways to recruit more undergraduate and graduate international students to New England's college campuses, both private and public.
- Reinforce and redouble efforts to sell New England higher education's "brand" to a worldwide audience.

How can we accomplish this?

First, we must collaboratively promote all of New England's education resources. Students from China, Vietnam, Thailand and India, to name a few examples, want the quality and cachet of an American degree, particularly a New England degree. Yet, except for a handful of elite schools, few of our region's 270 higher education institutions have any name recognition among these young people. Fewer still have any strategy in place to change that. They offer quality programs of study and even have spaces available, but they lack a coherent means of marketing themselves overseas. It is critically important that the entire New England higher education community work collaboratively to promote *all* of our education resources to the world.

Secondly, we need to cultivate personal and professional contacts

with key partner countries. New England should develop relationships with higher education systems in ASEAN countries such as Vietnam, where large numbers of students seek improved higher education options. These relationships will lead to constructive agreements enabling New England students and faculty to interact with counterparts from around the globe, serve as ambassadors through study abroad and faculty exchange, and increase international awareness here at home.

Foreign students would benefit by studying at host campuses in New England and experiencing American culture (while contributing to the critically important global diversity of their host campuses). Many of these international students—potential future leaders of their countries—would form a bond with New England, leading to future global partnerships and business collaborations. New England institutions of higher education—small and large, public and private—would fill open seats. Partner institutions in Asia and elsewhere would directly experience American administrative and academic practices and adapt these practices to their campuses.

If New England is to survive and thrive in an interconnected world, our colleges and universities must redouble their efforts to promote the region's full range of education resources and commit themselves to nurturing relationships around the globe—and they can do that best by working together.

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