

Visiting International Scholars
and University Internationalization

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Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education

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Abstract

Visiting international scholars are viewed as an important part of an institution's internationalization goals and objectives. Meaningful learning can take place about different or other teaching, research, cultures, and communities by interacting and collaborating with academics from around the world. Despite the central role of visiting international scholars as a valued component of internationalization, research related to the experiences of these individuals is quite limited. This research study set out to add to the field of research regarding visiting international scholars by examining one university's Visiting International Scholar programs to explore to what extent the academic activities of visiting international scholars contributed to the internationalization goals and objectives of the institution. My research study looks at the types of academic activities in which visiting international scholars engage, including in particular academic publications, conference or workshop presentations, conference or workshop attendance, course participation, guest lectures, courses taught, research projects, participation in meetings, and interactions in the local community. Informed by a review of literature, I analyzed publicly available institutional data about the Visiting International Scholar programs and hour-long interviews conducted with 5 visiting international scholars. I describe important contributions these visiting international scholars made to the university community as well as the benefits and challenges these scholars experienced. These findings provide the basis for recommendations regarding institutional internationalization practices, policies, and strategic planning intended to lead to improvements in the existing Visiting International Scholar programs.

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Acknowledgements

Many people helped to make this study possible.

To my research supervisor, Dr. Michelle McGinn: Thank you for your amazing support, wealth of research knowledge, and expertise. Words do not sufficiently express my gratitude for your continued encouragement and understanding. Thank you also to Dr. Michael O’Sullivan and Dr. Tony DiPetta for your valuable insights and support.

To my family: Love you from the bottom of my heart. I am blessed to have you in my life. Through the good and the bad, we are forever and infinitely soul-connected.

To all the visiting international scholars I have come to know over the years: Thank you for entering and enriching my life—to those who participated in this project and all the rest. I am honoured and grateful to have met each of you and hope our paths meet again in the future.

To my friends: You know who you are. Thank you for always being there and for not falling over or off your seats when I tell you this is done.

Drench yourself in words unspoken,

Live your life with arms wide open,

Today is where your book begins,

The rest is still unwritten.

—Natasha Bedingfield, *Unwritten*

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

... I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough
Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.

—Tennyson, *Ulysses*

This excerpt from the poem titled “Ulysses” by Lord Alfred Tennyson (Tennyson & Tennyson, 1908/1970) may be interpreted to speak to the importance of firsthand experience, international discovery, and learning. The sentiment may be likened to the experience of visiting international scholars who travel to new academic and research environments, cultures, and countries in order to fulfill their scholarly goals and objectives and potentially contribute to the internationalization of the host university.

Mobility of scholars is probably one of the earliest recorded forms of internationalization in higher education undertaken by classical scholars in the late 15th and early 16th centuries. Scholars such as Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus, after whom a major international European mobility program is named, lived and worked in several parts of Europe, seeking knowledge, experience, and insights that only contact with other countries could bring (European Commission, 2012).

Since the late 20th century, it has been widely published in the field of international education and academe that higher education should include internationalization of the curriculum, mobilization of scholars and students all over the world, global collaboration on research projects as well as development work, cooperation with the community, and a wide array of support services for university staff,

as well as “distinct commitment, attitudes, global awareness, an orientation and dimension which transcends the entire institution and shapes its ethos” (Harari, 1994, p. 230).

Visiting international scholars are viewed as an important part of an institution’s internationalization goals and objectives. Meaningful learning can take place about different or other teaching, research, cultures, and communities by interacting and collaborating with academics from around the world (Childress, 2010; Heinz & Lewis, 2008; Miller & Blachford, 2012). Visiting international scholars may also contribute to deepening of institutional partnerships through relationship building with scholars at the host institution or by introducing and developing new international partnerships (Guo & Wei, 2012; Mill, Johnson, Mendes, Ventura, & Brito, 2014; Shimmi, 2014). Although engagement by and with visiting international scholars represents valued and important forms of internationalization, research related to the experiences of visiting international scholars is quite limited (Enskär, Johansson, Ljusegren, & Widäng, 2011; Howe, 2008; Liu & Jiang, 2015; Miller & Blachford, 2012; Shimmi, 2014).

This research study sets out to add to the field of research regarding visiting international scholars by examining one university’s Visiting International Scholar programs to explore to what extent the academic activities of visiting international scholars contribute to the internationalization goals and objectives of the institution. In my former role as a university administrator involved for almost two decades in this type of international programming and activities, I believe that visiting international scholars play an important role in the internationalization of universities. My research study looks at the types of academic activities in which visiting international scholars engage,

including in particular academic publications, conference or workshop presentations, conference or workshop attendance, course participation, guest lectures, courses taught, research projects, participation in meetings, and interactions in the local community. Analyzing publicly available institutional data that are acquired as part of the practices of the Visiting International Scholar programs as well as data gathered from one-hour interviews with five visiting international scholars, I present findings about the important contributions visiting international scholars can make in the university community as well as the benefits and challenges scholars may experience. The findings may have an influence on institutional internationalization practices, policies, or strategic planning and potentially lead to improvements in the existing Visiting International Scholar programs at the selected institution.

Problem Statement and Purpose

Jane Knight (1999), a Canadian academic who has published in the field since around the same time as American academic Maurice Harari, defined internationalization as “a process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the goals, functions, and management of higher education” (p. 14). Knight’s definition of internationalization is widely used in mission statements and strategic internationalization plans at higher education institutions and government organizations in North America.

Provincial and national governments and associations in Canada, as well as international governmental organizations, all agree on the imperative of internationalization of higher education (e.g., Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2014; Council of Ontario Universities, 2016; Global Affairs Canada, 2014; International Association of Universities, 2012).

According to Universities Canada (2014), a non-profit, national organization representing university member institutions from across the country, “ninety-six percent of Canadian universities include internationalization as part of their strategic planning, and more than eighty percent identify it as one of their top five planning priorities” (para. 2).

For many institutions, internationalization means a greater emphasis on international student recruitment, major international research grants, and off-shore campuses. What drives these emphases? It seems to be about increasing sources of revenues and funding, rather than the more altruistic goals that are also associated with internationalization. As Dei (2014) argued, “it goes without saying that the current mantra [around internationalization and global education] is anchored in the dictates of corporate capital agendas and commercial interests” (p. 242).

Hans de Wit (2017), a leading scholar in the field of internationalization of higher education, seems to concur with Dei, as evidenced by his statement:

Over the past 40 years, internationalisation as a concept and strategy has evolved from a minor, fragmented and marginal theme to a major, central agenda item for governments and higher education institutions all over the world ... although we use labels like ‘comprehensive internationalisation’ and ‘global citizenship’ as if ‘internationalisation’ were systematic and qualitative, the reality is that it has become a very broad term, used for a great variety of (mostly economic) agendas. (p. 28)

Following the earlier-mentioned and widely used notion of internationalization, Knight (2008) introduced another concept called “internationalization at home,” which she describes as:

Those aspects of internationalization which would happen on a home campus. They include the intercultural and international dimension in the teaching–learning process and research, extracurricular activities, and relationships with local cultural and ethnic community groups, as well as integration of foreign students and scholars into campus life and activities. (p. 22)

In the same vein, universities also value the presence of visiting international scholars on their campuses, encouraging and supporting their active participation in Canadian university life. Visiting international scholars are viewed as an important part of an institution’s home internationalization goals and objectives. Meaningful learning can take place about different or other teaching activities, research activities, cultures, and communities by interacting and collaborating with visiting international scholars (Childress 2010; Heinz & Lewis, 2008; Miller & Blachford, 2012). Research teams and projects may be enhanced by the input and participation of international colleagues (Bachmann, 2006; Collins, Tekin-Iftar, & Olcay-Gul, 2017; Jehn, Northcraft, & Neale, 1999; Wagner, 2006). Visiting international scholars also enhance student learning when they are invited to give guest lectures or teach courses (Bentao, 2011; Mill et al., 2014; Paige, 2003; Xue, Chao, & Kuntz, 2013). The overall purpose for this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the value of visiting international scholars at a Canadian university that has long had internationalization at the heart of its institutional vision and as a key strategic priority. The Canadian university context is described below.

Definitions

Visiting International Scholar: A scholar from abroad participating in an international research and scholarship opportunity at a Canadian university for a period of time ranging from several weeks to one year or more, collaborating with a host faculty member, faculty, and students in a range of academic activities.

Academic Contribution: An academic, teaching, research, or service activity undertaken by a visiting international scholar. Examples of activities include courses taught, guest lectures given, participation in collaborative research projects, conferences, presentations, publications or joint publications, workshops, and community or volunteer activities.

Research Site

I worked for almost two decades at Brock University and was closely involved in the development and formalization of visiting international scholar programming. It is a mid-sized university in Ontario and is active in numerous internationalization activities and programs. Therefore, it seemed a natural choice to select Brock University as the research site for this study. I wanted to explore to what extent the academic activities of visiting international scholars contribute to the internationalization goals and objectives of the institution. In order to appreciate Brock University's institutional experience and commitment to internationalization, I took into consideration the most recent and publicly available high-level strategy documents for the university, including Brock's strategic plan for internationalization (Brock University, 2013). The highest level institutional document is the *Strategic Mandate Agreement 2017–20*. This agreement between Brock University and the (former) Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (2017) essentially outlines the role of the University in Ontario's postsecondary

education system, identifying the shared objectives and priorities and how they will be achieved. Under Section 3: Strategy, Sustainability and Partnerships, sub-section 6.0 is titled “Enrolment Strategy and Program Direction.” Within this sub-section,

“International Enrolment Strategy and Collaboration” is elaborated as follows:

Brock University’s internationalization strategy is rooted in our vision, mission, values and strategic priorities. It speaks to our commitment to the highest quality academic and student experience and to serving the 21st century learner. In an increasingly interconnected world, we are compelled by an ever-strengthening imperative to graduate global citizens. This will include diversifying the Brock community and welcoming larger cohorts of international students, faculty and staff. (Brock University and the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development, 2017)

Welcoming larger cohorts of international students, faculty, and staff would appear to be in keeping and supportive of the visiting international scholar programs. This strategy is also prioritized among the four key internationalization goals that were identified in the *Strategic Internationalization Plan 2013–16* (Brock University, 2013). The third key goal focused on promoting student, faculty, and staff mobility included a specific objective and a participation target to encourage, facilitate, and attain 75 visiting international scholars per year (Brock University, 2013).

The 2017 *Strategic Mandate Agreement* further states that “to operationalize our internationalization strategy, Brock University has adopted the Canadian Bureau of International Educators Internationalization Statement of Principles for Canadian Educational Institutions (CBIE, 2014), which identifies seven internationalization

principles to which all Canadian institutions should adhere” (p. 20). The principles are an overarching statement of Canadian core educational values such as quality, equity, and inclusion. The fourth principle aligns well with and supports the values of the visiting international scholar program:

Ideally, internationalization is inclusive, pervasive and comprehensive, encompassing all aspects of the work of the institution (teaching, research, service and community outreach) and the full range of institutional goals and actions, including: curriculum and program design; teaching and learning development; student, faculty and staff mobility; language education and training; research and innovation; projects and services; community outreach and local economic development. (CBIE, 2014, p. 2)

The *Strategic Mandate Agreement*, under the subsection that describes “International Enrolment Strategy and Collaboration,” further reports the following:

Brock currently has more than 150 international agreements with institutional partners in 54 countries to support student exchanges, research collaborations, study abroad and other experiential opportunities geared around its internationalization strategy. In 2015, for example, this led to 70 visiting scholars from 20 countries coming to participate in the Visiting International Scholars program. (Brock University and the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development, 2017, p. 21)

Clearly, Brock University, as part of its commitment to internationalization as expressed in the *Integrated Strategic Plan: Priorities to Actions* (Brock University, 2011), values the participation of visiting international scholars on campus as an

important part of a wide range of international activities, education, and programming at the university. Visiting international scholars participate in various home internationalization activities through their academic contributions and their engagement in the broader campus and local regional communities. The formal Visiting International Scholar programs at Brock University began almost two decades ago (Brock University, 2014). In early 2017, Brock renewed its commitment to the visiting international scholar programs and the enhancement of internationalization by introducing the newly named Global Scholars Office, with expanded support and opportunities for faculty (Firth, 2017).

Most recently, Brock University (2018) renewed its institutional strategic plan for 2018–2025. The plan is entitled *Niagara Roots–Global Reach* and includes several areas that confirm a continued commitment to internationalization, including the international mobilization of scholars. Here are several relevant excerpts from the new plan:

Brock University is rooted in Niagara, Ontario and pursues a global reach through its leadership in ... research, scholarly and creative activities ... attracting students and scholars from every continent. (p. 2)

Brock will reach out to the world to share the knowledge and skills of our students, faculty and staff while we engage with and learn from local, national and global partners. (p. 6)

Universities' reputations are determined by their international connections and standing ... international exchanges of students and faculty, international research and creative partnerships facilitate a university having direct engagement at the global level. (p. 11)

The plan also supports efforts to “attract world-leading scholars to Brock [and] increase active partnerships with highly reputable international academic institutions” (p. 18) as appropriate actions to achieve a stated goal to offer global learning. It also aims to “enhance international research activity and partnerships” (p. 20) in order to build Brock’s reputation as a centre of research excellence.

All the above-referenced institutional-level strategies and priorities demonstrate Brock University’s commitment and experience in the realm of internationalization of higher education. These high-level commitments, coupled with my own personal experience working in the same realm, made Brock an obvious and appropriate choice as the research site for my study.

Research Questions

With Brock University as the research site, I examined data in annual reports, program information, and other documents to get a fuller picture of the academic contributions of visiting international scholars and the various impacts their engagement has had on the internationalization goals and objective at the institution. I complemented this research with one-hour interviews with five participating scholars to understand the purpose and range of their participation and academic contributions as a result of their participation in the Visiting International Scholar programs, with the aim of capturing and evaluating the impact on stated institutional internationalization priorities and goals.

My main research questions are as follows:

1. What do visiting international scholars hope to achieve at the host institution?
2. What are the perceptions of their roles and responsibilities in their host universities?

3. What factors influence their experiences (positively or negatively)? These factors may be administrative, cultural, financial, institutional, personal, or societal.
4. How does the presence and participation of visiting international scholars contribute to the home internationalization of the Canadian university?
5. What activities or outputs can be measured to potentially make inferences about the impact of visiting international scholars on the internationalization of higher education in Canada?

Importance of the Study

There are three main reasons why this research study is important. One, many universities and government organizations or associations concerned with higher education have made internationalization a significant priority in their strategic plans and directions. Two, global mobility in the form of visiting international scholars is viewed to be an important part of internationalization. Although there is a significant amount of literature regarding internationalization in higher education, there is limited information with respect to visiting international scholars. It is hoped that the current research study will add to the limited literature base on visiting international scholars and their roles in internationalization of higher education. A third reason this research is important is the benefit it could bring to the key stakeholders, that is, the visiting international scholars and the higher education institutions.

Through my own past work experience in an international office in this Canadian university setting, as well as by reviewing existing research literature, I felt it was important to undertake formal study to deepen understanding and illuminate findings in

ways that could be substantial enough to shape institutional policy, identify program improvement factors, or lead to expansion of formal visiting international scholar programs at universities.

The next chapter provides an overview of literature related to internationalization theories and practices and to visiting international scholars, and some additional background regarding visiting international scholars at Brock University. The subsequent chapter highlights the methodology used in this study and the publicly available data that were gathered and analyzed. Next, the findings will be presented, first with reference to the existing institutional data and then based upon the interviews. Recurring themes from the interviews clearly map to the six key themes that came out of the literature. Finally, this study will conclude by presenting a summary of the important contributions visiting international scholars made to the university, as well as the benefits and challenges they experienced. I hope that this new knowledge may influence internationalization practices and policies, and, perhaps, lead to improvements in visiting international scholar programming.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This research study is important as it will help to build understandings of internationalization in higher education and the importance of visiting international scholar programs. However, an extensive literature review also revealed a range of understandings and practices of internationalization among institutions. In conducting this review of literature on these two key, inter-related topics—internationalization and visiting international scholars—six recurring themes emerged. The themes related to internationalization were strengthening research, the importance of cross-cultural learning and knowledge, and enhancing institutional partnerships. More specific to visiting international scholars, the themes that emerged were enriching the academy, importance of institutional supports, and professional and personal development. This chapter elaborates on the six emergent themes below.

Internationalization: Theories and Practice

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Higher Education Programme began a project in 2011 to explore the relationships between internationalization strategies of governments and higher education institutions to better deal with challenges associated with internationalization. The OECD project (Hénard, Diamond, & Roseveare, 2012) involved researchers from countries all over the world, including Canada. The project identified that internationalization matters to institutions and why. Key among their list of things that internationalization enables institutions to do is “mobilise internal intellectual resources ... and develop stronger research groups” (Hénard et al., 2012, p. 9). The project further emphasized that higher education is becoming more internationalized as it increasingly involves substantial networking

among institutions and scholars. This serves as the basis for the themes that I have focused on from the literature.

Theme One: Strengthening Research

Hénard et al. (2012) identified that internationalization enables stronger research groups. International collaborative research has been strengthened by the extensive networking between institutions and multi-national funding of research. John Hudzik (2011), who authored a significant paper on comprehensive internationalization for higher education in the U.S., argued the following:

The business of universities is ideas: the creation of ideas through research and the dissemination of ideas through education Increasingly, the business of universities is as much across as it is within borders, and not just in the free flow of ideas but in the global flow of students and scholars who generate them. (p. 7)

Hudzik further emphasized that faculty need international perspectives and opportunities to strengthen and support international, collaborative, and globally competitive, cutting-edge research. Internationalization and visiting international scholar mobility can play important roles in this. The accumulating evidence shows that research teams and projects are often enhanced by the input and participation of international colleagues (Bachmann, 2006; Collins et al., 2017; Jehn et al., 1999; Wagner, 2006).

Theme Two: Importance of Cross-Cultural Learning and Knowledge

As observed by five research collaborators, Coryell, Durodoye, Wright, Pate, and Nguyen (2012), who undertook case studies of internationalization in their U.S. and U.K. institutions, “Universities interested in internationalizing the learning experience need to take advantage of the rich learning opportunities individuals can have when peoples of

different cultures, ethnicities, and nations come together in dialogue and collaboration” (p. 88).

Guo and Wei (2012) who conducted a study on faculty international mobility and the role this can play in building sustainable international partnerships recommend that institutions “value visiting scholars as valuable resource for cultural diversity in higher education” (p. 192).

University of Birmingham Professor of Islamic World and Comparative Literature, Gould (2017) agrees that “internationalisation is promoted as a top priority in many universities around the world” (para. 4). Gould discusses the ethical imperative of internationalization and its importance in institutional growth and development, and the inter- and cross-cultural training, learning, and growth opportunities for students and universities.

A number of well-known cross-cultural education theorists have published widely on the importance of internationalization and global education. Two such theorists, Michael Paige and Josef Mestenhauser (1999), believe that a deep international mindset or culture comes from the integration of emic (an insider’s view of culture) and etic (an outsider’s view on culture) thinking until “the ways of thinking of its adherents become international in scope” (p. 501). Longer term participation of visiting international scholars can lead to this integration of emic and etic ways of thinking. This is important because interculturalism and cross-cultural understanding matters in the internationalization of higher education. As former California State University President Jolene Koester spoke about in a 2010 Mestenhauser Lecture on Internationalizing Higher Education:

The term 'intercultural' and what that means is often overlooked, explicitly and implicitly, in discussions and work on the internationalization of higher education ... 'intercultural' does matter in the work to achieve the goal of internationalizing higher education. For me 'intercultural matters,' considered in the context of internationalizing higher education, direct us to the human, individual, personal, and most of all to the interpersonal domains of internationalization. (p. 1)

Koester's idea regarding the importance of intercultural matters in the internationalization of higher education—especially the personal and interpersonal side of internationalization—speaks to why visiting international scholar programs, that allow for this type of cross-cultural learning and understanding, should be a vital part of the offerings and opportunities in the internationalization of universities.

Other important theorists well-known for their cross-cultural theories include Janet Bennett and Milton Bennett (2014), educators and socio-psychologists who developed a model for measuring intercultural sensitivity and other important learning tools that are widely used by international educators in higher education organizations, government and non-governmental organizations, and private-sector companies. Bennett and Bennett consider internationalization of higher education through a socio-cultural lens, suggesting the following:

We can increase the long-term effectiveness of initiatives by carefully assessing the readiness level of the individuals and the organization. Further, using intercultural relations as the overarching perspective allows the diversity initiative to be completely inclusive We can weave in all cultural groups as part of the process. (p. 162)

Bennett and Bennett's intercultural developmental approach is useful to consider in evaluating the impact of visiting international scholars in the university.

Theme Three: Enhancing Institutional Partnerships

Lisa Childress (2010), an internationalization consultant, researcher, and former administrator at Duke University in North Carolina, points to Duke as an example of a university with an extensive institutional internationalization plan with very specific goals and steps to operationalize it. One step recommended for faculty development and engagement in internationalization is to “encourage and fund more foreign visiting scholars and practitioners, which will also improve collaboration with foreign institutions” (p. 151). Childress further argues that international faculty involvement brings benefits such as opportunities to undertake research and practice throughout the world by actively participating in international scholarly communities and opportunities to bring international experience and learning into the classroom, studio, or laboratory.

Internationalization is not always viewed positively. It may be thought of as Eurocentric, in the sense that it can be about what the host university gets out of international visitors, linkages, and initiatives. Although the intent is to work in partnership, or collaboratively, toward a “common goal,” often what drives the international activity or project is more selfish than that. From the institutional point of view today, quite often consideration for economic gain from the activity becomes the priority over everything else. The same could be said of the visiting international scholar's home institution as well. Across the world, “the activities of higher education institutions become more developed in international (in terms of cooperation) and global (in terms of competition) frameworks” (Horta, 2009, p. 288). Internationalization can

lead to imbalance in terms of the international programming and priorities. Imbalances can occur in various forms. As one example, institutional mobility and exchange may be higher and more frequent among partners in developed countries, with abundant institutional and infrastructure support. As another example, differing priorities, needs, and financial resources between two institutions may lead to mobility that is one-way and ethno- or euro-centric. In terms of institutional international programming, yet another example of an imbalance could be an ever-increasing focus of efforts and resources on international student recruitment as opposed to two-way mobility and exchange experiences for students, faculty, and staff.

As Knight (2008) notes, “internationalization is reactive and organized in an ad-hoc way, as opposed to being approached with a well-developed strategy based on thoughtful response and vision” (p. 5). There is a real need for institutions to ensure that their internationalization goals and objectives are comprehensive enough to include aspects that are enriching and beneficial educationally speaking and not only beneficial in terms of economic gain.

Yet the compelling pressure to internationalize, owing to the instantaneity in communications and rapid advances in transportation, which result in an increased need for intercultural and international understanding and knowledge, has become an urgent priority. International literacy has become critical to our cultural, technological, economic and political health. International competence in an open world of permeable borders has become a generalized necessity rather than an option for the tier of societal elites as was true in the past. (Bartell, 2003, p. 45)

Although it is important to consider and better understand the various and broader institutional internationalization contexts in which visiting international scholars are participating or welcomed to participate, it remains important to explore and understand more about visiting international scholars.

Visiting International Scholars

Indiana University academic John Howe (2008) writes about the importance of understanding the transition, adaptation, and adjustment that must occur for visiting international scholars. He argues that “international faculty and their counterparts must intentionally and effectively engage to fully adjust” (p. 75). He reinforces the importance of visiting international scholars to the home internationalization of the institution through their teaching, research, and service.

Theme Four: Enriching the Academy

University of Colorado researchers Heinz and Lewis (2008) studied the role and impact of their university’s Visiting Faculty program. They found that visiting international scholars brought prestige to the host department or unit, provided opportunity to expand course offerings, and served to increase resources and support for inviting distinguished research scholars. At Brock University, the academic host faculty or staff member plays an important role in preparing for and receiving the visitor into the academic and research life of their department. There can be negative effects when expectations and realities don’t match for visiting international scholar and academic host. Pre-arrival communications are encouraged in order to arrive at a mutual understanding about expectations and objectives for the visit well in advance, as much as possible, and prior to meeting in person. At Brock University, academic teaching and

collaborative research expectations are outlined in the formal invitation letter, which helps to make clear these important details in advance. Coryell et al. (2012) also concluded that their institution's international program offices and academic departments needed to cooperate to improve and enhance scholarly services and programming in order provide needed supports for successful involvement and integration.

Haussler (2006) said "with visitors from abroad, we gain insight into how people from other countries view the United States" (p. 372). The academic host and institution gain new insights and perspectives by welcoming visiting international scholars into their academic environment and community. Meaningful learning can take place about different or other research approaches, teaching methods, cultures, and communities by interacting and collaborating with visiting international scholars. Visiting international scholars can also enhance student learning when the visiting academics are invited to teach courses or give guest lectures. At Brock University, the centralized Visiting International Scholars program introduced a Speaker's Bureau to encourage the involvement of current visiting international scholars in other departments and across disciplines in the university. Scholars volunteer to take part in the Bureau and are listed as voluntary guest lecturers who may be invited by anyone in the university community to provide a guest lecture or workshop. This can expand the reach and impact of the presence and participation of a visiting international scholar more broadly in the university and include students beyond the host departments or units in which the individual participates.

Authors Bao and Ferrara (2009), at the State University of New York, provide a case study of a Chinese Cultural Exchange Program examining how the program

contributes to the campus efforts to enhance global awareness specifically with respect to faculty exchanges. In order to achieve their goal of preparing students for a global future, their university adopted integration of internationalization not only across the curriculum but also via the structures of the university in order to create a campus culture or ethos. They found that the higher the level of faculty involvement in international activities such as teaching and collaborative research at host institutions abroad, the more successful the campus internationalization efforts at their home university.

Theme Five: Importance of Institutional Supports

Haussler (2006), a Nursing faculty member at the University of Massachusetts Boston, provides an insightful and thorough study of considerations to prepare for an educational exchange and host colleagues from abroad ensuring successful social, cultural, and academic goals. Some of the considerations include pre-planning and clearly defining the purpose for a visit, learning about the host culture, ongoing and regular communications with hosts, participating in on-arrival orientation, considering social and academic dimensions to the participation by a visiting international scholar, and tracking outcomes and benefits (p. 365). At Brock University, a centrally administered visiting international scholar program is in place to not only meet an aspect of the institution's internationalization beliefs and mandate, but also ensure that important considerations such as Haussler describes are implemented to ensure the successful participation of visiting international scholars at the university.

For visiting international scholars, a practical but truly critical aspect to the success of their visit seems to be their ability to access and use the library and information systems of the host university. Time and time again, when conducting formal

and informal surveys of our Brock University participants, the library and unlimited access to the vast array of books, resources, and electronic journals is one of the most important aspects to the visiting international scholars. As Bordonaro (2013) surmised in her research interviews with visiting international scholars about their perception of the role of the library in internationalization, “the library was seen as an important intermediary between individual scholars and information world-wide that may be needed but not easily or inexpensively available for them” (p. 91). This makes sense in the academic scholarly sense, as all faculty scholars rely on access to this important university resource. Librarians are able to serve and support faculty and scholars by specializing in certain disciplines or fields.

At Brock University, a librarian has been identified as the key “liaison librarian for visiting scholars” in order to better serve and meet the needs of our international visitors. The Liaison Librarian is not “discipline based” (these specialist librarians remain available to all of course) rather more broadly “research and service based” in the sense that the Liaison Librarian is taking into consideration the diverse contexts and needs of visiting international library users. There are quite a number of studies in journals, such as *The Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research*, that speak to meeting the needs of international faculty and how the library also, thereby, helps to support the international initiatives and objectives of the institution. Shiyi Xie (2012), a Research and Instructional Services Librarian at the University of Western Ontario, writes the following:

Academic librarians should be aware of international visiting faculty in their user community and the need to make this user group aware of library resources and

services. International visiting faculty are easily overlooked by academic librarians because of their short visiting period and the fact that they are hard to track on campus. They may often encounter difficulties and challenges using Canadian academic libraries if they do not have previous experience with North American academic institutions. (p. 5)

In addition, numerous Chinese researchers have been researching and writing about the outcomes of Chinese visiting international scholar experiences in terms of faculty professional development, research development, academic linkage-building and strengthening between institutions and countries, and the impacts of their experiences in the context of internationalization (Guo & Wei, 2012; Liu & Jiang, 2015; Rhoads & Hu, 2012). China has figured prominently as a partner for countries like Canada. In fact, Canada and China will be marking 50 years of diplomatic relations in 2020. According to the Government of Canada's Canada–China Scholars Exchange Program and the Government of China's China Scholarship Council, China ranks among the top countries of origin for international scholars and students in Canada. For Brock, and many higher education institutions across Canada, this can also be seen in terms of numbers participating each year, across disciplines, some from formal institutional partners, and many well-funded by institutional or government funding support programs.

Brazilians and Canadians have also collaborated on visiting international scholar program evaluation research noting several factors that are key to program success, such as institutional commitment to internationalization, an enabling environment for scholars to develop research capacity, and sufficient financial support (Mill et al., 2014). The Brazil–Canada Science Without Borders program that welcomed over 10,000 young

Brazilian scholars to institutions across Canada to study and engage in research projects or internships provided a wealth of case studies and experiences for visiting international scholar program research.

Theme Six: Professional and Personal Development

A number of studies (Heinz & Lewis 2008; Howe, 2008; Mill et al., 2014) find that visiting international scholars are intrinsically motivated to take advantage of an experience abroad for the purpose of personal growth. They seek new and different sources of information as well as hope to gain new knowledge and firsthand experience in their fields of expertise. Some are also motivated or inspired to participate by their home institution or home government.

Miller and Blachford (2012) at University of Regina, published “A Model for a Sustainable Partnership: Connecting Chinese Visiting Scholars, the University and the Community” using a well-designed two-phase study employing surveys, interviews, and focus groups to examine the impact of visiting international scholars’ social interactions with the on- and off-campus communities. Their research makes an interesting link to the impact of scholar participation in communities, going beyond a focus on cross-cultural experience, to emphasizing such impacts as mutual benefit, shared learning, collaboration, and sustainability in the host university.

Literature Review Summary

This literature review revealed the range of meanings and the applicability of internationalization of higher education among institutions. As Melanie Agnew (2012) pointed out, “divergent ideologies manifest competing goals among academics, deans, and senior leadership ... and many participants lacked a paradigm in which to situate

their international teaching, research or service” (p. 485). Nonetheless, this in-depth literature review revealed six key and recurring themes that offer a better understanding of the main topics of this research paper. Three themes relate to internationalization in general—strengthening research, the importance of cross-cultural learning and knowledge, enhancing institutional partnerships—and three themes relate to visiting international scholars—enriching the academy, importance of institutional supports, and professional and personal development. These themes aligned well with my own personal experience and practice working in the field of internationalization in higher education and laid a firm foundation for this study. The next chapter details the overall research approach, including the two phases of data collection: first, gathering and analyzing publicly available data about the accomplishments and contributions of the Visiting International Scholar program at Brock, and second, uncovering the perspectives of visiting international scholars via in-person, in-depth interviews.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a qualitative research strategy of inquiry to examine Brock University Visiting International Scholar programs, exploring to what extent the academic activities of visiting international scholars contribute to the internationalization goals and objectives of the institution. The study involved two components: (a) an analysis of secondary data in the form of Brock International annual reports as well as individual statements and certification letters for visiting international scholars over five years and (b) interviews with a small sample of current and recent Visiting International Scholar program participants. This qualitative research approach sought to provide a holistic picture (Silverman, 2006) of visiting international scholars and their roles in the internationalization of higher education.

Data Sources

The research draws upon two data sources: publicly available institutional data about the Visiting International Scholar programs and in-person interviews with 5 visiting international scholars.

Existing Institutional Data

The secondary data analysis component specifically involved looking at all publicly available data associated with the Visiting International Scholars program at Brock University. I gathered data about the academic contributions of visiting international scholars at Brock from annual reports and individual letters between 2008–2013 that identify research and teaching activities, guest speaking engagements in classes, public presentations, publications (journal articles published, chapters in books, etc.), collaborative research, assessment or supervision of students, community

involvement, and volunteer activities. As per Creswell (2005), I developed tables to capture and organize the data. The data I have reviewed from 2008–2013 include files and documentation for over 100 visiting international scholar program participants.

Interviews

The interview component of my research involved interviews to uncover and learn more about the visiting international scholars' perceptions of the impact of their participation as Visiting International Scholars at Brock University. I sent a letter of invitation to all visiting international scholars that were participating at Brock at the time of this research study ($n = 32$) and invited them to participate in an interview. Six responded that they would be interested in participating in my research study. One volunteer had already completed a term as a visiting international scholar and had returned home. After several unsuccessful attempts to establish a mutually convenient time during which to conduct the interview by Skype or other videoconference format, a decision was made to forgo this interviewee's participation in the research study due to time constraints. Hence, there were a total of five interviews conducted.

The interview guide and open-ended research questions that were used are included in Appendix A. I chose to use the Powney and Watts (1987) interviewee-as-informant type of approach in order "gain some insight in to the perceptions of a particular person or persons within a situation" (p. 18), which allowed me to capture rich and meaningful narrative from the visiting international scholars about their experiences.

I conducted five semi-structured, in-person interviews that lasted between 45 minutes and 1 hour each. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. Although the

method of audio-recording and transcription was time-consuming, I chose this method as it offers the following advantages according to Atkins and Wallace (2012):

- Captures the entire interview and allows for careful review of data
- Makes a complete transcription possible
- Allows accurate partial transcription (e.g. of quotable extracts)
- Allows researcher to check accuracy of transcript with interviewee
- Allows the researcher to evaluate his or her own interview skills (p. 6)

This was my first time employing this method as a researcher and I did find Atkins and Wallace's comments on this method to be useful and to hold true in practice. For example, I did encounter a situation whereupon reviewing the audio-recording, I did not understand one interviewee's response to a question and, as a result, I reached out to the interviewee to re-confirm the statement by email. Atkins and Wallace also outline the disadvantages of the audio-recording method, such as possible failure of equipment, but fortunately I did not experience that, nor did I note any sense of uncomfortableness from the interviewees, which can be experienced in an audio-recorded interview. In each case, I explained in advance to the interviewees that I would be audio-recording and taking notes, in order to put them at ease or give them an opportunity to let me know if they were ill-at-ease.

Participants

In total, I reviewed publicly available data and files for over 100 visiting international scholars, including the five individual research participants who participated in my research interviews. For the purpose of this study, the institutional data were treated in aggregate form whereas the interview data are treated individually.

Five visiting international scholars were interviewed for this study. Each interview was conducted in person. In order to maintain interview confidentiality, I arbitrarily assigned pseudonyms to the five interviewees. I used names from or associated with the poem *Ulysses*. There is no intentional association with gender or ethnicity in any case. The pseudonyms, in alphabetical order, are Ithica, Penelope, Telemachus, Ulysses, and Victoria.

The five research participants were representative of three geographical regions of the world, namely Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Their range of participation at Brock University as visiting international scholars ranged from four months to two years. The participants were participating in three different Faculties at Brock, namely Education, Humanities, and Mathematics and Science. All but one research participant had previous experience participating as a visiting international scholar at Brock or another institution in North America, and all but one were participating from one of Brock's formal partner institutions. All five research participants were participating in the Visiting International Scholar program at the time of the interview and present at Brock University.

Ethics Considerations and Clearance

With the support of my research project supervisor, ethical clearance for this study was sought by submission of an in-depth Research Ethics Board application to the Brock University Research Ethics Office. After a period of time, and providing some minor clarification to the Ethics Office, clearance to proceed with this study was approved, as per REB 17-001 MCGINN clearance grant.

This study did not place participants at any psychological, social, or physical risks. There was potential for interview participants to feel an obligation to participate in my research study due to my role at the time as an administrator of the department that oversaw the Visiting International Scholar program. However, the participants were already present at the university, so I could not in any way affect their acceptance into the program, nor did I have any authority at their home institutions abroad. I recognized the relationship dynamic very clearly and explicitly in the invitation letter and again during the actual interviews, emphasizing that there was no requirement (programmatic, institutional, or otherwise) to participate in the research project. I also ensured that each participant could withdraw from the study at any time, assuring them if they chose to do so, any information that had been gathered pertaining to them would not be utilized.

Each participant was emailed the Consent Form and Interview Guide and was provided the paper version of each at the beginning of the in-person interviews. Each audio-taped interview was saved on a device that was only accessible to the researcher, and each file was named with an alphanumeric filename, to maintain confidentiality of the participants. Each audiofile was transcribed by me, word for word, and saved similarly on a computer only accessed by me, the researcher.

Emergent Themes and Related Sub-Topics

I looked for common themes emerging from the interview transcripts and, in so-doing, found that they directly corresponded or could be related to the six key themes I discovered in my review of literature (see Appendix B). Interviewees noted several theme-related and recurring, sub-topics of importance.

Each interviewee came to Brock University with very clear ideas and plans on what they hoped to accomplish during their period of scholarly participation. Each came to participate in the Visiting International Scholar program to engage in research (either independently or collaboratively), teach or observe teaching practices, and learn about new methodologies. Each equally recognized that they would be adapting their plans or changing strategies on how they intended to accomplish their academic and research goals, objectives, and plans.

Most (4 out of 5) interviewees noted that their participation was tied to a previously established relationship with a faculty member or a result of an existing institutional international partnership or initiative.

Yet another theme from the interviews was the notion of internationalization and each visiting international scholar's understanding of their impact on institutional internationalization at their home institutions. The term internationalization appeared to be well-understood among interviewees; however, they tended not to have a clear sense about the ways their individual participation as visiting international scholars affected internationalization at Brock University. Most talked about how they could bring benefits in terms of new knowledge, practice, and experience back to their home institutions. One interviewee talked about the importance of funding and institutional support for their scholarly activities and participation abroad.

Interviewees also talked about the importance of firsthand experience and whether or not they had previous experience as a visiting international scholar, either at Brock or at another academic institution abroad. A similar theme that resonated with the literature among interviewees was the importance of personal development and cross-cultural

learning, whether expected or unexpected. Notably, every scholar viewed this as a significant part of their experience.

Finally, interviewees also advanced two other notable topics: language challenges and opportunities, and sense of belonging on campus or in the local community.

All of the above sub-topics very much aligned with the key themes identified in the literature. Interview discussions revolved around all of these themes, affording a fulsome understanding of key themes identified in the literature.

The findings in the literature coupled with secondary data analysis and the individual scholars' experiences, afforded greater insight and appreciation of the intercultural or transformational learning experiences as well as the perceived and actual benefits, challenges, and impact of their participation on internationalization at Brock University and also at their home institutions abroad.

Scope and Limitations

There are limitations with this study. First, although the publicly available data were substantial, the sample size of participants that were interviewed is very small. Second, the research site was limited to a single, mid-sized university in Ontario. Therefore, although this study contributes findings that add to knowledge in the field of internationalization and visiting international scholars, those findings really are limited to the scope of this research study and cannot be generalized more widely.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The earlier-mentioned goals and objectives for internationalization affirming the importance of scholarly mobility and participation at Brock University, reaffirmed to me the appropriateness of research context and site, providing a solid foundation for this research study. I was able to examine and analyze outcomes of the Visiting International Scholar programs by gathering data from annual reports, program information, and other documents. The secondary data analysis, complemented by the one-hour interviews with participating scholars, helped me to more deeply understand scholars' participation in the Visiting International Scholar programs and to measure and evaluate the academic contribution of visiting international scholars in terms of impact on stated institutional internationalization priorities and goals.

Visiting International Scholar Program Outcomes

Pre-existing institutional data provide clear evidence regarding program participation levels and the activities and accomplishments of visiting international scholars.

Visiting International Scholar Program Participation

As shown in Table 1, over a period of 5 academic years, from the academic year 2008–2009 up until and including the academic year 2012–2013, a total of 420 visiting international scholars participated in the Visiting International Scholars program. The average number of participants per year, over those same years in the Visiting International Scholar programs was 84.

Table 1

Visiting International Scholar Program Participation by Academic Year, 2008–2013

Academic Year	2008–2009	2009–2010	2010–2011	2011–2012	2012–2013
Total number of program participants	60	74	82	78	126

Total number of program participants over 5 years, from 2008–2013 = 420
Average number of program participants per year = 84

Upon closer review of the data, the participation “spike” reported in 2012–2013 was attributed to an international government program, Brazil–Canada Science Without Borders, that provided generous funding support for the mobility of young visiting international scholars. If the Science Without Borders government program had not existed, and assuming the rates of participation were similar to previous year averages, then the average yearly participation rate between 2008–2013 would have been approximately 74 per year.

Referring back to the *Strategic Internationalization Plan: New Directions, 2013–2016* document (Brock University, 2013), a key strategic goal around maintaining the participation rates and quality of experience in relevant and appropriate international programs clearly stated a participation target of 75 visiting international scholars per year by 2016. This goal was easily achieved as the data show the target was already being met in the 2010–2011 academic year. Possibly, a conservative target was set as the Science Without Borders program had a limited funding period. Regardless of the reasoning behind the set target, the Visiting International Scholar programs are helping to achieve institutional internationalization strategies, goals, and objectives.

Further exploration of university media releases since 2016 also demonstrate and speak to the institutional support for enhanced visiting international scholar programs and offerings. In early Spring 2017, Brock introduced the new Global Scholars Office to build on the success of the existing Visiting International Scholars programs, in order to enhance international connections and the experience of highly valued scholars in the campus community (Firth, 2017). The new Global Scholars Office branding and elevation of scholarly mobilization activity further demonstrates the university’s

commitment to the Visiting International Scholar programs and the important roles and contribution they are making to the overall internationalization goals and objectives of the institution.

As I considered the strategic internationalization goals and objectives, in particular the “percentage goal number of international students” (10%) that is typically sought not only by Brock, but by many Canadian universities in terms of international student participation targets, I began to wonder about whether the institution had ever considered an ideal target percentage or threshold for visiting international scholars relative to the full-time faculty (scholars) on a university campus. It is my experience working in the field of internationalization for many years, collaborating with and learning from colleagues from other universities in Canada, that 10% is the widely typical norm for the number of undergraduate international students as a percentage of the total number of undergraduate students in any given year. My familiarity with this commonly stated percentage goal for students, led me to wonder about such a percentage goal for visiting international scholars.

The number of full-time faculty at Brock University engaged in teaching, research, and service during the 2008–2013 timeframe was on average 586. (Note this average was calculated from the Brock fact sheets produced from 2008–2009 to 2012–2013, see Brock University, n.d.). It is interesting to note that the participation rates of the Visiting International Scholar programs are quite good respectively when one considers the percentage of these “visitors” engaging in research, teaching, and service each year against the full-time faculty at the university. The visiting international scholar participation at the university could be said to be equal to 74 (the average number

referred to earlier) out of 660 (equal to the total population of scholars, that is the number of full-time faculty plus the number of scholars). The portion 74 out of 660 equals 11.2% presence of visiting international scholars per year. If one considers the goals that universities set around international student participation rates as a percentage of total student participation, Brock University's visiting international scholar programs are exceeding this widely accepted measure or goal of a key aspect (the presence of international students) of internationalization in universities.

Year over year, as evidenced in Brock International's annual reports, China is the top country from which Visiting International Scholar participants originate. For Brock, China has also been a country from which there has always been high international student participation rates. This is a trend seen at many universities across Canada (Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2018, pp. 3, 4, 6–7.). Brock also has a number of successful partnerships with institutions in China, the most notable one resulting in the establishment of a Confucius Institute to develop and promote the learning and appreciation of Chinese language and culture at the university and in the local community (Brock University Brock International, 2009–2010). In addition, there is a very active Chinese faculty association at the university and a Chinese Cultural Association in the local community that may also play a role in attracting visiting international scholars from China to the university.

Visiting International Scholars' Activities and Accomplishments

What are the accomplishments of visiting international scholars during their participation abroad? Does the participation of scholars contribute to host universities' institutional internationalization goals and objectives?

I chose to look at what the accomplishment or activities of visiting international scholar participation looked like over a five-year timeframe, from the academic years beginning in 2008 and ending in 2013. I gathered from Brock International reports, the reported outcomes or accomplishments of visiting international scholars participating at the university. I categorized the range of activities according to the categories that have been used over this period in the annual reports. I captured the reported visiting international scholar activities and accomplishments data in Table 2. I use the word *reported* because the data are gathered by the program administrator who requests these data from participating international scholars as well as their faculty hosts. These data are entirely reliant upon the individuals reporting the accomplishments to the program administrator in response to the request for information. Thus, the program administrator reported to me that the data captured are not an exhaustive representation of the actual accomplishments and activities of visiting international scholars at the university. To try to get an idea of the accuracy of this belief, I looked at the number of scholars reporting data during a given annual report year. I randomly chose the 2011–2012 annual report year and counted 20 individual visiting international scholars that reported activities or accomplishments from their participation. The number of scholars enrolled in Visiting International Scholars programs during this annual report period was 78 (see also Table 1). As a percentage, then, only 20 out of 78 scholars or 26%, reported data regarding their accomplishments and activities during their scholarly participation at Brock in the 2011–2012 academic year. Although it would be inappropriate to assume then that the accomplishments would be four-fold in each academic year, I cautiously estimate that the accomplishments are at least double what has been reported.

Table 2

Visiting International Scholar Activities Reported, 2008–2013

Activities Reported	2008– 2009	2009– 2010	2010– 2011	2011– 2012	2012– 2013
Courses Taught	6	5	8	4	6
Guest Lectures and Presentations	7	4	2	4	7
Committees	12	11	2	10	9
Workshops and Courses Attended	2	7	3	3	7
Research Projects	11	13	5	14	11
Papers	14	14	20	6	18
Conference Presentations	8	4	3	3	7
Community Involvement and Volunteerism	4	1	3	3	1
Total Activities Reported	64	59	46	47	66

The range and number of visiting international scholar activities shown in Table 2 provide evidence of the extent to which visiting international scholars contribute to the academic, research, and service life of the scholarly community at the host university. This information demonstrates how the Visiting International Scholar program provides measurable benefit and serves to strengthen internationalization at home.

Gleaning a richer and fuller perspective about the accomplishments and activities of visiting international scholars led me to conduct interviews with a smaller subset of visiting international scholars from the 2017–2018 academic year.

Visiting International Scholar Interviews

I chose to present the following interview data largely as direct quotes from the interview transcripts. I chose to do this in order to ensure that the authentic voices of the visiting international scholars were, as far as possible, retained (Atkins & Wallace, 2012, p. 18).

Generally speaking, the overall understanding of internationalization was quite good. Some scholars said the term is something they understand they contribute to and have learned about at their own universities. Some saw the benefits of internationalization mainly from their own personal or home university perspectives, as opposed to understanding how their participation and activities benefited the internationalization of Brock University. They understood the possibility but perhaps did not consider it. This variance in meanings of the term is understandable. Agnew (2012) similarly found that her research participants lacked a shared understanding of the notion of internationalization especially in terms of the ways their international teaching, research, or service played a role in internationalization of the institution.

Table 3 shows the prevalence of discussion of each literature review theme by the participants during the interviews. Most notable in Table 3 is that all participants discussed two of the key themes found in the literature. The two themes were “Importance of Cross-Cultural Learning and Knowledge” and “Professional and Personal Development.” This is interesting to me from my own professional experience as well, nonetheless, this section will begin to provide description and information that was shared by the interviewees in the order in which the themes have been consistently presented thus far in this paper.

Moving beyond the literature review themes, I organized the interview data by eight sub-topics that relate to the six key themes emergent from the literature and my professional experience. I detail the sub-topics that came out in the interviews, as they were recurring and related to the six key themes. The sub-topics were as follows: (a) research, teaching practice, and new methodologies; (b) a clear plan for visit and flexibility; (c) relationship with hosting faculty; (d) existence of an institutional partnership; (e) internationalization benefits to home university; (f) importance of firsthand experience; (g) language challenges and opportunities; and (h) belonging on campus or in the local community. All of these themes and related sub-topics are outlined in Appendix B and described in full in the sections that follow.

Table 3

Prevalence of Discussion of Key Literature Review Themes by Interviewees

	Ithica	Penelope	Telemachus	Ulysses	Victoria
Strengthening Research	●		●		●
Importance of Cross-Cultural Learning and Knowledge	●	●	●	●	●
Enhancing Institutional Partnerships	●	●		●	●
Enriching the Academy	●	●		●	●
Importance of Institutional Supports	●		●		
Professional and Personal Development	●	●	●	●	●

Research, Teaching Practice, and New Methodologies

Four interviewees had very clear and detailed plans to accomplish research goals and to teach a course or provide guest lectures, as well as a general interest in learning about other teaching methods and styles. Victoria shared:

I mainly teach and I can see that the student[s] I teach are very interested and this is a motivation for me. In terms of research, I have drafted a paper with a Brock professor and, after more revisions, plan to submit it to a journal. I also plan to finish a book draft.

Telemachus described research goals and objectives as follows: “I have many expectations to get good results [in my research] ... that’s why I came here from a faraway country I am satisfied because I am sure I can get a good result.” Ithica also described interest and benefit from learning about the research process, pointing out:

First, I try to, with my home university, develop a research proposal. Here, I also learn about such a different research process ... in my country it is very simple. Here in Canada you must take a detailed, ethics approval process. Because I had this different experience, when I return home, I will share my experience.

Penelope added, “the library is so useful, so large and the conditions are so wonderful. I need to use this so much—many books that I have been able to reach about my topic.” Ithica made a similar comment, saying “most books and articles are in such easy reach for me. Access is more easy than in my home country. This is so helpful for me, in my research.” These discussions by several scholars provide insight and understanding around the importance of research and academic goals. As emphasized

early on in this paper by Hénard et al. (2012), internationalization and international collaborative research is strengthened by networking between institutions and scholars.

Clear Plan for Visit and Flexibility

Four scholars expressed their wish to collaborate on, or independently complete, at least one academic publication. In one case [Telemachus], the visiting international scholar is completing research that is being undertaken for a home institutional academic requirement, a doctoral dissertation. Telemachus described a clear goal and associated objectives as well as the realization that the plan might require adaptation:

In my research, I have many expectations to get good results and access to many facilities here ... but I realise there are also limitations and budgets here. But everything is okay and I am satisfied I can get a good result and my supervisor helps me a lot. I haven't changed my goals, but maybe I change my way ... for example if I wanted to do a particular analysis and realise I cannot, then I change my method. I have to be flexible.

Ulysses further elaborates on the need for flexibility stating with regard to research goals and objectives: "My main direction has not changed. But the strategy is changed all the time ... I am trying to reach the goals I set out... so I am trying to work harder." As pointed out earlier, Haussler (2006) notes the importance of preparation and a well-thought-out plan of goals and objectives in order to have the most successful visiting international scholar experience. From my years of interacting with visiting international scholars at Brock University, I concur that scholars who arrived with a clear plan, but also with an open mind or willingness to adapt to new or changing variables or a new

research context, seemed to be more satisfied with their participation and accomplishments as visiting international scholars.

Relationship with Hosting Faculty and Existence of an Institutional Partnership

Generally speaking, the visiting international scholars I interviewed chose to participate in the Visiting International Scholar program either for the purpose of academic collaboration with a specific host faculty member with similar or complementary areas of academic disciplinary expertise and research, or as a result of an existing institutional partnership. Ithica explained:

Well, I first met my Professor many years ago because my doctoral dissertation was about her topic. She sent me her books that I was interested in for my research. I emailed her later ... and I came here because my Professor was here ... umm, also, we [my institution and Brock] signed an agreement to exchange professors and this was so important.

Ulysses also pointed out the importance of an existing institutional partnership by saying “the University that I come from is a longstanding partner with Brock ... so of course Brock was my top choice to visit.” These scholars confirm what Guo and Wei (2012) believe regarding the important interplay between international institutional partnerships and the research groups and networks that form as a result of, or serve to strengthen, existing linkages. In my experience, I also found this to be the case. There were more meaningful joint initiatives and accomplishments when there was a pre-existing relationship between visiting international scholar and hosting faculty member and an existing institutional partnership or agreement.

Internationalization: Benefits to Their Home University

Victoria shared:

First, my participation here has benefited me. I think I will make changes to my teaching style. Also, I can share with my students a lot about what I see and what I learned here. I would also say [when I go back home] that I would like to recommend Brock University to other faculty if they would like to participate in the Visiting International Scholar program.

Penelope also shared about the benefit that her participation would bring to her home university, stating “We have to put there necessary goals for internationalization or multicultural education because I’m teaching teacher nominees. They have to learn these topics too.” In general, all the visiting international scholars described similar ideas about how their participation as Visiting International Scholars would benefit their home institutions.

Importance of Firsthand Experience

Three interviewees, all from different regions, with entirely different cultural and country contexts, noted the following about their experiences while participating as visiting international scholars:

If most people meet different cultures ... maybe it starts to change your brain ... more empathy, more empathy skill develops ... this is so important ... if you didn’t touch or meet different people your brain works differently. (Ithica)

You know I come from an Eastern country ... and maybe I have a big imagination about North America ... maybe I thought that there is no weakness here and

everything is perfect. But when I came here I realised that the sky is the same color as in my home country. There is weakness here too. (Telemachus)

I liken this perspective to Samuel's (2005) description of the "honeymoon stage" that may be experienced by international students:

They see the host country as a land 'flowing with milk and honey' and full of opportunities. These newcomers are captivated at first by the host country's economic prosperity. Yet, at the same time, most of them focus intensely on their academic endeavours; they also maintain a firm grounding in their own culture.

(p. 52)

Ulysses also talked about the benefit and personal growth to be gained from firsthand experience:

Personally, there is another reason why I choose to come out ... you know, to go abroad ... that is about improving my abilities whether that is in language capability as well as in my horizons ... to see the world ... of course I have travelled to a lot of countries but travelling is different than living in a region for a long time. That is the personal reason ... the factor that I would like to reach ... that is to improve myself as an English teacher as well as a person with a broader horizon and broader vision. (Ulysses)

Telemachus further elaborated:

For Canadians it has benefit to be introduced to this foreigner (like me) ... as we know many people don't want to come to my country based on what they know from media and tv ... but you know when you come close to another culture you

can learn and understand each other. It's good for us all to be familiar with each other based on real experiences with each other ... not based on news or tv.

This emphasis on firsthand experience is exactly why universities have at the heart of their internationalization activities and priorities, mobility programs for students, faculty, and staff.

Language Challenges and Opportunities

Ulysses discussed how language and “crossing cultures” could be challenging: Before coming to Canada, I could say that my English ability is okay or above average back home, but when I came here, I was so frustrated at the very beginning ... the large vocabulary ... I was reluctant to speak, to communicate because I was afraid I would make mistakes in English or say something improper.

Ulysses also shared with me that while communicating in English was challenging, she also saw it as an opportunity to learn and improve. She shared, “I tried to correct myself in that mentality [worried about saying something improper], so I tried to collect new words and participate more in conversations.”

In my experience working and interacting with visiting international scholars over a number of years, language challenges can be quite common and an issue that can affect an individual's confidence in interacting with others, possibly impacting their social integration as well as collaborative research work. Mills et al. (2014) found in their study examining a Brazilian–Canadian visiting international scholar program that “English skills (both verbal and written) were the most common challenge identified by both scholars and supervisors” (p. 257). Guo and Wei (2012) who studied Chinese visiting

international scholars' experiences at a Canadian university also concurred: "Because English is not the instructional language used by most participants back in their home institution, the language issue affected each in deeply personal ways" (p. 188). Although only one of the five research participants in my study raised the topic of language challenges, I am cognizant that this sub-topic is very related to cross-cultural learning and knowledge and to professional and personal development. These themes are personal and sensitive, so other participants might have experienced similar challenges but not have felt comfortable sharing those experiences with me.

Belonging on Campus or in the Local Community

Another sub-topic that could be viewed as a more personal or sensitive topic was related to visiting international scholars' socio-cultural and integration experience.

Ulysses explained:

It is a community that is hard to infiltrate I barely know a lot of people here ... and when I got here it was real culture shock that I experienced I have learned not to judge, it's just about difference between people. I think people can overcome differences and find commonality and have harmonious relationships and that's based on not judging people ... either on their colour of skin, or on their nationality.

Ulysses's expressions about difference made me wonder about the challenge that might be faced by visiting international scholars in terms of their integration into the university and local community. As St. Lewis (1996) expressed, "The colour of my skin drives the engine of my public life. It defines relationships and sets out possibilities.

Attitudes and beliefs make it real” (p. 28). Another visiting international scholar, Telemachus seemed to echo Ulysses’s integration and socio-cultural challenges, saying:

I am thinking that I would like to participate in more events here to learn about others and so more people come to know me too ... so we can gather together, make friends, more connections... because I am a happy person. (Telemachus)

Guo and Wei (2012) reported from their study, “adjustment to new academic and living environments are ... the two most prominent challenges faced” (p. 187) and “challenges involved ... lack of interaction with people from local communities, and feeling of loneliness” (p. 188). Miller and Blachford (2012) concluded from their study’s visiting international scholar focus groups that “the desire for more social and cultural opportunities was the single most important theme expressed” (p. 32). Haussler (2006) noted the social aspect that “a school-wide welcome reception provides visitors with an excellent opportunity to meet and interact with all faculty, students, and staff” (p. 369). At Brock University, such a reception is organized each term to welcome visiting international scholars into the campus community and to facilitate meeting and connecting with faculty and staff (Brock University, 2014).

Additional Challenges

I expected there to be some common issues encountered by visiting international scholars such as culture shock or loneliness. Several scholars, as mentioned above, did express such concerns, but one issue that was raised as well by the research participants was related to timing. Penelope talked about timing as a barrier to accomplishing all of her goals during her participation at Brock:

I wanted to give some presentations but my colleagues have not asked this of me ... I know my visit was a little unexpected because of a last-minute change in visit plans ... I realize that time of year and length of time can be critical to do everything that I wanted. (Penelope)

Ithica seemed to agree that timing could be critical:

Besides my research, I had hoped to observe and learn more about teaching process here. Most of the time I can only visit here in summer-time, but term-time is important for students, to see teaching in the classroom. (Ithica)

Ulysses considered the importance of timing as well, suggesting that a longer length of participation time as a visiting international scholar could improve language learning and successful integration outcome. She expressed to me how “others express themselves so fluently, without any difficulty—they have managed and done so well. I think it has to do with longevity—how long they have been here and settled here.”

Timing clearly can impact the success of a visit, and so, is a detail that should be taken into consideration when a visiting international scholar and the host university are planning for mobility. Glitches in timing will always be unavoidable, especially in the case of visiting international scholars participating from differing time zones and from home institutions on “the other side of the world,” but ample consideration should be given to this factor in order to plan for a successful visit.

Summary of Research Findings

The visiting international scholars shared many relevant perspectives about internationalization and their experiences, many of which were relatable to the literature review themes. As one example, the topic of research, teaching practice, and new

methodologies as it was discussed by the visiting international scholars I interviewed, could be related to several of the key themes, such as strengthening research, importance of cross-cultural learning and knowledge, enriching the academy, and professional and personal development. As another example, several scholars in describing relationships with hosting faculty, also made a connection to strengthening research and enhancing institutional partnerships.

As I might have expected, the theme to which there were the most connections by the research participants according to recurrence and relatedness of sub-topics, was professional and personal development. As was revealed earlier in this paper, numerous studies (Heinz & Lewis, 2008; Howe, 2008; Mill et al., 2014) find that visiting international scholars are intrinsically motivated to take advantage of experiences abroad for personal growth. Professional and personal development was followed by the strengthening of research, importance of cross-cultural knowledge and learning, enriching the academy, and enhancing institutional partnerships themes. Guo and Wei (2012) attest to this in their view of visiting international scholars as facilitators of strategic international partnerships. They recognize “visiting scholarship as an important strategy in internationalization teaching, research, and service in higher education” (p. 193) and that “their [visiting international scholars] in-depth knowledge of both institutions and cross-cultural learning and working experiences qualify them as the resources for building sustainable international partnerships” (p. 193). The theme that appear least in the interview subtopics was the importance of institutional supports. In contrast, this topic was very prevalent in the literature. It is possible that the topic was not suitably prompted in the interviews. The final chapter in this study includes a discussion

of the findings relevant to the synthesized themes and topics, affording an overall impression that illustrates the importance of visiting international scholars and their meaningful roles in internationalizing higher education.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Like early scholars such as Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus who travelled to other countries to seek and share knowledge, scholars today wish to gain new experiences, insights, and perspectives in their academic lives. Institutions also place great importance and value on the presence and participation of visiting international scholars in their campus communities as part of their internationalization goals and objectives in order to better serve the global and knowledge-based world society. There is much opportunity to learn and understand more about the functions of visiting international scholar programs and how they contribute to the internationalization of universities.

I began this study considering several main research questions. I wanted to know how visiting international scholars participate at host institutions abroad. What do they plan to do during their visiting international scholarship experience? What types of factors influence their experiences? How does their participation as Visiting International Scholars contribute to the internationalization of the host university? Can we capture and measure some of their participating activities or outputs—does it translate to a positive impact in terms of institutional internationalization?

The review of themes around internationalization and visiting international scholars in the literature, as well as the analysis of existing institutional data and especially the descriptions from the interviews, when synthesized, are illustrative of these important aspects in higher education today.

Through this study, I explored the many ways that visiting international scholars contribute to the internationalization priority of Brock University. I also uncovered the

importance of understanding what the term internationalization means in an institution, as well as the various challenges that are faced in higher education that may impact the associated strategies and priorities. Regardless, this study demonstrated that visiting international scholars pursue and strengthen teaching and research activities, including publishing papers and books, sharing cross-cultural knowledge and perspectives, enhancing faculty relationships and institutional partnerships, and more broadly, enriching the academy and community in which they are participating. They also enrich themselves. Personal development and the importance of firsthand experience were themes that resonated powerfully with the scholars that I interviewed. It also come through strongly in the literature. I also learned about some of the challenges they may face, such as subsequent language barriers, socio-cultural challenges, and timing issues.

Brock University, in its *Strategic Mandate Agreement* with the Ontario Government (Brock University and the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development, 2017), and in its newest Strategic Plan for the next six years, until 2025 (Brock University, 2018), is strongly confirming continued commitment to internationalization and, in particular, mobilization of scholars, as it appears in numerous priorities and aims throughout these important documents. The importance of institutional support was a prevalent theme in the literature, and this was recognized as well by the continued commitment to the Visiting International Scholar programs with the introduction of increased supports and programming by way of the Global Scholars Office (Firth, 2017). I believe this will result in enhanced and further strengthened institutional partnerships and contributions to teaching and research with the participation

of visiting international scholars as an important part of internationalization of higher education, for many more years to come.

Institutions could benefit from setting specific goals and objectives that could be measured and evaluated in order to adjust the resources and supports for Visiting International Scholar programs and other programs that may positively impact the internationalization of higher education.

Recognizing that this study was limited in scope due to the singular research site and small sample size of research participants, I believe that further research could be explored with other visiting international scholar programs at other institutions in Canada and other countries. Much remains to be learned about internationalization of higher education and what that can and does look like for different institutions. More knowledge could be gained about the importance of visiting international scholars—about the personal, professional, institutional, research, and societal benefits of their international mobilization and participation. The mobility of scholars will always exist and continue between universities and countries driven by the scholarly search for new knowledge and expertise. As Tennyson continued in his poem, “Ulysses” (Tennyson & Tennyson, 1908/1970):

I cannot rest from travel: I will drink

Life to the lees: all times I have enjoy'd ...

To follow knowledge like a sinking star,

Beyond the utmost bound of human thought. (p. 26)

Institutions and their internationalization priorities will stand to benefit from the mobilization of scholars, if they choose to define, support, measure, and evaluate this important activity in all its possible forms. This should lead to added benefit for all.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Guide

Thank you for taking part in this research study entitled “Visiting International Scholars and University Internationalization.” I am interested to learn more about the purpose and accomplishments of your participation here as a Visiting International Scholar. I will explore this also from the point of view of the hosting institution (in this case, Brock University). The purpose of my study is to explore the ways in which visiting international scholars may influence Brock University’s internationalization goals and objectives. I am undertaking this research as part of my graduate thesis in Education.

To undertake this research study, I am collecting and analyzing data via interviews with key informants to complement information drawn from prior university reports and records (ranging from letters to annual reports) about the Visiting International Scholar (VIS) programs. I have asked you to participate in this interview because you are an important informant to this research as an active participant in the VIS programs.

The questions I will ask you have to do with your program knowledge, expectations, and opinions, and will be open-ended. Before we start, do you have any questions?

Interview Questions

- How did you learn about the Visiting International Scholar program at Brock University?
- It would be helpful to understand your particular context: How long are you participating here as a Visiting International Scholar? Are you at the beginning, mid-way point, or toward the end of your stay? Have you participated as a Visiting International Scholar before at another university?
- Are you familiar with the term “internationalization”? How do you feel your participation here as a Visiting International Scholar contributes to internationalization?
- What were your expectations, goals, and objectives in terms of your participation as a Visiting International Scholar? Have they changed since your arrival? To what extent are they being met?
- What types of academic activities are you engaged in here? Please tell me about some of your academic accomplishments, which may fall under the categories of research, teaching, and/or service.
- How will your participation here benefit you when you return to your home institution? What about longer term?
- How do you think your participation here benefits Brock University?
- Is there anything else that you feel is important to mention about the Visiting International Scholar program and/or internationalization?

APPENDIX B

Recurring Emergent Themes (1–6) from the Literature

Internationalization

1. Strengthening Research
2. Importance of Cross-Cultural Learning and Knowledge
3. Enhancing Institutional Partnerships

Visiting International Scholars

4. Enriching the Academy
5. Importance of Institutional Supports
6. Professional and Personal Development

Recurring and Related Sub-Topics From Interviewees	Related Theme(s)
Research, Teaching Practice, and New Methodologies	1, 2, 4, 6
Clear Plan for Visit and Flexibility	1, 3, 4, 6
Relationship with Hosting Faculty	1, 3
Existence of an Institutional Partnership	1, 3, 4, 5
Internationalization: Benefits to Home University	1, 2, 4, 6
Importance of Firsthand Experience	2, 6
Language Challenges and Opportunities	2, 6
Belonging on Campus or in the Local Community	2, 6