

Continental Drift

International students
become international
alumni and create
international institutions

By JOHN PULLEY

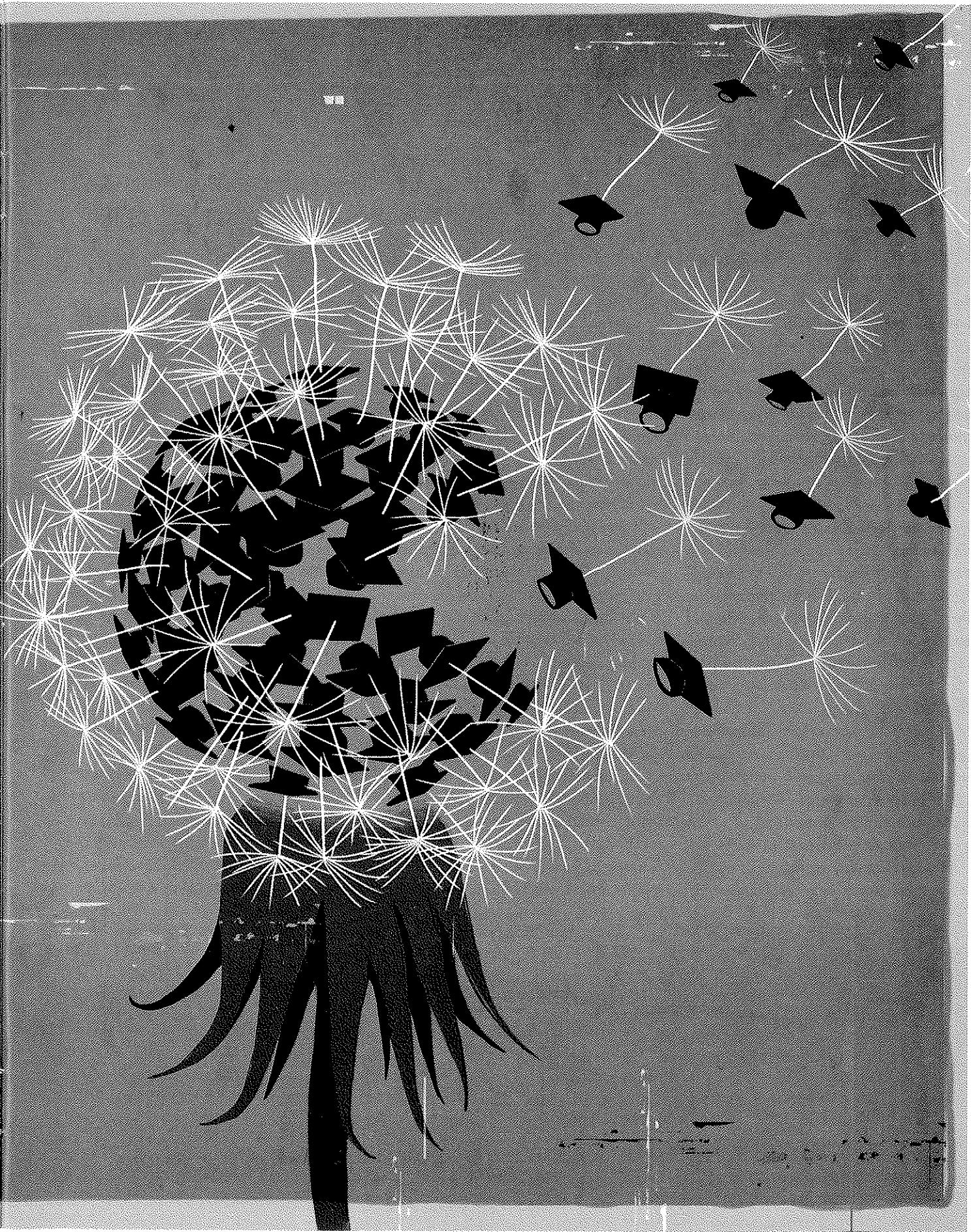
No nation would entrust its foreign relations to ambassadors bereft of international experience. Nor would a global conglomerate ignore overseas markets and expect to prosper.

Yet colleges and universities have frequently taken a remarkably unsophisticated and *laissez faire* approach to advancing their international interests—if they have bothered with them at all.

In the era of globalization, that approach is changing. Institutions are entering new education markets and recruiting students from abroad at a quickening pace. Now, of necessity, they are turning their attention to international advancement and how best to engage alumni, friends, governments, foundations, and other entities beyond their borders.

The University of Nottingham, for example, aspires to have an international cohort of students equal to 25 percent of its

ILLUSTRATION BY ENILIANO PONZI FOR CASE



total enrollment, a mark the university is likely to hit sooner rather than later. Nottingham's enrollment quadrupled to 37,000 over the last 20 years thanks to ongoing recruitment of international students to its campuses in the U.K.; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; and Ningbo, China.

"If you want to be a great university, you have to have an international agenda," says Joe Beyel, director of international development, a position that was created this year.

But that agenda can't stop at recruitment. "The advancement piece of international participation has been universally weak," says Kirk Cerny, executive director and CEO of the Purdue Alumni Association. "The effort has been focused on domestic alumni, but as the world shrinks, a significant piece of the advancement puzzle will be international development in the years to come."

GLOBAL GOALS

Multiple factors are pushing colleges and universities to expand internationally and welcome students from farther afield, in part because students are demanding postsecondary education that will prepare them to succeed in an interconnected world.

"Students are coming to college with the expectation that they will be exposed

to people of different cultures and backgrounds and that the alumni network that they graduate with will have a reach beyond their region," says Scott M. Mory, associate senior vice president of alumni relations at the University of Southern California, which has 300,000 alumni.

More than 7,000 of USC's 35,000 current undergraduate and professional school students come from other countries. To serve constituents abroad, the university operates offices in Hong Kong; Tokyo; Taipei, Taiwan; and Mexico City. In the next year, it will add outposts in Shanghai, China; Seoul, South Korea; and Mumbai, India. "We're giving students the added value of being able to build a global network," Mory says.

Beyond the desire to deliver diversity, colleges and universities are also expanding their reach in response to market forces. As many governments decrease financial support of higher education while the global demand for education rises,

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institutions are encouraged to explore new markets.

Asia, for example, is expected to fuel the growth of international education for years to come, largely because it has "significant middle classes with money set aside for education," says Allan Goodman, president of the U.S. nonprofit Institute of International Education. Ken McGillivray, secretary general at the Association of Pacific Rim Universities, predicts that Asia will account for 70 percent of cross-border student mobility by 2025.

Australia was among the first to recognize and exploit the growing Asian demand for postsecondary education, recruiting heavily from Singapore, Hong Kong, and Malaysia. However, the international market for education is ever-shifting. Recent stiff competition from institutions in Southeast Asia has dampened Asian demand for Australia's universities.

The University of Queensland has responded by recruiting more students

in short

STATISTICALLY SPEAKING. Borders? What borders? According to a 2009 report by Universities UK titled *Patterns of Higher Education Institutions in the UK, between 2000 and 2006*, U.K. universities saw a 48 percent increase in international students. Within the European Union, the U.K. was the major provider of higher education to EU and non-EU students combined, although Germany had the most international students from just the EU. Meanwhile, the Australian government's Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations releases monthly data on international student enrollment. The July data showed that China and India are sending the most students to Australia, while students from Saudi Arabia and Vietnam have increased at the highest rates over the last year.

U.S. OF ¿QUÉ? Don't you love it when one Web site answers all your questions? If you are looking for data on international students in U.S. higher education, the site to surf is that of the Institute of International Education. IIE produces the annual *Open Doors* report, which included the following fascinating tidbits about the 2007–2008 school year: The total number of international students in U.S. higher education was 623,805, a 7 percent increase from the previous year; the top U.S. institutions for international students were the University of Southern California and New York University; and India and China sent the most students to the United States. Check out the IIE Web site (opendoors.iienetwork.org) in November for the 2008–2009 academic year data.

from India, the Middle East, and China. "Education," says Lea Sublett, the university's deputy director of alumni and community relations, "is one of Australia's top exports."

STRONG AFFINITY, WEAK PHILANTHROPY

If conducting advancement on a global stage were easy, everyone would be doing it. Travails notwithstanding, broadening an institution's advancement horizons has inherent advantages.

International alumni are frequently more loyal to their alma maters than native-born students, say advancement professionals. Monique Harper-Richardson, manager of development, alumni, and community at Australia's University of Wollongong, attributes that devotion to the "holistic experience" of leaving behind friends and family to study in a new country, often in a new language. By comparison, many Australian students live at home and work while attending college.

"[International students] tend to focus on what they want to get out of their experience," says Sublett. As a result, international alumni often are more keenly aware of and grateful for the advantages conferred by a degree earned abroad.

"They develop a strong appreciation for the university," says Cerny, of Purdue. "Talk about loyalty! People who come here from other countries, they have a very strong affinity toward the institution when they leave because it was such a game-changing experience for them."

And the financial wherewithal required of international students speaks to a level of affluence that development professionals should find encouraging.

"I don't know as a rule that international alumni are better prospects," Mory says, "but obviously recruiting internationally exposes you to people of means."

Then there are the challenges. Chief among them is that, as a rule, international students are unfamiliar with philanthropy. "Here in Europe, institutions of higher education have traditionally been supported by the government, a mentality that is prevalent in other cultures, as well," says Christopher Redo, executive director of development and alumni affairs at INSEAD, the graduate business school with campuses in France and Singapore. "When we talk about the need for alumni to participate in advancing the mission of the institution, we sometimes are met by blank stares or, in the worst cases, an indignant response."

About 11 percent of INSEAD's graduates contribute to the annual fund. "We

wish it was closer to 20 [percent]," says Redo, "but we believe that by building a habit of giving, the long-term interests of the institution will be taken care of."

Philanthropy education abroad is a process, but not everyone is starting from the same place. "I believe there are families in Asia who have been exposed to philanthropy and understand the importance it holds for their country and their societies as well as for institutions in this country," says Debra LaMorte, New York University's senior vice president for development and alumni relations. "International fundraising is our next frontier. It's a place where we intend to spend a lot of time and effort."

Advancement professionals also bemoan the annoyances and impediments that bedevil international activities, such as the high cost of mailing magazines and database-management systems that don't support international addresses and other essential data. Nottingham, for instance, presumes that most of the 3,000 known alumni who live in the United States are Americans or Brits, but it can't be sure.

American University's database indicates that 5 percent of alumni with known addresses live abroad, but "it could be double that," says Tom Minar, the D.C. institution's vice president

RANK AND RILE. Love them or hate them, college rankings are a fact of life, and international students tend to be particularly enthralled by them. If you are having trouble remembering which international ranking is which, a handy Web page at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Education and Social Science Library can help. The page links to major non-U.S. rankings and provides a short explanation of or link to each of their methodologies. For instance, the Chinese Shanghai Jiao Tong University rankings are based solely on academic or research performance, while the *Times Higher Education*–QS World University Rankings rely heavily on academic peer review. Peruse the list at www.library.illinois.edu/edx/rankings/rankint.html.

FROM EAST TO EAST. Experts predict that Asian students will account for a large portion of international students by 2025. Historically, these students have been attracted to English-speaking countries, but that might be changing in East Asia. The 2008 British Council report *International Student Mobility in East Asia* found that East Asian students are now more open to studying in another country within the region, and current mobility data bear that out. Furthermore, the report says that "while the majority of [East Asian] students will still want to travel overseas for their entire education qualification, increasing numbers of students are satisfied with partial international study, obtaining only part of their degree overseas."

of development and alumni relations. "Often you have a much higher loss rate with alumni abroad."

And the mobility that makes study abroad possible in the first place can become a bane when trying to keep up with on-the-move alumni. Sometimes simply making a telephone call to prospects in different time zones can be a logistical pain in the neck.

Says Ian Gardner, Nottingham's deputy development director: "We have to start calling New York City at the midnight hour our time and California at 2 or 3 in the morning to make sure it's tea time in the United States."

ALUMNI EDUCATION STARTS EARLY

Referring to students as alumni-in-training is a popular trope among college administrators. In the realm of international advancement, it's a do-or-die mandate.

"If students come here and do not have an idea of how they will stay connected and engaged [after graduation], then we will lose them," says Oksana Carlson, director of international alumni relations at D.C.'s George Washington University. "It's very hard to find them and have them reconnect with the university later."

The university is inaugurating a new program in Hong Kong this fall called the GW Global Forum, which will bring together alumni, parents, students, and friends of the institution to hear experts discuss important topics in Asian politics, business, and economic and foreign policy.

At USC, cultivation of international students begins before they arrive on campus. The university's two dozen international alumni clubs (in Shanghai, Paris, Seoul, and elsewhere) hold summer send-off parties every year for students leaving home to study in California. The events are family affairs.

From Tokyo to Lawrence

A former international student discusses her experience

By SACHIKO MIYAKAWA

"Why Kansas?" Many people ask that question when they learn that I graduated from the University of Kansas in May. In their place, I'd probably wonder the same thing: Why did a girl from Tokyo choose to go to school in Lawrence, Kansas?

Since high school, I've dreamed of being an international correspondent. U.S. colleges have a reputation for good journalism programs and cultural and ethnic diversity, so studying in the United States seemed like a good fit for me.

I applied to the University of Kansas because of its journalism program and tuition, which was more affordable than other schools I had considered. The university's recruiter, whom I met at an American college fair in Tokyo and still keep in touch with, also played a big part in my decision. I was attracted to the university's beautiful campus and small college-town setting, but I was worried about my English proficiency and the school's admissions standards. Talking to the recruiter relieved my stress.

During my college years, I struggled with—and perhaps learned the most from—class discussions. American education often values student participation, while many international students, especially those from Japan, are not used to articulating their opinions in class, let alone in English. These discussions helped my English, and they also exposed me to different types of students. In Japan, there are not many older, nontraditional students, and I found their perspectives interesting.

While a student at KU, I was also a reporter for a campus newspaper and a radio program. Extracurricular activities at American universities, such as student government and campus media, are often more large-scale and dynamic than those at Japanese universities. College recruiters would be wise to stress that point more when talking to international prospects.

There were, however, a few things I wish I had known before I enrolled. For example, I always wanted to live in a small college town, but I wasn't aware that this could be a disadvantage when applying for jobs after graduation. I had difficulty getting an internship in Kansas, because I didn't have a car to commute, and there were not as many opportunities in the state as in New York or Washington, D.C. Most recruiters at the university's job fairs were from local companies or branches.

Location is an important factor when choosing a school, and I think recruiters should address it more. Many international students are not used to driving, so the availability of public transportation can be a big plus.

Overall, I had a great experience at KU. While I enjoyed going to a large state university, studying at the journalism school also allowed me to experience some advantages of a small college—easier access to professors and small classes of 10 to 15 students.

Many international students don't have a chance to visit college campuses outside their home country; they are choosing a school based on academic reputations or rankings. It's important for college recruiters to understand that fact, while also addressing the various strengths of their institutions.

Sachiko Miyakawa was the editorial intern for CURRENTS this summer. She is currently interning at Al Jazeera English in Washington, D.C.

"Students and their parents get exposure to what it means to be a member of the Trojan family," Mory says, referring to the university's mascot. He also notes that an international alumnus recently made a seven-figure gift in support of the university's new campus center.

Once international students arrive on campus, Australia's Murdoch University helps them feel at home by assigning them to a local family in Perth, where the university is located. Lianne Cretney-Barnes, the university's director of public relations and brand marketing, volunteered her

clan to serve as a surrogate family for a Malaysian student.

"You take them under your wing, take them on family outings," says Cretney-Barnes. "We were her family at graduation."

Murdoch draws many of its international students from India, China, and Africa. To accommodate Muslims on campus, the university is raising funds to expand its multifaith chapel. Its dining hall offers a range of international choices, including halal dishes.

At INSEAD, cultivation of students is pursued with the goal of creating a pipeline of donors who will give up to €50,000 and, over time, become major contributors. The recently completed INSEAD Campaign raised €203 million, eclipsing the campaign goal two years ahead of schedule. Alumni contributed 20 percent of the total.

"We say to them, 'You are standing on the shoulders of others. We hope that when you have the capacity, you will remember that part of your tuition was made possible by alumni who preceded you,'" Redo says.

KEEPING THE FAR NEAR

When international students graduate and return home as alumni, the closeness of campus life is suddenly replaced by distance and lack of regular contact. Maintaining and deepening ties to international alumni at this stage requires winning what political operatives engaged in election campaigns call the ground game—engaging alumni where they live. Rather than casting ballots, however, alumni vote with their time and enthusiasm and by opening their wallets.

"It's really important to develop a strong network of volunteers on the ground," says LaMorte. "They can help guide you."

Nottingham is developing 20 alumni networks in 15 countries, including India, China, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Canada, and the United States. It plans to staff an

advancement office in Asia in the next few years, and it is ramping up efforts to bring globe-trotting university officials and academics to the home turf of far-flung alumni. A recent such gathering in Shanghai drew 125 people.

"The university's expansion and internationalization is moving faster than we have moved from an advancement point of view," says Beyel. "We're simply trying to catch up with where our alumni are."

To that end, a university that formerly employed Cretney-Barnes established a formal alumni ambassador program for recruiting newly minted graduates, an investment that generated a healthy return. Charged with building an alumni network in her home country, the ambassador in Bangkok created a Rolodex of graduates that included "many names we didn't have," recalls Cretney-Barnes.

"We have found at every institution I've ever worked at that alumni in non-American places are the most effective recruiters for us," Minar says. "They love talking about the education they receive at places like AU."

"The second thing I would emphasize to colleagues is that widespread annual fund results are rare abroad. I think it's more important to focus on major gift work abroad, to connect with people and do hardcore cultivation of people you identify as being capable of major gifts."

The upside of such an approach is personified by Gordon Y.S. Wu, who in 1995 pledged a gift of \$100 million to Princeton.

"I'm going to try and take a lesson out of their book," says LaMorte, who attended an alumni dinner in London this spring with 40 prospective donors, including two billionaires. "We could use more capital gifts."

Third, says Minar, a successful program of international advancement can't be achieved on the cheap. It requires investments of time and money. "Too often when we're making cutbacks, we find it

very easy to cut on the international side.” he says. “We’ve been inconsistent with them. We should be ashamed. We don’t mail the magazine abroad because it’s too expensive? International alumni aren’t half-class citizens. They are alumni.”

Electronic communications can help with outreach. The University of Nottingham is developing country-specific alumni Web sites that have regionally unique social networks and career links.

USC provides its international clubs with Slingboxes, electronic devices that can stream live feeds of Trojan football games. Mory recalls attending a viewing party in Tokyo that drew 100 fans, despite the game’s 4 a.m. kickoff.

Mory cautions, however, against over-reliance on electronic tools. “E-mail doesn’t lead to major gifts. It’s a medium, not a communication,” he says.

Low-tech approaches work, too. At an event in Thailand for graduates of the University of Wollongong, organizers floated rubber ducks in the hotel’s pool to elicit memories of the campus duck pond, which included one memorable billed bandit who stole students’ lunches.

ENGAGING GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY

In addition to the cultivation of alumni, colleges and universities with international constituencies must engage governments, industry, and other institutions.

Goodman, the president of the Institute of International Education, recently toured Indonesia with a delegation of 30 college and university presidents, provosts, and deans who are interested in expanding the flow of students to and from the world’s most populous Muslim country. Due to the Asian currency crisis and increased competition for students, the rate of student exchange is half what it was a decade ago, he says.

“Every single official we met—the minister of education, director general for

“We don’t mail the magazine abroad because it’s too expensive? International alumni aren’t half-class citizens. They are alumni.”

higher education, presidential spokesman, and the president himself—was educated in America,” says Goodman, noting that those leaders control huge education and scholarship budgets.

“What if the minister of education creates a decade-long program that funds thousands of students to study in America? Sometimes your graduates can deliver a whole country.”

GW has established ties with South Korea, whose first modern president, Syngman Rhee, was an alumnus. The country’s current president, Lee Myung-bak, a former GW visiting scholar, received an honorary degree from the university this summer.

At the very least, international advancement demands a familiarity with the ways of doing business abroad.

“In China, it’s very important that you establish good relations with the government,” says NYU’s LaMorte. “Given the fact that it’s a communist country, it’s important to respect their rules and culture.”

Development officers are also aware that international donors are increasingly interested in making gifts that will benefit multiple recipients. A donor making a gift to support a center on Asian studies at NYU, for example, might want to ensure that the center partners with an Asian university so that the gift “has an impact in this country but also has an impact in their own country,” LaMorte says. NYU recently received two such gifts of \$1 million each.

During the past 18 months, the University of Queensland has been researching international philanthropic foundations and

“identifying with whom we’d like to build relationships,” says Sublett.

And Purdue, seeking to advance its interests in India, is linking together alumni who work in the industrial centers of Mumbai, Bangalore, and Hyderabad, places where “there are major industry and major research capabilities,” Cerny says. The goal is to enhance recruitment, bolster pride in the university, and “create substantial research and corporate collaborations between India and Purdue.”

When Purdue’s College of Pharmacy, Nursing and Health Sciences wanted to collaborate with the Indian pharmaceutical industry on research and development, alumni leaders in Mumbai “built a great working relationship” with the Wockhardt pharmaceutical company, whose chairman is an alumnus of Purdue.

The upshot is opportunities for Wockhardt to collaborate with Purdue researchers, for the university’s alumni to work for the company, and for the advancement office to encourage its graduates in India “to be further supportive of the College of Pharmacy by making personal gifts back to the university,” Cerny says. “It’s like an alumni club on steroids.”

The world’s boundaries and populations are blurring at an unprecedented pace. Logistical issues and cultural divides still exist, but as students find ways to bridge these gaps, so must advancement offices. They owe it to their alumni; more than that, they owe it to their institutions. □

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