

WAKING UP TO INTERNATIONALIZATION IN THE BRAZILIAN UNIVERSITIES: A GOAL TO BE REACHED

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On being invited to write this Editorial after returning from a post-doctorate experience in a university in the United Kingdom, I see that internationalization is a challenge, if we consider some specific issues that Brazil currently faces in the scientific world.

Globalization makes it possible to see the world in broad terms, making it possible to understand new directions for rethinking education. In discussing internationalization among the Brazilian universities, we must carry out a review in order to understand where we want to get to, and how we intend to disseminate our knowledge, derived from the excellent scientific research undertaken in our universities. It is beyond doubt that we have progressed, and, with the continuous effort of the Brazilian universities, supported by sources of promotion such as CAPES (the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel), we are succeeding in disseminating this knowledge outside our frontiers.

For us to continue our advance, it is necessary, in our Postgraduate Programs, to offer courses in other languages, and to undertake videoconferences with international institutions in an international language (English), among others. When the students meet and face challenges in other contexts, or with other students from other institutions manage to understand the importance of their future academic qualification, a scientific perspective is awoken; and the students come to think globally. Making internationalization possible, through our students spending time in other universities, as well as through receiving foreign students, is a challenge which we must encourage, and maintain this focus in all the Postgraduate Programs.

We Brazilian researchers have to have a globalized stance in order to attract researchers from other universities so that both students and professors may travel abroad. I believe that we have much knowledge to contribute and exchange. Without doubt, we need to deal with barriers such as that of language and the local culture – nevertheless, in the scientific world, we need to overcome these differences.

The Brazilian Academy of Sciences, in the words of Davi Padilha Bonela, summarizes that the internationalization of Brazilian science cannot be achieved purely through sending researchers abroad, but will also require us to absorb the lessons that foreign countries present to raise their research, as well as attracting foreign researchers to our universities. We cannot direct our concern simply to the number of publications produced; but must also make our research visible through citations by other researchers.

We must understand that this articulation with other universities will have multicentric studies as its return, and, in its turn, the dissemination of other universities' scientific production. The international institutions will look at our production and will see that we can contribute through our researchers, professors and students, and awaken a perspective directed towards the seeking of partnerships in further research.

I believe that our struggle will be hard, dynamic and ongoing. However, as a researcher, I think that we professors and researchers are on the right path. Internationalizing science is a daily conquest for each researcher who believes in our country, our universities and their students, who tomorrow will be professionals with a critical vision and who will surely be responsible for a Brazil which is more scientific.

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