World Café Notes

Question #1: According to the author, “European universities have a hard time getting on the coveted ‘strategic partner’ lists of American colleges.” In a ‘strategic partner’ model, “a select few institutions abroad are chosen to develop multifaceted partnerships, from research to faculty and student exchanges.” What can/should European universities do to better position themselves as potential ‘strategic partners’ with distinct competitive advantages for education abroad?

1st round
- European universities should provide more student services, more or less like in US campuses
- A strategic partner should also offer more courses, and a multifaceted relationship with research projects on all levels and specially doctor research projects
- US institutions should look for more support of European institutions, so that their students can also have access to go to US institutions and pay the full tuition there (they should offer more scholarships for European students)
- There should be more symmetric programs that offer the same courses on European and US campuses.
- To have less strategic partners is better than to have a lot. It is very time consuming to find a strategic partner
- Idea of site visits subsidized by European Universities
- Public and private institutions defer greatly in Europe
- European Universities could research whether any alums are on staff/faculty at US institutions

2nd round
- There is a need of more intercultural knowledge training specially for students applying for internships in Europe
- Working with the different communication styles is needed (again for internships)
- European course syllabus should be translated into English to make sure, that advisers can understand and students in Europe can transfer their credits
- A lot of US institutions want to have many European study abroad options in Europe, but they are not really looking for a strategic partner

3rd round
- Experiential education is increasing, but the cost is very high in doing it correctly, because labor laws make it very tricky.
- the labor laws should be improved by the governments to help create more internships
- European institutions receiving interns should help lobbying governments to make them see the benefits of having more interns in Europe
**Question #2:** According to the author, “The Bologna Process, begun in 1999, aligned disparate higher-education systems across the continent. But is also made studying in the United States less appealing…” Given the positive impact of the Bologna Process, how can any negative ramifications on education abroad be mitigated?

**Round 1:**
- Bologna Process was positive for Europeans
- Question of cost as that is a great inhibitor as the payment structure for higher education is very different between Europe and the United States
- Bologna enables students in Europe to study abroad across Europe
- Difference between the grading system is also a barrier
  - Clearly articulated grading systems and how credit it awarded would ease education abroad exchanges for students
- Bologna Process makes it easy for mobility within Europe and the uniformity made it more attractive for US students (especially at the Master’s level)
- In Europe a student is pursuing a degree in an area vs. the US there is prestige attached to the University that you attend
- Calendar is also an issue with Fall semesters in Europe always running into the Spring semester in the US

**Round 2:**
- Finances and calendar are the two biggest challenges facing education abroad between Europe and the United States
- Europeans will go abroad as long as the finances are there
- Bologna Process really hasn’t affected study abroad and private universities that can still afford to send their students abroad
- France going to the two semester system that matches more closely with the US system is seen as positive
- Next step in the Bologna Process is to better align and standardize the academic program/calendar
- Is there value in study abroad if the two systems become more similar
- Belief that there is more culture shock in England because culture shock is impacted by student expectations

**Round 3:**
- Number of European to the United States really depend on the availability of scholarships
- Mobility; great opportunity for them to go the United States
- Spain feels that US is more accessible culturally than Asia
- Germans find that they cannot go abroad because of the time and the stress they feel to complete all requirements for their degree in three years
- Most exchange students are at a higher level than the United States counterparts going abroad; hard to keep things in balance
• If credit transfer systems were more comparable then this would be easier for students to have education abroad experiences

**Question #3**: As quoted in the article, John Hudzik, former vice president for global engagement at Michigan State University, says “Higher-education capacity, research, and instruction is flattening globally. Clearly Asia is ascendant. But I don’t think of the 21st century as the Asian century, it’s going to be the global century.” How can European universities better ensure that study abroad within higher education flattens rather than skews towards Asia in the 21st century?

**Round 1:**
• ERASMUS links are valuable
• Need to go beyond language student prorams
• Broadening beyond department exchanges to university exchanges
• Academic quality should override destination
• Use European cities as campuses and classrooms
• Enhance/Promote common Western knowledge within/among European locations
• Uniqueness of the EU
• Diversity of cultures across Europe
• Stability of EU economy vs. China (and some other Asian) economies
• Know your customer_MARKET
• Value of similarity between US and European educational styles
• Custom made programs can be a competitive advantage

**Round 2:**
• European programs as a springboard to other study abroad locations
• Problem: 3 year vs. 4 year degree programs
• Capitalize on national diversity within Europe (i.e., Asian students on European programs)
• Influence of students’ major on choice of location
• Becoming strategic partners for schools/majors
• Possibly capitalizing on opportunities for STEM students
• UK universities can refocus on US (e.g., Is the US passe in the UK?)
• Spain focuses on EU, then US and Latin American, recently Asia
• No real threat of change in the trend of who goes abroad and where

**Round 3:**
• Columbus Plan – required of Australians and New Zealanders to go to Asia
• Rise of administrators and their priorities/advice
• Capability of students to adapt to Asia vs. Europe
• Myth of Europe as a comfort zone
• Study abroad trends may be reflective of economic trends and thus change accordingly
• Thematic programming/Unique experiences
• Asia has no marketing advantage, however, sister cities has an impact as do more English language classes
• Possibility of three-way partnerships between the US, EU, and Asia