

What it requires to make a University Global?

A country's scientific capability is gauged based on its ability to launch rockets, deploy satellites into space, create its own nuclear reactors, develop modern defence equipment, aircrafts and automobiles. In fact, very few countries in the world have these capabilities and India is one among those countries which possesses many of these capabilities. Similarly, in the present knowledge era, countries are vying each other to position at least a few of their universities in top 100 in Global Rankings. It is believed that universities appearing in global ranking reflect the intellectual capabilities of the academics of that country. In addition, it gives an edge to the universities to differentiate themselves and compete in the open and transparent international education markets. Though, India as a country quite successful in contributing to contemporary technologies including playing leadership role in Information technology, is not been successful to position at least one university in top hundred universities either in Times Higher Education, QS or Shanghai Ranking systems. It is time that India should focus on pushing some of its Universities to the Global University status, by definition global universities are those that appear in Global Ranking Systems.

In India, the public are continuously echoing their desire that at least some of the Indian universities appear in the top 100 in global ranking systems. In this context, it is necessary to examine what it takes to become a global university.

A university aspiring to become a global university may have to adopt systems and practices that are globally relevant. A global university may constitute a governing body with members from different nationalities to reflect international positioning and outlook. The University will have to engage a truly international mix of faculty members reflecting diverse communities and provide education to students coming from different countries with their own cultural backgrounds. A global university require to have financial capacity and human resources frame works and systems that can attract international talent.

A global university requires a global brand to project itself internationally. Harvard and Cambridge are, truly global universities, as they have associated by the audience across the world with attainment and educational excellence. The creation and working of a global brand requires enormous efforts to address concerns and perceptions of a given cultural and geographic setting and a vision for placing the institution in a global context.

Global universities address global issues. Education should make humanity more intelligent, knowledgeable, and wise enough to address global challenges- like sustainable development while addressing global climate change; sufficient clean water without conflict for everyone; balancing population growth and resources ; evolvement of genuine democracy emerge from authoritarian regimes; the global convergence of information and communications technologies work for everyone; ethical market economies to help reduce the gap between rich and poor; the threat of new and re - emerging diseases and immune micro-organisms; new security strategies to reduce ethnic conflicts, terrorism, and the use of weapons of mass destruction; meeting growing energy demands safely and efficiently; accelerating scientific and technological development to improve the human condition; and ethical considerations into global decisions. These global issues need to be solved for the benefit of the society. It is expected that the solutions to such global issues come from Universities. However, most of the times, university faculty are unable to undertake research that addresses global issues because of funding contingencies. Global Universities address global issues.

A global university educates global students. A global University should be able to attract international students coming from different countries with diverse ethnic background and all students be treated identically.

Cultural openness is a critical requirement. Simply being open to the presence of international faculty members and students does not make a university global. Indeed, if there is no real mixing of students coming from different nations, then the University campus become a set of silos. The willingness to adopt attitudes, pedagogies and systems from beyond the national context is necessary. This does not mean setting aside lightly the contributions that a particular location and institutional tradition might provide but it certainly means being comfortable going beyond them.

A global university has global partnerships. A global partnership is to be built on complementarity with the parties gaining mutual advantage each from the other. A global university understands that the world is a big place. It knows that it cannot be globally present, it must make choices about where to focus its efforts. The difference between a global university and a national or regional university is that those choices are made with a view to opening up to global influences and contributing to the global scene rather than a decision driven purely by local financial imperatives. It also understands that international strategy is a long game, with partnerships taking time to cement and presence recognised slowly.

Finally, but most importantly, a global universities educate students to be global citizens and for global careers. This is easy to say, and hard to implement. It covers a wide array of challenges from certification and accreditation, at the more straightforward end, through ensuring curricula reflect international problems to the teaching of the much more complex soft or transferrable skills that are called upon in global careers. It cannot be disregarded in the belief that an internationally diverse staff and student body will suffice to make a global educational experience.

The mantle of a global university should not be casually assumed. It imposes significant responsibilities on all members of the university community. Accepting the responsibilities requires knowledge and understanding that implies an educational task in itself.

The realisation of global university dream for any country does not come easily and so also for India. It is beyond that a country make huge financial investments to push some of its universities to global university status. To support the cause of Global University dream, it is essential that support and commitment of federal and local governments, cultural acceptance and tolerance amongst local communities, enormous exposure of faculty members to global challenges, strategies, and educational practices are all necessary. It is all about converting a city like Bangalore into London or Boston and making members of faculty think like Harvard or Cambridge University professors and converting your people into global citizens.