Prompt

A while back I asked a question about how institutions are handling the increasing requests from institutions abroad to ‘negotiate’ arrangements related to tuition at US institutions as part of degree and exchange agreements. This has been an increasing part of the conversation when talking with possible partners with respect to 2+2 and other types of relationships in academic exchanges; ultimately involving as well institutional recruiting of international students from abroad (China in particular although I have had similar requests from South Korea and others).

Summary of Responses

The responses I received were limited and the majority of responders were colleagues who asked me to provide a summary as they were interested in the information as well. Please do not make assumption about the following regarding use at any given institution or even the prevalence of use of the models outlined.

Given the nature of the issue much of the discussion was on a colleague to colleague basis over the phone and frankly I have no hard and fast documents or materials (I cannot refer to x specific place doing W) to frame this summary on. All the feedback and collegial conversation was helpful and perhaps the following as background will be useful:

1. Where there were responses, the range of responses appeared to be from no arrangements possible - the tuition is what it is and there are no differentials - to yes we have specific options/arrangements with specific partners (no details). There were some situations which appeared to also blend existing policies for alumni (and dependents) who returned for degree work and received a tuition benefit and these could possibly serve as part of a 2+2+1 or similar relationship.

2. the range of approaches that seemed to be available for those working in this arena varied from the use of scholarship and waiver based models to partnership differential agreements say with specific institutions or students from certain countries - the percentage of differential from published rates varied and was not something that is readily identifiable other than perhaps through the requests we may have coming directly from abroad who identify the differentials (generically - statements such as we have similar agreements with others that include) for resident/instate tuition levels to percentages differentials.

As an example, the following models might be appropriate for discussion(s):

Model A - no differential possible at any level - Under this model one then must rationalize the benefit to the partner of paying full fare or the partner already has the benefits identified - the relationship therefore is capitalizing on institutional research, active/interactive partnerships, strong recruiting resources, institutional name/identity, faculty resources/connections, longstanding relationships, etc. becomes critical. One can also attempt to do "price" comparisons and market oneself as the most competitive pricing package, the challenge then is to compare against the same institutions that foreign partners are comparing against and not necessarily against ones peer grouping which is often how we base on our local discussions. They key is identifying what is being compared and trying to match that somehow in the conversations.

Model B - Under this model one delineates what is possible so one can begin a conversation, know the limitations and keep discussions open. One model might call for Y% differential if 10 students recruited, X% differential if 20 students recruited from institution W or institutions M, N, O.

Model C - Another model could call for exchanges where instate/resident rates would be allowed for the inbound partner students in order to facilitate and open pathways for domestic student participants. The connection between exchanges and degree relationships is also evolving as well where one level carries forward into the next level.

Model D - Another model evident from some of the EDUCATION USA materials is the scholarship recruiting model - using full to partial scholarship programs to recruit internationally, these appear to range form targeted to international students to general packages offered to all applicants domestic and international alike, the total number of awards made is not clear.

I am sure there are more models that could be developed. Many models could work off a revenue format showing the potential for positive revenue over time or as an investment model that allows for opening of future relationships, faculty development, etc. Filling empty seats in certain degree programs or pipelines from undegrad to graduate level is another point for consideration.

All these are discussion models please do not make assumption about their use at any given institution and again make no assumption about their prevalence of use.

As a caveat, colleagues did raise the strong concerns about the implications of these types of such arrangements. Clearly, there are many issues that make these discussions challenging on an institutional, local, statewide and national level. In some cases state laws are indicated as preventing "arrangements" like these, at least for public institutions. In some cases it is the combination of public issues versus the institutional missions that come together to guide policy. Ultimately as part of the model discussions the caveat is that all of this is specific to international partnerships/recruiting/mission/etc. When moving in the domestic market many US institutions have a wide array of tuition arrangement packages for everything from honors to regional recruiting, as part of a variety of broader consortia (state to state level, etc..), and even guaranteed differentials under state economic development packages for international foreign direct investment partners and their affiliated industries. The challenges are complex to say the least.

When reading articles that have appeared in the media or even PR announcements about establishing, growing international relationships, recruiting, etc. from countries such as china, etc.. there is little or no reference to the specifics of the arrangements, history, etc.. Ultimately it would appear that many potential foreign partners are attempting to increasingly maximize the return for their students and limited resources - especially those with scholarships for their students to study abroad (in the US or elsewhere). Perhaps if not already being done we should be adding this issue into framework of facilitating our globalization efforts to produce graduates who are globally literate and experienced - what is the financial resource model for such an outcome if not some of the above? Clearly when at least at many public universities the domestic population of students is increasingly financially placebound the international presence of the campus becomes more important and the value of these partnerships could be seen as an invaluable part of the mission.

How all this relates to the general international recruiting activities (including use of agents/agencies abroad) of each institution is also a possible connection as well. I know that much of what is summarize above is relatively vague and without concrete examples, however that is the nature of the issue at least from the perspective that came across from the responses and all the research we have done into the subject.

Additional Response

We have attempted to stamp out the phrase "2+2." We found early on that it set up unrealistic expectations. Even with those international partners with whom we have shared syllabi and created transfer equivalencies, we end up with "lived" programs that are more like 2+2.5 or 2+3. Among the reasons this happens: general education requirements, accreditation requirements (e.g. ABET), and course prerequisites.