The Future of International Studies

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If you wanted to learn about Thailand, the campus of the University of Wisconsin–Madison would be a good place to start. In Dane County, Wisconsin, far from any major port, national capital, or major financial center, you will find experts on Thai history, politics, language, society, and economy. You will find scientists who are working closely with Thai counterparts on basic and applied research. You could meet a number of UW students specializing in Thai studies, most of whom have spent a year or more in Thailand. You can meet and talk to any of the one hundred or so Thai students and visiting scholars currently in residence. Go to the alumni office and they will provide you with information on the active, four hundred-person-strong Wisconsin Alumni Association of Thailand. The library has an excellent collection of Thai materials. UW–Madison faculty visit Thailand regularly, and the chancellor has visited Bangkok twice in the last few years.

This story can be repeated substituting any region of the world, or many countries large and small, for Thailand. Name your country and it is likely that the UW–Madison teaches its languages, studies its history and contemporary affairs, investigates its role in international trade and politics, sends students there for advanced training, has ties to its universities, and trains some of its future scholars and leaders. We regularly teach forty different

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languages each year, and offer another twenty on an occasional basis. We have interdisciplinary programs covering all the world's regions and regularly offer our students overseas experiences in thirty countries. We have hundreds of faculty members with in-depth international expertise. We have formal relationships with several hundred universities around the world. Upwards of one thousand scholars from all over the world come to Madison each year to work with our faculty and interact with our students.

International education begins with in-depth knowledge of the countries and regions of the world. But it does not stop there: we also study and teach about issues that transcend countries and even regions. Do you want to learn about commonalities in the literatures of former British colonies? The spread of nationalism and ethnic violence in many parts of the world? The role of the United Nations in peacekeeping? The relationship between African-Americans and Africa? What about the management of global financial markets or the impact of economic globalization on workers and wages? You'll find research groups on the Madison campus working on these questions, and you can enroll in courses that explore these and other contemporary issues.

Look at the student body. Most of our undergraduates develop competence in at least one foreign language. The interdisciplinary undergraduate major in international studies, with close to four hundred students, is one of the largest majors on campus. A large percentage of students in the College of Letters and Science specialize in international topics, major in foreign languages, or spend at least one semester studying overseas. And many do all three. Several hundred graduate students are enrolled in programs in international studies, and many of them being trained as specialists who will conduct advanced research and train future generations. Increasingly, international studies are becoming de rigueur for students in professional schools of business, law, agriculture, engineering, and the health sciences.

Travel around to any of America's research universities and the same story will repeat itself. There is nothing unique about the Wisconsin experience. All of our major universities have made substantial commitments to international education. They have added numerous international specialists to their faculties, incorporated international topics in the curriculum at all levels, provided support for students who wish to develop international skills, built relations with foreign universities, and established linkages with public and private institutions that need knowledge about the world outside the United States.

To this end, they have all made major changes in university structure and organization. During the course of the twentieth century, all the research universities created specialized institutions that are dedicated to developing and transmitting knowledge about the rest of the world and maintaining linkages between the university and institutions here and abroad. Taken together, these institutions constitute the international education complexes of the research universities. They organize specialized courses, provide advice for students seeking international learning and careers, support faculty teaching and research, maintain relations with foreign universities, and provide international information to policymakers and the public.

Of course, emphasis varies from one institution to another, as do organizational forms. Some universities stress regional studies while others have focused more on topical issues like arms control and global warming. Some aspire to comprehensive coverage while others have concentrated on specific regions of the world. On some campuses the international complex is highly decentralized and dispersed; on others there are offices, centers, or institutes that serve as central support and coordination mechanisms. But whatever the focus and whatever the form, these complexes have been assembled to build and maintain linkages between the traditional structure of the American university and the sources and consumers of international knowledge. They facilitate both the formation and the dissemination of learning about the world and America's role in the world.

Our university international education complexes are the
International Studies at Century’s End:
Turbulence, Debate, and Doubts

This is a time of great turbulence and ferment in international studies at our research universities. Because international education serves as a link between the university and world society, it is susceptible to changes in both. And today, dramatic changes are occurring both in world society and in American universities. The international education community must deal with changed universities, new types of students, and a transformed world scene. It is being forced to rethink both its mission and its methods.

This has led to a great deal of internal debate and no shortage of concern and disquiet. As the community looks ahead to the next century, it is unsure of its future and divided in its counsels. Some predict a decline in the strength and importance of international education on U.S. campuses, while others see the dawn of a new age with great prospects for growth and improvement. Some argue that as a result of globalization and post-Cold War international politics, we need to make radical changes in curriculum and organization. A few go so far as to suggest that we should replace area studies with global studies, and shift our policy focus completely from geopolitics to geoconomics. Others see “global studies” and similar efforts to respond to a changing world as a passing fad and urge that priority be given to preservation of existing capabilities. Some think that the most pressing need is to strengthen the role of the humanities in international education, while others think social science and professional training should be the top priority.

Behind the debates between optimists and pessimists, regionalists and globalists, traditionalists and reformers, humanists and social scientists, one can detect a shared concern for the fragility of the enterprise and the sustainability of the international education complexes that have grown up on our campuses. These institutions have been built by hard work, sustained by intellectual excitement, and supported by academic leaders and external agencies. Many are flourishing today. But all are being buffeted by forces from on- and off-campus: these forces threaten the foundations on which our contemporary international complexes have been constructed. What seemed like a permanent change on the American campus now looks more evanescent. For the first time in fifty years, international educators fear that the capabilities built up so carefully over many decades may be at risk.

I share these concerns. I am proud of what has been accomplished at Wisconsin and in our sister universities. I am hopeful for the future but I recognize that we face tremendous challenges. I think we have begun to confront these difficulties and are devising imaginative responses to the changes occurring around us. But no one should be complacent: more has to be done at all levels inside and outside the university to ensure the continuity and the growth of international studies in our research universities.

In this chapter I outline the current situation and suggest ways the international education community can overcome the challenges we all face. I draw heavily on my experiences as a faculty member and dean of international studies at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. I will report on some of the efforts underway on the Madison campus, relay information from contacts with
other universities in the United States and overseas, and outline
the issues common to all large public research universities and to
other institutions of higher education at the end of this century.

How We Got Here

International education is nothing new. American universities have
been oriented toward the rest of the world and connected to insti-
tutions overseas from the beginning. In particular, scholars in the
humanities have always been interested in the study of foreign lan-
guages, literatures, and the great world civilizations. World War II,
however, marked a watershed in the development of international
studies in this country and started a shift from an emphasis on
humanistic knowledge to one that included development of prac-
tical knowledge for policymaking. Changes begun during the war
accelerated in the post-World War II period, and they help account
for the formation of international studies as we know it today.

During World War II the U.S. national security establishment
found itself in a global conflict that involved operations literally
in every part of the world. Government recognized the need for
trained personnel with language and area knowledge. Although
the universities contained people with these skills, their numbers
were small, especially relative to the perceived need. Moreover,
while there was substantial expertise on Europe, there were rela-
tively few people who studied other parts of the world. Even
when experts on places like India, China, Arabia, and Africa
existed, many of them were concerned more with ancient civi-
lizations and dead languages than with contemporary speech and
immediate social and political issues. While war-inspired crash
programs helped fill the immediate need, the American establish-
ment emerged from the war with a sense that our universities
were not equipped to produce the international expertise needed
for the country’s newly-found global responsibilities. Voices were
heard urging restructuring and expansion of international educa-
tion for the postwar world.

The Postwar Boom in International Studies

International studies flourished in the postwar period. It was fed
by forces internal to the universities and support from outside.
Forward-looking educators saw international studies as a prom-
ising area for development. Partly inspired by wartime experi-
ences, scholars in the social sciences had awakened to the need
both for comparative knowledge and for insights relevant to
international policy concerns. Thus they were eager to add
experts on world regions to their departments. Historians saw the
possibility of expanding beyond the triad of America, Europe,
and the Ancient World that dominated curricula in the first half
of the century. Similar opportunities were presented to language
teachers when universities saw the need for instruction in a whole
range of languages that had not been taught at all or were only
offered in a few places for advanced specialists. Everyone thrilled
to the possibility of constructing knowledge that might be useful
to policymakers. The challenges of global security and Third
World development offered rich opportunities for policy-oriented
social science. Educators at the research universities saw the emer-
gence of a new market for their graduate students as the postwar
“internationalization” wave spread quickly throughout the col-
lege and university sector, creating a constant demand for trained
specialists who could both teach in conventional disciplines and
also provide education about all the regions of the world.

The Cold War lent urgency to the project of expanding inter-
national studies, stimulated government interest in university
developments, and offered a focus for energy. Confronting what
they thought would be a protracted global struggle with the Soviet
Union, the People’s Republic of China, and their allies, the
American elite saw the need to institutionalize the temporary rela-
tionship between national security and the academy that had been
forged on an emergency basis during the hot war. Major founda-
tions like Ford and Rockefeller began to invest heavily in interna-
tional studies. They were followed by the federal government,
which developed programs to support foreign area and language
studies in the research universities. These were designed to produce and sustain expertise about the societies, cultures, economies, and languages of all the world’s regions. This meant increasing the study of modern languages, especially the languages of potential enemies and possible allies. It meant developing more area expertise within the social sciences. It meant bringing language, cultural, and social studies together to develop a more holistic understanding of events in specific countries and regions.

Universities responded to these opportunities with relative ease. Thanks in part to the GI Bill, the postwar period was one of rapid growth in tertiary education. Public universities like Wisconsin grew dramatically. There were opportunities to hire large numbers of new faculty, thus permitting the universities to expand existing international programs and create many new ones. There was growing student interest in international subjects. World War II had expanded the global awareness of the American public. As a result of the Cold War and the overseas expansion of the U.S. economy, there were more prospects for international careers. The supply of international experts on faculties grew rapidly to meet existing demand and to exploit opportunities to create further demand for their teaching, research, and service.

Even though the boom in international studies was facilitated by national concerns and geopolitical interests, by and large the universities maintained their autonomy from the national security apparatus and often became centers of criticism of U.S. foreign policy. The interest in expanding international studies arose from core concerns of major academic disciplines, and international scholars were supported by core university resources as well as by extramural sources. Traditions of academic freedom encouraged wide-ranging inquiry and vigorous criticism of public policy. So while Cold War concerns had a real impact on the campuses, and external funding affected priorities, the universities never became mere instruments of government policy.

Area Studies Centers and the Emergence of the International Education Complex

Initially, at least in places like the UW–Madison, attention was focused on the creation of what came to be called “area studies”—an in-depth, holistic, interdisciplinary approach to understanding specific world regions. Of course, many universities had been committed to the study of other parts of the world long before the onset of the Cold War, so that area studies was in some way the continuation, on a much enlarged basis, of earlier traditions. But area studies did not just enlarge the scale of these programs; it also involved a major change in focus. Earlier, humanistic studies were supplemented—if not sometimes replaced—by a focus on contemporary social, economic, and political issues. The postwar area studies movement was based on a belief, then quite strong in the social sciences, in the interdependence of knowledge in the social disciplines. That is, people believed that insights in any discipline would depend in part on knowledge to be gleaned from specialists in another. Political scientists believed that breakthroughs in comparative politics could not occur without knowledge of the economies and cultures of the countries under scrutiny; economists thought that economic development involved changes in culture and systems of governance as well as in business behavior. Everyone agreed that a student could not really understand a country without knowing its language, history, and cultural traditions, or without living there.

For those reasons, scholars everywhere supported the creation of new institutions that would foster interdisciplinary communication and cooperation and organize curricula in new ways. These centers would bring specialists from various fields together; organize new curricular offerings that would provide students with comprehensive programs combining language training with studies in the humanistic and social disciplines; and create opportunities for students to spend time in the region of their specialization. Hence the creation of organized “area studies centers,” which served to build holistic knowledge of world regions and
create organized curricula and new majors, minors, master’s programs, and other specialized credentials for area studies students.

Driven by faculty energy and excitement and the support of forward-looking administrators, and heavily supported by extramural funding from foundations and the federal government, these centers flourished on many campuses. In a time of rapid growth of the university, it proved relatively easy to assemble people from many disciplines who wanted to study developments in places like Latin America, the Soviet Union, or Asia, and who were eager to work with others having similar interests. At Madison, and on many other research university campuses, these area studies centers were the nucleus for the emergence of large complexes of specialized centers, programs, and institutes dedicated to international education. These institutional complexes existed in creative tension with traditional departments. They maintained close ties to scholars and institutions in the regions they studied. In some cases they developed linkages to policymakers.

From Area Studies to Global Studies: The Growth of the International Education Complex

Area studies centers often were the primary nucleus for today’s large international education complexes. Over time, however, other major dimensions have been added so that today’s typical research university now contains a wide range of specialized international educational offerings, ranging from undergraduate majors to interdisciplinary Ph.D. programs. Most also have large organized interdisciplinary international research enterprises, and many have outreach programs and other service operations.

These varied teaching, research, and service activities, and the institutions that support them, constitute the international education “complexes” that form such a unique feature of research universities like the UW–Madison. In addition to interdisciplinary centers for the study of specific world regions (e.g., Latin American studies, Asian studies, European studies), there are many other types of specialized international units. Most campuses also have interdisciplinary centers organized on a topical rather than a geographic and cultural basis. These include centers on topics like arms control and disarmament, development and economic growth, and human rights. Increasingly, we see the emergence of centers of “global studies,” which expand the scale of “area studies” to embrace world society, economy, and politics. Many universities also have units devoted to international issues unique to a given discipline or professional field such as international business, economics, or legal studies: for example, the UW–Madison has a Center for International Business Education and Research, an East Asian Legal Studies Center, and a Law and Globalization program. Some universities have specialized “study abroad” units designed to encourage students to include overseas study and work in their academic programs, as well as offices that provide specialized services for the increasing numbers of international students in all fields enrolled at the research universities. Many campuses have specialized “outreach” offices that disseminate international knowledge to the K–12 system, other colleges and universities, and the general public. And some schools have units whose mission is to provide technical assistance to developing countries.

The International Education Complex and the Traditional Structure of the University

The growth of international education complexes in the postwar period changed the landscape of many campuses throughout the United States. All of a sudden, new majors were defined based on regions (Latin American studies and Asian studies) or around topics (international relations or development). Instead of being limited to majoring in economics, political science, Spanish, or sociology, students could select one of these new sets of offerings in addition to—or instead of—the more traditional fields. And along with these changes in the curriculum came organizational changes as new offices, centers, programs, and institutes that had not
not existed before were added to manage the new courses, majors, research programs, and service activities. This brought to the fore the issue of the relations between the new structures and the established institutions on campus.

An Alternative Axis
From the point of view of the traditional structure of the American university, this complex of internationally oriented and largely interdisciplinary institutions offers an alternative axis of organization. Where the traditional axis is built around disciplinary departments organized into largely autonomous colleges, the international education complex cuts across departmental and college lines. International knowledge requires inputs from many fields, so the area, topical, and global studies centers typically draw people from many colleges and dozens of departments. Because overseas experiences can enrich almost any field of study, the study-abroad offices usually serve students who are pursuing a wide range of majors and careers, from anthropology and business to water resource management and zoology. Similarly, policy analysis, technical assistance, and outreach usually require holistic knowledge and the services of faculty and staff from several fields. Because so much of international education demands services that combine input from several disciplines, universities built separate international studies structures that complement the historical axis of organization. Some of these structures challenged traditional boundaries.

Different Methods and New Missions
The international education complexes not only represent an alternative axis for the organization of academic services, they also redefine the way the university should fulfill its traditional mission of training students and producing knowledge. Study abroad, for example, exists because educators decided that to acquire a language and understand a culture, long-term residence in another country was superior to simply sitting in a classroom somewhere in the United States. Area studies emerged because people believed in the interdependence of social knowledge and assumed that no single discipline could provide the insights and understandings needed to deal with issues in other countries. Thus it was thought that even if your primary interest was in the Brazilian economy, you could not understand it unless you could read and speak Portuguese and had a grasp of the nation’s history and politics. More recently, people have also seen the need to supplement interdisciplinary studies of nations and regions with an understanding of broader forces and phenomena, so the study of a subject like the Brazilian economy now also requires an understanding of global capital flows, the emerging world trade regime, and the global shifts in ideas about the role of the state in the economy.

Further, international education represents a significant expansion of the traditional mission of the university. To be sure, the primary role of international studies is to strengthen and expand the university’s capacity to produce knowledge and educate students. But the international education complexes also support the direct provision of policy advice; the dissemination of information beyond the campus to the public, K–12 system, and business; the development of universities and other institutions overseas; and similar new missions. This expanded mission had not been contemplated when the UW–Madison was founded 150 years ago, and was only beginning to be recognized when it celebrated its one hundredth anniversary in 1949.

Useful Supplement or Dangerous Rival: The Traditional Axis and the International Complex
The size of the international complexes vary from university to university. In some cases, they are very large and engage large numbers of students and faculty. At the UW–Madison campus the international education complex is embedded in separate traditional schools and colleges. However, if all the UW–Madison’s international faculty and staff who are now housed in various col-
leges were to be formally joined together, the resulting “international college” would have hundreds of faculty members, teach thousands of students, and be larger than all but the biggest of the traditional units.

Today the international complexes exist in complex tension with the units that form the older and more traditional axis of university organization. While most educators recognize that the specialized interdisciplinary and cross-college units that make up these complexes are useful if not essential supplements to traditional campus structures, some perceive them as dangerous rivals. Where most see these institutions as enriching disciplines and enhancing the capacities of departments, others see them as competitors for student enrollments, academic prestige, faculty loyalties, and campus resources.

While it is easy to see why conflict might erupt between international studies and traditional units, there was very little tension during the postwar boom. For several reasons, the potential conflict between the disciplinary axis and interdisciplinary international studies was kept under control. Universities favored internationalization and disciplines promoted international study. The social sciences recognized the importance of international knowledge and the interdependence of international studies. Professors sought opportunities to conduct research, teach, and provide advice around the world. First the language departments and then other disciplines recognized the importance of overseas experiences. Few worried about competition for scarce resources because there was no real scarcity: in an era of rapid growth there seemed to be enough to go around for everyone. This was especially true because international education received substantial support from external sources, principally the federal government and the major private foundations. The existence of extramural resources available exclusively for international education made it easier to develop new programs and thus create an alternative axis of campus organization without generating too much conflict with established units.

Challenges at the End of the Century
Two questions face international education on our campuses today. Can the era of good will continue in a different intellectual climate and a period of relative austerity? And can international education change fast enough to meet all the new needs of students and the public? These questions have emerged due to the rapid and unexpected changes—changes both occurring throughout the world that international educators relate to and within the universities they serve. Poised between a world in turbulence and universities undergoing significant changes, international educators are reassessing their missions, reengineering their institutions, and seeking new bases of intellectual and material support. The UW–Madison, like many of its peers, has spent a good part of the last decade reviewing the international education complex, restructuring some units and creating new programs in areas previously underserved.

To understand the new context for international education in universities like the UW–Madison, we have to look closely at three areas of change and turbulence: those occurring in world society; those happening on university campuses; and those affecting the extramural funding sources that have been so vital to international education in the past. The changes in all these areas during the past decade have been rapid and dramatic. We are still struggling to respond to them.

Changes in World Society
At the dawn of the twenty-first century, the world looks very different than it did even a scant twenty years ago. Changes too numerous to mention have taken place, but a few seem to be particularly central to the changing context for international studies. These are the end of the Cold War, globalization of the economy, the communications revolution, cultural conflict and the “clash among civilizations,” and the changing role of the United States in world politics and the world economy.

The end of the Cold War created new topics for academic
study (like democratization and transitions to a market economy) while rendering others (like the study of communism and nuclear deterrence) less central. It opened up new possibilities for overseas study and research as U.S. universities developed relations with counterparts in places like the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and China. At the same time it seems to have led to declining interest in international affairs in this country and to a reassessment of many government programs, including support for academic exchanges, which had flourished in a period when the U.S. saw itself in an ideological struggle with a major enemy and viewed the universities as allies in this struggle.

The end of the Cold War also coincided with, and facilitated, the most recent wave of economic “globalization.” While there has been a world economy for centuries, and although the international economy was highly integrated one hundred years ago, quantitative and qualitative changes in the past twenty years have led many to describe this as a new and different stage of world economic integration. At least four changes mark this era as different: dispersion of manufacturing production from the North to the South and the rise of strong export-oriented economies in many developing countries; a global financial market making capital available throughout the world and constraining national economic policy; the declining importance of nation states in the management and operations of the economy; and the growing importance in the world economy of subnational regions like the American Midwest.

These changes in the world economy and its governance structures have rendered some knowledge bases obsolete and created the need for new knowledge about issues like the operation of the World Trade Organization, the regulation of global financial markets, and the export potential of regions like the Midwest. They have also led to a much greater internationalization of the U.S. economy, as the role of exports and imports in our gross domestic product have soared. This has generated new demands for international knowledge from business and state govern-
ments, and for expanded international instruction within professional schools.

A related development is the global communications revolution. The computer, the satellite, and other technical changes have led to better and much cheaper telephonic communications, facilitated the spread of TV, permitted the creation of email, the Internet, and other information technology capacities. The speed and ease with which information and images of all kinds can cross national borders have increased exponentially. This chapter was written in a small and relatively isolated cottage, but while I wrote I kept in contact with people all around the world by email and telephone: these technologies gave me communications capabilities that not even embassies, corporations, or other major institutions could muster fifty years ago when the UW–Madison turned one hundred.

These changes have not only made it possible to link economic actors on a global scale; they also offer tremendous potential for linking individual scholars and universities more generally. Email and the Internet have greatly facilitated scholarly exchanges and research, and universities are beginning to share courses by distance education on a global scale. Yet, while the global communications revolution has created a flood of information that can enrich study and research, it also threatens to overwhelm students and professors alike. The sheer volume of information now easily available creates major problems of quality assessment and organization.

Great changes also result from the emergence or reemergence of ethnic, nationalist, and religiously-based conflicts that have taken place in many parts of the world. The end of the Cold War unleashed nationalist forces in the former Soviet Union and elsewhere: in many cases these are ethnic conflicts as well. At the same time, the global communications revolution and other changes have made it possible to link cultural groups across national boundaries, thus creating new forms of cleavage and new possibilities for global conflict. Some think a resulting “clash of
civilizations” will develop and become the new central axis of world politics.

Finally, the end of the Cold War, globalization of the economy, and other changes have led to major shifts in the position and role of the United States in world society. They help explain the growing interest in economic competitiveness and “geo-economic” concerns, as well as waning interest in traditional issues of national security. They probably help account for what looks like a new wave of isolationism in important segments of American society. As the global ideological, material, and military struggle of the Cold War winds down, Americans seem to want to either withdraw from the world, or redefine our international relations along lines of economic conflict.

The renewal of isolationist tendencies and the new emphasis on U.S. economic competitiveness create tremendous challenges for America’s universities. We have to be beacons of international interest and understanding in a time when some in the media and the political elite seem to have lost their interest in world affairs. We have to maintain our commitment to the pursuit of universal knowledge and academic autonomy while at the same time providing assistance to those whose primary concern is with the growth of our national economy.

Changes in Universities

Turbulence in world politics has been matched by turbulence on the campus. There have been fiscal, administrative, and intellectual developments that have challenged the academic traditions and institutional organization of the international education complexes. Some of these represent a critique of existing efforts; others call for new programs to meet underserved needs.

At the intellectual level, a number of critiques address the way international education was practiced in the post–World War II period. In some circles, there has been a collapse of belief in disciplinary interdependence: as a result, some have suggested that the holistic and interdisciplinary methods pioneered by area studi-
other campuses) has been on graduate education in the humanities and social sciences and particularly on producing Ph.Ds. Now, however, with the Ph.D. “market” at best flat and probably in decline, and with new demands for undergraduate and professional education emerging, international educators have been called upon to revise old programs and develop new ones.

Changes in Extramural Support
One of the most serious challenges facing the international education complexes today comes from changes in their sources of extramural support. Not only has there been an overall decline in the funds available from traditional sources like major foundations and the U.S. government, there is also real uncertainty about what kinds of programs might be funded with the money that remains. This is especially true for the foundations, which have been reassessing the nature and purpose of their support for international education. Some traditional supporters of international studies have announced an end to support for area studies as such but have not articulated a clear vision of what forms of international learning and teaching they hope to support in their place. Others call for major changes in area studies without offering a fully articulated new vision. In such a climate, competition for extramural funding has become very keen, funding search costs have gone up, and it is much harder to make long-run plans for projects that are in whole or part dependent on extramural support.

Impact on International Studies: The Emergence of a Twenty-first-Century Vision
Changes in the world, the universities, and the extramural support system have generated both excitement and anxiety among international educators in recent years. This has been a period both of heated debate and creative ferment. Institutions have been forced to adapt to new circumstances. There have been struggles between those who felt the only priority was to preserve existing courses and academic programs and those who emphasized the need for innovation. For many, the process has been painful, but the struggle is beginning to pay off. International educators have begun to cope with the challenges presented by the new context. They have seized new opportunities made possible by some of the intellectual, political, economic, and technological changes now underway. As the twentieth century comes to an end, a new vision of international studies is beginning to emerge at the UW–Madison and on campuses around the nation.

This vision is based on the need to preserve existing strengths while also developing new offerings for new constituencies. It recognizes that the traditionalists and the reformers were both right. In the new vision, the first goal must be to conserve valuable capabilities. These include both intellectual resources and know-how on ways to develop new knowledge and disseminate it to disparate audiences. The in-depth area knowledge and language capacity fostered by the area centers form the foundation for all other types of international study and education. Existing policy centers not only bring together expertise on important contemporary issues; they also know how to transmit relevant knowledge to policymakers and the public. International relations programs provide essential information on foreign policy and the operation of the interstate system. The specialized administrative staffs that support international education have irreplaceable special knowledge about overseas operations, extramural funding, and interdepartmental cooperation. To the extent possible, these assets must be preserved. But conservation alone is not enough. The emerging vision recognizes that it is equally essential to be innovative. To do that, we must refocus on new needs of our students, reimagine international education, restructure the alliances on which this interdisciplinary enterprise is built, and develop new ideas for a changing world.

Refocusing on Students and Their Changing Needs
The first challenge is to rethink what our students need today and
what they will need twenty years from now to operate effectively in the international arena. A much larger percentage of the student body will need to develop international skills in the future than has been the case in the past. As global knowledge and international skills become more important to sectors of U.S. society and the U.S. economy, international educators will have to reach out to a larger and different student constituency. This will not only mean increasing the numbers of students served by our programs, but also changing the programs as well. We are already seeing this process at work in Wisconsin: for example, as exports loom larger in the state economy, government and business have called for new kinds of international education at all levels from K–12 to the doctorate.

While graduate training will continue to be important, and liberal arts will continue to be central to international studies, international educators will have to spend more time with undergraduates and with students in the professional disciplines. Moreover, we will need to provide more general international education, orienting all students to the changing world, and not just train a core of specialists. There will be more demand for courses that deal with business and economic questions in all world regions, as well as new approaches to the study of ethnicity and religion. Demands for language skills will both increase and change in nature as more people seek practical and applied language capacities. Courses on world regions and global issues will continue to be important, but some will have to be tailored to fit into the curricula of the professional schools of business, law, public policy, engineering, and the health sciences. We will need to develop new kinds of overseas experiences to meet the needs of a growing and different student body, finding ways other than the traditional semester or college year abroad to develop global competence. Internships, short-term overseas modules, and similar innovative overseas experiences will be needed. These changes will help us develop capstone experiences and credentials that will facilitate entry into new as well as traditional international careers while preparing the general public for life in a more interdependent world.

Other areas of change include devoting more attention to student information and advising. The larger the student body involved in international studies, the more we will encounter students with little or no prior international background. And the more options for international learning we offer, the more complex the choices facing students become. For these reasons, international educators in the future will need to provide more and better information about students’ options and strengthen advising services in general.

Finally, we will need to make changes in programs for graduate students. While we need to preserve the strong Ph.D. capabilities that are vital to the production and dissemination of cutting-edge knowledge, we also have to recognize that the demand for Ph.D.s in international studies is flat at best in this country. So we need to explore other kinds of graduate training, including terminal master’s degrees with career potential and degrees offered jointly in international studies and professional schools, e.g., a JD/MA in international affairs.

Rethinking Boundaries
The next thing we need to do is to rethink many of the boundaries that were built into our imagination of the international educational complexes and that have shaped the construction of international programs. The current architecture of international education rests on a series of explicit or implicit distinctions and boundaries that need to be rethought. These include boundaries within the international complexes themselves, as well as between the complexes and other entities.

Within the international complex. Intellectually, we have tended to separate the national sphere from the international system of relations among nation-states. And we have separated the public and the private. As a result, international policy studies tend to
look either at the national or the interstate level (or both) but often have left the role of corporations, civil society, religious life, and similar matters to be studied elsewhere, if at all. Yet issues like ethnic and religious conflict or the operation and regulation of global financial markets engage public and private actors at multiple levels. In an era when many issues transcend nations and even regions, when the public and private interact increasingly, and when policies may involve public and private actors at local, national, regional, and global levels, all these boundaries must be rethought.

The same can be said for boundaries that define the scope and limit of interdisciplinary programs on our campuses. We need to rethink both the formal and informal boundaries that have grown up among the elements of the international education complex. Historically, international education in the liberal arts has been separate from studies of international business, law, agriculture and other professional subjects. There has been a tendency for graduate studies to remain separate from undergraduate programs. Even when programs formally served both undergraduate and graduate students, they sometimes drifted toward a focus on the graduate level. Topical programs in fields like arms control or development often were only weakly linked to area studies. In some cases the separate centers for study of individual world regions had little contact with each other, so that specialists on Southeast Asia had only limited interaction with those who studied East Asia, let alone those who worked on Russia and Europe.

At the UW–Madison, we have recognized the need to bridge many of these gaps. We have brought all our area and international studies programs together into one International Institute. We have created global studies programs that both deal with comparative cultures, global topics, and cross-regional issues and that straddle the public/private divide. We have created a special initiative that brings scholars from economics, political science, sociology, business, law, and other fields together to study new issues relating to the management of the global economy. And new initiatives focus more attention on undergraduates: a new certificate in global cultures; internationally-oriented residential learning on campus; a revitalized undergraduate major in international studies; and a program to support new and innovative types of overseas learning experiences.

**Between the international complex and the rest of the university.**

Another set of boundaries that must be rethought are those between the international education complexes and the rest of the university. These include boundaries between international studies and the departments and colleges, as well as boundaries between the interdisciplinary international studies programs and other parts of the interdisciplinary axis itself. We need a way to reestablish the sense that international studies are central to the concerns of departments like sociology, political science, and economics; we must renew the belief in the interdependence of knowledge in the social disciplines. We also need to break down the barriers between international studies in the liberal arts departments and those in the professional schools of law, business, agriculture, engineering, education, and public policy. At the same time we need to forge relationships with groups pursuing such interdisciplinary topics as ethnic studies, women’s studies, environmental studies, and cultural studies.

**Between “our” knowledge and “their” knowledge.** Another boundary that must be crossed is that between knowledge produced in the United States and knowledge produced in the regions we study. In the past, area studies in the United States seemed to be a project reserved for Americans and carried out primarily on U.S. campuses with occasional forays to “the field.” We would send people out to study “the other,” and then transmit the learning developed by these American area specialists to our students. To some extent, this practice was a natural response to objective conditions. In some parts of the world there were no local schol-
ars to work with. In others access to local scholars was cut off. In some parts of the world universities were weak or nonexistent, and the only source of scholarly insight on many parts of the world came from scholars in Western universities. The Cold War meant that U.S. researchers were denied access to many countries and contacts with local academics were limited and tightly controlled. Now, however, as a result of decolonization, economic development, the strengthening of universities around the world, the end of the Cold War, and the global communication revolution, this is no longer the case. Today it is possible for researchers in this country to work closely with counterparts in most countries around the world.

Wisconsin and its sister research universities are responding to these needs by forming closer ties with universities and research centers around the world and by encouraging our faculty to join with peers in “global research networks” that address broad and widely-shared issues like nationalism and ethnic conflict, the globalization of the media, and the changing role of government in the economy. These networks do not privilege any one center of scholarship but seek to work collaboratively on a global basis. In many cases they are virtual networks that operate primarily through the Internet.

Creating New Partnerships
In addition to challenging and transgressing boundaries, progressive international educators are seeking to develop new partnerships and alliances that will sustain and enrich international studies and programs. These include new partnerships on our own campuses as well as partnerships with other universities in the U.S., with universities overseas, and with the public and private sectors. These alliances form part of the basic architecture of the emerging vision of international education.

Within the interdisciplinary axis. The first set of partnerships are those within the interdisciplinary axis of our own universities. International studies were one of the first elements of the interdisciplinary axis to be institutionalized. They have been followed by many other cross-departmental and cross-college programs. Among them are programs that study specific ethnic groups in this country (e.g., Afro-American studies, Asian-American studies, and Chicano studies), women’s studies, environmental studies, and cultural studies. In each case there are natural affinities between these newer members of the interdisciplinary axis and the international studies complexes. Ethnic studies programs look at populations with roots elsewhere in the world and need to understand from whence these communities have come as well as how they have evolved in the United States. Women’s studies programs benefit from comparative knowledge of women’s roles and conditions around the world as well as from an understanding of transnational advocacy for and international protection of women. Environmental studies programs similarly require knowledge of conditions in other countries and the international arena. And cultural studies is emerging as a global enterprise with interests in the relationship between culture and society worldwide.

While some partnerships have been formed, alliances of this nature have proven more difficult than might be expected. To be sure, some centers of Latin American studies maintain close relations with Chicano studies programs, and some African studies centers work closely with Afro-American studies. But collaborations of this nature are not yet commonplace. The reasons are complex. Some programs may be too busy struggling for survival. Others may be concerned about their relations with departments and disciplines and fearful of too much contact with other interdisciplinary programs that might be looked down on by those wedded to traditional disciplines. At the UW–Madison we have sought to overcome these barriers through joint programs sponsored by the International Institute and units like the Humanities Institute and the Women’s Studies Research Center as well as through a growing number of workshops and other activities put on jointly by area and ethnic studies centers.
With disciplines, departments, and professional fields. The second set of alliances are those between the international education complexes and the units that make up the traditional axis of campus organization. Here there is a need both to redefine old relationships and forge new ones. Traditionally, the international complexes have been closely tied to departments of humanities and social science. Some of these relationships have become frayed in recent years, as new trends within the disciplines have challenged extant approaches to international knowledge and pressures to downsize departments have reopened questions about the role and importance of international knowledge within the disciplines. Efforts are being made to clarify and, if necessary, to redefine these traditional relationships. Area and international studies scholars have tried to forge relationships in two ways: by demonstrating that the social sciences have a need for the insights comparative study can produce, and by refining their scholarship to make it more theoretical and employing the latest empirical techniques. At the same time, they are trying to revive older traditions that stressed the interdependence of the social disciplines and counteract what seems to be “go it alone” tendencies in fields like economics, sociology, and political science. At the UW-Madison we have encouraged intellectual innovation and worked closely with leaders of colleges and departments to ensure that the core area and international studies resources embedded in these units are preserved in times of austerity.

Similar issues arise in the relationship with the humanities as cultural studies and post-colonialism become more important in the humanities and require a redefinition of the relationship between area studies and humanities departments. These newer traditions tend to challenge some of the work that has been done by area scholars in U.S. universities. There is a growing critique of “orientalism” or the tendency to construct knowledge of other societies based on assumptions of Western supremacy. This has led to calls to pay closer attention to, and work more in tandem with, scholars from outside American and Western academic tra-
that are growing up between the liberal arts-based international programs and the professional schools of law, business, agriculture, education, and engineering. Largely as a result of economic globalization, the professional schools at all our research universities have recognized the need to expand their international offerings at all levels. We see this in dramatic form at the UW–Madison. Several of our professional schools have created new international degrees or similar specialized programs and have hired additional international specialists. At the same time, they have sought closer relations with the existing area and international studies programs and asked them to provide specialized training for professional students who want to develop language skills, general area knowledge, and competence on selected global issues. This has led some of the area and international studies programs to revise their curricula and develop specialized offerings more suited to the needs of professional school students. These developments have been supported and encouraged by a special initiative on World Affairs and the Global Economy which brings faculty from the liberal arts and the professional schools together in a cross-campus learning community dealing with problems of management of the global economy.

With other universities. In addition to partnerships on campus, international educators are expanding existing ties and forging new relationships with other universities in the United States and overseas. Faced with increasing demands for international knowledge, and often for knowledge of a novel, complex, and specialized nature at a time when resources are shrinking, university leaders have looked for ways to share resources and cooperate more fully. Thus we increasingly see the development of consortia that link two or more universities for all kinds of specialized tasks. These include jointly-run area studies centers and overseas programs as well as joint programs for research and graduate training on specialized issues. Consortia are also emerging to facilitate the teaching of less commonly-taught languages like Thai, Kazach, Quechua, or Telugu through summer institutes and distance education. And we are seeking new and deeper relations with individual scholars and research institutions in other countries while also developing global research networks that link our scholars with peers around the world working on similar topics. In the Midwest, the eleven Big Ten universities plus the University of Chicago have worked together in many areas for decades, but only recently have they started to explore cooperation in international studies. In addition to participating in this general consortium, the UW–Madison belongs to many consortia for study abroad, several designed to foster teaching of less commonly-taught languages, and some in area and global studies. Recently, we have created a Joint Center for International Studies with the UW–Milwaukee better to serve the UW System and the state. With the University of Minnesota, we jointly manage the Midwest Center for German and European Studies and with Minnesota and Stanford the MacArthur Consortium on International Peace and Cooperation.

While we are working more closely with sister universities in the United States, we are expanding and deepening our relations with scholars and universities overseas. In particular, we have developed a wide range of partnerships to foster exchange of students and faculty and conduct joint research. This is an area that has been materially helped by U.S. government programs, and thus it is one that is at risk as international education budgets in Washington are cut. Given the nature of these relationships, it will be hard to find alternative sources of support should these cuts be deep and permanent.

With external constituencies. Finally, we are strengthening and deepening relationships with existing constituencies outside the university and trying to build new external alliances. International educators in the research universities have lobbied heavily to preserve existing federal programs that are at risk. We have continued our relationships with the K–12 systems and col-
leges in our states and regions. Many of us are trying to develop relations with the alumni of our programs as well as with alumni of our universities who reside abroad. In recent years, most universities have sought to strengthen relations with the business community. And many state universities like the UW–Madison have sought a much closer partnership with state government, primarily through alliances with state export promotion offices.

The emerging partnership between state business, state export promotion offices, and state universities is the newest and most innovative of the new external alliances being forged in this time of change. As the economies of states as well as whole regions (like the Midwest) become more and more dependent on exports, business and political leaders have seen the need for more international expertise. In some cases, they have turned to the universities to supply the needed knowledge and training. It is too soon to say if this new alliance will prove mutually beneficial and help take up the slack created by the decline in federal support. But it remains a promising area for future exploration. In the past few years the UW–Madison has developed close relations with the State Department of Commerce and the business community. We have offered a pilot program of workshops, conferences, and other programs on international issues relevant to the state’s export promotion program and hope to secure long-term funding to continue these activities.

Preserve Knowledge and Develop New Ideas

The most important of all challenges is the need to preserve the great learning of the past and at the same time develop new concepts and ideas to equip students and others to confront a new world. This is, after all, the central responsibility of research universities in all fields. In our domain, we need to use old and new methods to ensure that our students understand other cultures and societies; to refine our understandings of how world society operates in light of recent trends; to seek new insights about, and appreciation of, the great civilizations of the past; to develop new models of an increasingly globalized world economy; to rethink the interdependence of nations and devise new modalities of governance; to listen to new voices in art and literature from around the world; and to otherwise maintain the highest level of excellence in our scholarship and teaching.

Some Recent Breakthroughs

Over the past decade, a new vision of international education has begun to take shape on our campuses. Emerging out of heated debate and no small amount of struggle, this vision is beginning to shape developments here and elsewhere. As a result, we can point to a number of recent breakthroughs on our campus. Thus, for the first time ever, hiring decisions for a cluster of related faculty in several UW departments have been authorized, and this “cluster hiring” plan has been applied to internationalize policy studies. This reflects campus recognition that the interdisciplinary axis needs the same control over hiring that was once the exclusive preserve of departments, as well as a realization that policy studies in the future must be international. The College of Letters and Sciences and College of Agriculture and Life Sciences have joined with the Schools of Business and Law to create a cross-college learning community on the global economy, thus showing they understand that no single college can create needed knowledge in this area on its own. We have joined with universities in Latin America, Asia, and Africa to create a global research network to study the legacies of authoritarian regimes in politics, culture, and individual psyches, showing that our faculty has seen the need to work with colleagues throughout the world. And member programs of the International Institute have started working together on shared projects, demonstrating that they have recognized that the era of splendid isolation is over.
Conclusion

No one can predict what international education will look like on our campus twenty-five or fifty years from now when the UW–Madison celebrates its next major milestones. International studies, like all higher education, is in flux. But the future is hopeful. The structures of international education in this country have been built on five pillars: strong intellectual interest in the disciplines for matters international; support from top campus leadership; creative work and sustained energy among the international educators; mutually supportive relations between the traditional and the interdisciplinary axes; and strong external support for international higher education. On our campus, these pillars remain strong. As a result, the UW–Madison is increasingly recognized as a leader in international education in our region and nationwide. We have confronted the issues of our times and emerged stronger than ever.