

Advancing Collaborative Global Education Programs

Author Commentary

CHAPTER ABSTRACT:

In the new era of globalization, health education institutions around the world are collaborating with one another in establishing education programs through cooperation, communication, information, and resources sharing. This chapter reviews the main forms and models of collaborative education programs, discusses the barriers and challenges of advancing collaborative global education programs, and offers strategies to overcome these barriers.

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A thorough search and review of the literature gave us a comprehensive picture of international cooperation in medical education, from which we worked out the framework and content for this chapter. We wanted to provide the reader with comprehensive and useful information on the existing types of collaborative global education programs and the challenges and barriers that may hinder the successful implementation of such programs, and, more importantly, some strategies for coping with these challenges. The writing process is also a learning process. We learned much from the experiences at other universities and institutions—both overseas and domestic, and reflected on and summarized our own practice.

In this era of globalization, in order to achieve excellence in medical education, collaboration is a must and has forward-looking significance. Review and summarization of such collaboration is definitely necessary, and will no doubt promote further collaboration in a virtuous cycle. Global collaboration in medical education plays an essential role in cultivating our students to become qualified health professionals with overall competencies, critical thinking, and team spirit—who are able to tackle health challenges both at home and abroad.

Advancing collaborative global programs in health professions education is a daunting task. We need to make every effort to ensure effective and sustainable development of such programs, including:

1. Substantial and ample support from the institutional leadership should be in place. Leadership support is the key factor in advancing collaborative global education programs.
2. We need to mobilize resources to enhance investment in collaborative global education programs. In the process of carrying out the programs, quality and equity are two major concerns.
3. We need to continuously improve the management mechanism of such programs. For example, we should attach great importance to program quality monitoring and evaluation so as to achieve better outcomes in the future. In the meantime, research in advancing collaborative global education programs should also be encouraged since we need to reflect on the current approaches and problems, and then look for innovative solutions.

As leaders of academic health centers, we first need to have a global perspective in transforming our institutions. We attach great importance to international cooperation. Academic health center leaders need to communicate and cooperate with their international peers and discuss the trends of transformation in medical education, research, and healthcare. We must learn from each other's experiences, and then work out appropriate strategies to tackle the new challenges as we go forward in healthcare's changing landscape.