

The International University in an Age of Deglobalization

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Over the past four decades, American universities and colleges have internationalized so significantly that many are now global knowledge institutions. After a brief survey and categorization of different approaches to internationalization (from enhanced study abroad partnerships to full degree-granting campuses of U.S.-based institutions abroad), the essay presents a case study of NYU Abu Dhabi, which the author helped create as its first provost and later led as its vice chancellor. The analysis focuses on the rationale, challenges, and rewards for U.S. universities to engage seriously abroad, and argues that in the face of deglobalizing headwinds, universities need to strengthen, not attenuate, their efforts to promote research across borders and offer vigorous intercultural education.

Even in today's "slowbalizing" moment, research and education cannot afford to be merely local. In our connected world, local trouble spells global trouble and global pathologies cause local headaches, from pandemics and climate disasters to rampant inequality and contemporary warfare. There are no sound solutions without international solidarity and vigorous knowledge exchange. As governments seek to constrain cross-border flows of data, intellectual property, and people, it is incumbent on our universities to maintain collaboration and dialogue among curious and talented people around the world. This traditional stance of universities has made them essential to knowledge production and tolerance for centuries.¹

The seemingly ungovernable forces of our time present big problems for universities, but equally big opportunities to teach, research, and debate them. Seizing on their mission, universities can demonstrate new relevance and serve as bulwarks of civil interactions across borders.

Universities are among the most enduring institutions in history.² Just four years ago, they weathered the challenges of COVID-19 with remarkable agility, resilience, and capacity for innovation to serve the world's students and research needs. Now, they need to strengthen the research and teaching across borders that have been their modern hallmark, so that they may solve problems that affect all living things. In an age when divisive action and rhetoric offer quick dividends,

universities can also shine a bright light on the beauty of the earth and on the *good things* that humans can do if they put their best minds and fellow-feeling to work.

In this essay, I briefly consider the rise of the global university since the 1980s. I then take a closer look at NYU Abu Dhabi, an institution I helped develop in its early days and have led as vice chancellor since 2019. These sections focus on the rationale, challenges, and rewards for U.S. universities to engage seriously abroad. Last, I indicate how, faced with deglobalizing headwinds, universities need to strengthen, not attenuate, the cosmopolitan character of their offerings. The regionalization of the day need not be at odds with the horizon-expanding mission that is core to every university.

The specter of deglobalization is a challenge for ambitious universities. Over the past four decades, most American institutions of higher education developed or intensified international programs as the Iron Curtain was rent asunder, air travel became cheap, and the internet and social media brought the wonders and worries of the world into every laptop and smartphone. Students clamored to study abroad, and faculty demanded partnerships to grow their intellectual communities, but few universities made global extension truly central to their strategies.

Approaches to internationalization ranged widely. Many universities established research partnerships abroad, from individual labs to broader research centers.³ Several institutions built proprietary sites for study abroad, and colleges that scaled up their study abroad programs saw a rise in student applications, satisfaction, fellowship competitions, and ratings.⁴

More ambitious colleges and universities set up degree-granting programs abroad. Bard College in upstate New York developed a dazzling array of study abroad opportunities, with a big appetite for experimentation. When it comes to international education, Bard is open to just about *anything*, even when fraught with risk. Its partnership with Saint Petersburg State University to create Smolny College (1994), a liberal arts college institution, ended unhappily in 2021, when the office of the Russian Prosecutor-General declared the institution “undesirable” as it “threatens the constitutional order and security of the Russian Federation.”⁵

Several U.S. universities jumped at the chance to create degree programs at Education City, an umbrella campus for smaller campuses, located in Doha, Qatar, with considerable success. In Education City, students can earn degrees in art and design from Virginia Commonwealth University (it established its campus there in 1998), an MD from Weill Cornell Medicine (launched in 2001), several engineering degrees from Texas A&M (2003), bachelor’s degrees in business, biology, and computer science from Carnegie Mellon University (2004), a BSc in foreign service from the Georgetown School of Foreign Service (2005), and undergraduate degrees in journalism and communications from Northwestern University (2008).⁶

Most recently, in September 2023, the American University of Beirut (AUB) launched a highly unusual instantiation of the partial campus approach in Pafos, Cyprus. AUB Mediterraneo is offering several undergraduate and graduate degrees and is slated to grow to about three thousand students. It is the first instance of a flagship institution of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region to establish a degree-granting campus in Europe. While the university can now offer an attractive site beyond its beautiful home campus in a challenged city, it remains deeply committed to its mission in Lebanon going back more than one hundred fifty years. As the university's president Fadlo Khuri put it, "Going global is the main objective."⁷

A very few U.S. institutions have launched comprehensive degree-granting campuses abroad, and most of those emphasize liberal arts education with an international character. Temple University in Tokyo has had remarkable staying power since 1982, and after a sustained planning period, Duke University in Kunshan has begun to graduate its first students.⁸ In 2011, Yale University and the National University of Singapore launched Yale-NUS, a promising liberal arts college. To the surprise of the Yale-NUS community and observers of international education, NUS has decided to wind down the partnership by 2025.⁹

A degree-granting campus abroad is a more plausible venture for some universities than others. From a governance perspective, the parent university has to think of a campus abroad as one of its schools, the way universities have different schools in their home states or countries (for example, many universities have schools of arts and sciences, business, law, and medicine). The scope of programs required, however, also forces the campus to operate like a version of the full university abroad, with local constituencies and stakeholders and accreditation requirements that will be quite different from those of the founding institution. Those novel conditions and constituencies may pose considerable challenges for the home campus and its sense of the university's historical identity. Challenges of connection and integration can be pronounced in the early years when trustees and faculty may worry about the centrifugal force of a strong campus in an unfamiliar setting. Even if allayed, such concerns can resurface as the campus grows, encounters obstacles that are distracting for the home campus, or needs to gain a measure of autonomy. I believe these circumstances apply whether you launch a campus in Switzerland, Singapore, South Africa, or Saudi Arabia.

New York University, my own institution, was not an early mover in the accelerated internationalization of higher education, but once it embraced the opportunities in the 2000s, it pursued several options. A broad international strategy has galvanized NYU into an integrated global institution with a significant presence on all continents except Antarctica. It has had transformative effects on NYU's campus in New York and its standing in the world. The most impactful decision in the strategy was the establishment of two full campuses of NYU in Abu

Dhabi (in 2010), capital of the United Arab Emirates, and Shanghai (in 2012). In both cities, the university committed to confer NYU degrees and develop research of NYU quality. It is delivering on these commitments by applying NYU admissions standards, having had NYU faculty lead initial recruitment, and complying with NYU's policies, including the NYU Faculty Handbook.

To make a degree-granting venture abroad worth trying, there has to be something in it for the university's key constituencies: students and their families, faculty and their research, alumni and their sense of their alma mater, and governing stakeholders who care about the university's ranking, financial health, and resource opportunities. Older, private institutions with large per-student endowments have little incentive to take entrepreneurial risks.

Most public universities do not have this weight of tradition constraining them, and the appeal of new resources abroad proved irresistible for some. The challenge for public institutions is that their international partnerships often draw impatient or antagonistic oversight from state or federal legislatures. Even if public universities can proceed, they have little leeway to secure a reasonable runway for an experiment to take hold.¹⁰

By these considerations, the kinds of institutions most likely to establish international campuses abroad are younger, private, and less well-endowed than traditional universities, and their stakeholders are often more open to experiments far from home. NYU is such an institution, and has built two full campuses. It was easier promised than done, but how it was done may be instructive for other universities that are grappling to maintain or redefine their global strategies today.

NYU Abu Dhabi (NYUAD) is a joint initiative of New York University and the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. Rather than a branch campus or satellite school of NYU, NYUAD was designed to be a global institution in and of NYU and in and of Abu Dhabi. Its first steps were building a liberal arts college and capacious research institute, in the shared understanding that the campus would eventually establish graduate and professional programs to ensure NYUAD's long-term success. In September 2007, after quiet exploration involving dozens of NYU faculty, the university committed to opening the initial NYUAD campus in the fall of 2010.

John Sexton, president of NYU at the time, saw NYUAD as a logical step in the university's internationalization. He had noticed that NYU students were expressing ever greater interest in studying abroad, and that NYU schools were eagerly launching international partnerships without much coordination. Under his leadership, the university put in place a more concerted strategy across its schools.

Several objectives motivated President Sexton's global strategy. First, as an educator at heart, he wanted to offer students seamless study abroad experiences regardless of their majors. Second, Sexton wagered that the pace of globalization

was making international exposure a vital new undergraduate requirement for employment and civic participation. Third, he intuited that a network of study abroad sites infused with New York's own global energies could differentiate NYU in a crowded field of private universities without big endowments. From a university in and of the city, NYU would become one in and of the world.

With these pragmatic arguments, Sexton could lead for what he believed: that it is the highest calling of twenty-first-century universities to transcend division by offering radically intercultural education – so radical that NYU would be the only university to have a global network of study-away sites in thirteen countries, including both Israel and an Arab country.

For a successful international strategy, credible academic leadership matters. Yaw Nyarko, an economist who served as NYU's vice provost for globalization, crisscrossed the MENA region scouting for opportunities and recognized that the UAE was determined to strengthen and diversify its higher-education system. Eventually, a trusted friend of the university with deep experience in the Gulf introduced Sexton to Abu Dhabi leadership. Over many conversations, NYU and Abu Dhabi developed the joint aspiration to create a liberal arts and research institution for students from the UAE and around the world, with majors in the sciences, social sciences, engineering (a must in the MENA region), the humanities, and the arts (a must for NYU). NYU committed to grant degrees and develop a curriculum to NYU standards, but geared to the opportunities of a young, dynamic country at a crossroads between Africa, Asia, and Europe. Moving forward was a bold decision for both partners, and at NYU it came after extensive consultations with the university's trustees, leadership team, and deans' council.

NYU faculty posed legitimate questions as to whether a research campus in Abu Dhabi could be representative of NYU, but enough faculty members had witnessed the positive effects of NYU's global strategy on student success and faculty research opportunities to give the initiative a chance. During listening sessions I was frequently asked, "How can you be sure that we can do everything in Abu Dhabi that we can in New York?" My standard answer was: "If you are asking whether we will have academic freedom and NYU-style student life on our Abu Dhabi campus, the answer is yes. But should we not rather ask what it is we *can* do in Abu Dhabi that we *can't* on Washington Square?" Flipping the lens was fruitful, as many faculty relished the opportunity to design fresh majors, interdisciplinary minors, and a new core curriculum focused on big ideas, interdisciplinary knowledge, and field experience connected to the region.

In 2008, we recruited Al Bloom, president of Swarthmore College and a passionate advocate for intercultural education, to serve as NYUAD's vice chancellor. Bloom's long-standing leadership for the liberal arts instantly evinced the ambition of NYU and Abu Dhabi not to compromise on quality, including academic freedom and vigorous campus life.

Working together with the Institute of International Education, we designed a global student recruitment strategy and bolstered it with scholarships that meet student need. We agreed that tenure should be available at NYUAD, as it is vital to the quality of faculty hiring and academic freedom. At NYUAD, freedom of inquiry and teaching is vouchsafed further by NYU's responsibility for all academic decisions, by the vice chancellor's accountability to the president and chancellor of NYU, and by the faculty's integration into NYU's faculty governance.

A true partnership between NYU and Abu Dhabi was critical to creating and opening NYUAD to students in less than three years. Prime land was provided for the campus, and NYU's fast-growing digital resources made it possible to have an instant library of high caliber. Despite the financial crisis of 2008, NYUAD could keep building its faculty, staff, student body, and infrastructure.

Finding great students was a wonderful challenge: talent is isomorphically distributed around the world, but the opportunity to develop it is not. We selected students on three criteria. First, students had to be academically outstanding and show scholarly promise, but we would evaluate them according to the educational environment that had been available to them. Second, students would have to demonstrate – not just profess – that they wanted to study and live with students who would be very different from them. And third, students had to show evidence of their drive to improve the world they had inherited. This last criterion can be daunting, so we made clear that the world is made up of many worlds, and that the aspiration to make it better could be enacted at any scale.

Today, NYUAD has 2,100 undergraduates from about 125 countries, speaking some 100 languages. The gender ratio is 54 percent women, 46 percent men. Twenty-three percent are Emirati citizens. The student population has no majority nationality, ethnicity, language, or faith. As the local student community has grown, the school has become both more cosmopolitan and more relevant to the region.

From the beginning, NYUAD's admission rate hovered around 4 to 5 percent; in 2023, it was less than 3 percent. Although no school relishes measuring its quality by the number of applicants it cannot accept, NYUAD's selectivity represents the extraordinary curiosity, creativity, empathy, work ethic, and intercultural commitment of the students. I observe this reality daily, as I interact with them in forums, on walks around the city, and in my courses.¹¹

Since 2010, NYUAD has graduated ten classes and a total of about 2,400 students. The simplest proxies for the success of its alumni are prestigious post-graduate awards: eighteen Rhodes Scholars, thirteen Fulbrights, fourteen Erasmus Mundus, nine Yenching, seventeen Schwarzman, three Knight-Hennessy, and two Truman Scholars. The six-year graduation rate is 94 percent, and 96 percent of NYUAD alumni land in excellent placements around the world within six months of graduating. About two-thirds of graduates go on to countries where

they did not grow up. Around 65 percent find employment across all sectors (with strong results for arts and humanities majors), and more than half of those stay in the UAE. Twenty-five percent enroll in top graduate schools across the globe. Another 5 to 6 percent pursue entrepreneurial opportunities. These placement rates were maintained throughout the emergency stages of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Attracting faculty of NYU caliber to teach these highly motivated students was the greater challenge. Top faculty are always harder to find than students, and even NYU cannot convince all scholars to relocate to New York. To foster a lively intellectual community in Abu Dhabi and build the university's early reputation, we developed a flexible, worldwide approach to faculty recruitment that would enable NYUAD to lay the groundwork for vigorous research.

The strategy assumed that a large number of courses would be taught initially by NYU faculty on assignment for half semesters, semesters, or a year or more. At the same time, NYU faculty would recruit and mentor the first faculty hired specifically for NYU Abu Dhabi. Some of these "standing faculty," as we called the NYUAD hires, would spend an integration year in New York, particularly if they had few touch points with NYU or with liberal arts education. Over time, the percentage of courses offered by New York-based faculty decreased, but these colleagues continued to help animate the NYUAD campus through my time there. Flexible teaching models and a mission-driven campus garnered a level of support from NYU faculty that we could not have anticipated.

Research opportunities have been critical to the development of an excellent standing and affiliated faculty. Nearly three hundred fifty NYUAD faculty and numerous researchers conduct advanced inquiry in over eighty centers, labs, and groups, in a wide range of disciplines, often together with faculty from New York. To enhance intellectual life in the UAE and communicate our research, the NYUAD Institute, Arts Center, and Art Gallery produce lively conferences, symposia, and workshops for scholars and artists from around the world. These initiatives galvanize public interest and community-based events that have opened the university to a diverse community of citizens and expatriate residents.¹²

NYUAD has attracted faculty from outstanding institutions around the world. One reason they stay is the increasingly high standing of both NYU and NYUAD. Over the past two decades, NYU has grown stronger, moving up in the Times Higher Education World University rankings from 60th in 2011, to 30th in 2016, 26th in 2021, and 24th in 2022.¹³ This success can be attributed in part to NYU's energetic global strategy and its establishment of the campuses in Abu Dhabi and Shanghai. The internationalization and digital transformation of knowledge networks have made working in a well-resourced campus far from home a plausible and exciting option.

For many scholars, disinvestment in American and European universities has made working in institutions like NYUAD or Duke Kunshan more attractive.

Faced with political division and shrinking research budgets, some no longer see America's universities as an academic pinnacle. While liberal arts colleges began to struggle in the United States, governments in Europe, China, and MENA countries were investing in holistic education in depth and breadth, including the humanities. Just as burgeoning Chinese universities have been benefiting from the return of scholars educated abroad, NYUAD has attracted top faculty of Arab and South Asian heritage who wish to be closer to family and cultures of origin.¹⁴

In addition to these incentives, NYUAD faculty members benefited from the enormous diversity, high motivation, and aspirational disposition of our campus community, which embraces the diversity of faculty and students to foster intercultural consilience and strive for a better world. It sounds utopian, but these energies are evident to visiting scholars and accrediting panels. NYUAD faculty simply love teaching because their students work hard, contribute actively to tough discussions, and take on community-based projects. The core curriculum is global, propelled by dialogue and undergraduate research, and asks students to apply their learning to real-world issues in local and international organizations.¹⁵

As much as faculty love the undergraduate vibrancy of our campus, like all university scholars, they look forward to establishing doctoral programs that bring graduate students and accelerate their research, particularly in STEM fields. Launching such programs is more challenging than creating a world-class liberal arts college. In overseas campuses, a parent university may be worried about creating internal competition for PhD students, and faculty may question the academic quality of a new campus. NYUAD has put those early worries to rest by its research output and the graduates it has sent on to world class institutions. Now, more than one hundred Global NYU PhD Fellows in Sciences and Engineering do coursework at NYU in New York and then move to Abu Dhabi to conduct dissertation research in our labs.

The success of the Global PhD Fellows program indicates the potential for homegrown graduate programs at NYUAD, but these take time to conceptualize, market-study, and launch. When establishing U.S. programs in emerging knowledge economies, a balance must be struck between doctoral programs focused on preparing research scholars and professional master's programs that support human capital development more broadly. To strengthen NYUAD's contributions to the UAE, the campus plans to launch the kinds of professional programs that propelled NYU to national and international standing in the twentieth century. In January 2025, it will launch a joint MBA degree offered by NYU's Stern School of Business and NYUAD, with two-thirds of the coursework in Abu Dhabi and the summer in New York.

Of course, a professional graduate program is not the same thing as a doctoral degree trajectory in arts and sciences. The tensions between a core university mission in arts and sciences and the need for professional education are familiar to

flagship universities across the United States and around the world. Most academic institutions are being called upon to do more for local or regional workforce development and support of the professions that societies need now and in the near future. As research universities have urgent mandates to serve local priorities and to support the international aspirations of outstanding faculty, they must find ways to balance curiosity-driven research and education with innovative and capacious professional education.

Most universities claim to have become global as well as local. NYUAD was *designed* to be both. In the UAE, NYUAD is a private university with a public mission, contributing to social and economic development for the country but rooted in the global urbanism of New York City. This hybrid condition has forced us to counter the isolationist risks of deglobalization while serving as a local anchor. As most universities face this challenge, NYUAD's experience may be instructive. Here are four takeaways from my time at the helm of NYUAD.

First, a global experience is available on *any* campus where students from different countries study together. Many "foreign" students in the United States are already in the host country before they enroll. Immigrant communities full of aspiring students are almost everywhere, not only in North America. The genie of demographic diversity, attendant on postcolonial and more recent migrations, won't go back into the bottle. Campus diversity becomes an educational resource when administrators encourage "domestic" faculty and students to bring elements of their cultural communities into classrooms, assignments, research projects, campus life, and service learning.

Second, if universities intentionally design courses and cocurricular experiences to open up the global in the local, they will help students see their own worlds differently. To make sure that the university delivers on its local and global mission, NYUAD administers its global education and community-based learning programs in one office, led by a seasoned and creative associate provost. This simple administrative move ensures that every student has access to experiential global learning.

Third, no global strategy will work if professors don't see the point of it. Faculty sometimes bristle at the idea that basic research should have local relevance. NYUAD scholars are fueled by curiosity and basic research, and their ability to pursue questions wherever they lead is what makes them scholars of worldwide repute. Nevertheless, they are also motivated to solve urgent contemporary challenges, and want to equip their students to tackle them. Their research advances climate solutions, ethical artificial intelligence, space science, water security, public health, drug discovery, human development, economic fairness, regional heritage, and tolerance and coexistence. These global research areas often converge with the UAE's goals for diversifying its economy and giving people opportunities to flourish.

That realization prompts a final point. Even if many universities now find that their global agendas are also and already local, we must remind external stakeholders that returns on investment in universities are rarely instantaneous. The greatest benefits of universities for their cities and countries come from the long-term projects of educating citizens and residents, and of generating the kind of knowledge that has brought the world computers, GPS, and COVID-19 vaccines. To make this case, NYUAD opens its resources as fully as possible to the local community, with public lectures and symposia, art performances and exhibitions, citizen science and climate action projects, and access to our library and labs, vibrant eateries and coffee shops, and splendid athletic facilities.

All universities can align worldly research and education with local needs, and become institutions that anchor our societies. To stay true to their missions, our universities need to demonstrate that they are talent magnets, idea factories, transformation agents, and forces for good. We need to show, not tell, that we keep the shining knowledge society and the Fourth Industrial Revolution within reach, not to mention a livable planet at peace.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ The power of international education courses through the reports of the Institute of International Education, founded in 1919; see “Research,” Institute of International Education, <https://www.iie.org/research> (accessed April 4, 2024). It is also evident in the fine case studies of the Free University of Berlin, Tsinghua University, and the University of Hong Kong in William C. Kirby, *Empires of Ideas: Creating the Modern University from Germany to America to China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2022).
- ² Mariët Westermann, “The Enduring University: Here, We Grow,” Convocation Address, November 8, 2020, NYU Abu Dhabi, <https://nyuad.nyu.edu/en/about/leadership-and-administration/office-of-the-vice-chancellor/communications/the-enduring-university-here-we-grow.html> (accessed April 2, 2023).

- ³ The University of Chicago created research centers in Beijing, Delhi, Hong Kong, London, and Paris. Columbia University pursued a similar but fuller strategy with ten global centers in Europe, Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.
- ⁴ In 2006, Goucher College of suburban Baltimore became the first college to require every one of its students (approximately 1,200 students) to study abroad, and made it affordable; Sanford J. Ungar, “The Study-Abroad Solution: How to Open the American Mind,” *Foreign Affairs* 95 (2) (2016): 111–123, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2016-02-16/study-abroad-solution>. Pitzer College, of similar size, requires all of its students to study abroad for at least one semester. It has enhanced its partnership program opportunities with bespoke sites for Pitzer students in untraditional locations, including Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Nepal, Vietnam, Botswana, and South Africa. See “Office of Study Abroad and International Programs,” Pitzer College, <https://www.pitzer.edu/study-abroad> (accessed April 2, 2023). A proxy for the success of Pitzer’s global education is its high number of Fulbright Fellows. It has been a top producer of Fulbright Fellows since at least 2005. See “Top Producing Institutions,” Fulbright Program, <https://www.fulbrightprogram.org/tpi> (accessed May 12, 2023).
- ⁵ For the sweep of “Bard Abroad,” see “About the Institute for International Liberal Education,” Bard College, <https://www.bard.edu/bardabroad/about> (accessed October 1, 2022); and “The Institute for International Liberal Education,” Bard College, <https://iile.bard.edu> (accessed April 8, 2023). See also Elizabeth Redden, “Bard College Declared ‘Undesirable’ in Russia,” *Inside Higher Ed*, July 9, 2021, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2021/07/09/bard-grapples-what-it-might-mean-be-declared-%E2%80%98undesirable%E2%80%99-russia>.
- ⁶ Since Northwestern arrived in Doha, no new American partners have joined, but a trio of British, French, and Qatari institutions have sought to expand Education City’s offer. In February 2024, the Texas A&M system’s Board of Regents voted to close the branch campus in Doha by 2028. No new students will be admitted as of the fall of 2024. See Liam Knox, “Cutting Off Qatar,” *Inside Higher Ed*, February 16, 2024, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/global/us-colleges-world/2024/02/16/how-texas-ams-qatar-campus-suddenly-collapsed>.
- ⁷ Liam Knox, “American University of Beirut to Open Cyprus Campus,” *Inside Higher Ed*, June 15, 2023, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/quick-takes/2023/06/15/american-university-beirut-open-cyprus-campus>.
- ⁸ Temple University, Japan Campus offers undergraduate degrees in the social sciences, humanities, and computer science. As of 2022, it enrolled 1,841 undergraduates. It also offers master’s degrees in management, law, education, and music therapy. “Basic Facts about TUJ,” Temple University, Japan Campus, <https://www.tuj.ac.jp/about/japan-campus/facts> (accessed April 1, 2023). See also Kirby, *Empires of Ideas*, 226–235.
- ⁹ The postmortem on Yale-NUS College is yet to be written, but for an early review, see Karin Fischer, “A ‘Flabbergasting Decision’: Abrupt End of Yale-NUS Partnership Offers Lessons to Colleges Seeking Global Re-Engagement,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 17, 2021, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/a-flabbergasting-decision> (accessed October 20, 2022). See also Pericles Lewis’s essay in this volume of *Dædalus*. Pericles Lewis, “The Rise & Restructuring of Yale-NUS College: An International Liberal Arts Partnership in Singapore,” *Dædalus* 153 (2) (Spring 2024): 48–62, <https://www.amacad.org/publication/rise-and-restructuring-yale-nus-college-international-liberal-arts-partnership>.

- ¹⁰ For the closures of campuses of the public institutions George Mason University Ras Al Khaimah and Michigan State University Dubai, see Jack Stripling, “Gulf Withdrawal,” *Inside Higher Ed*, February 29 2009, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2009/02/27/gulf-withdrawal>; Melanie Swan, “Michigan State University Shuts Most of its Dubai Campus,” *The National*, July 5, 2010, <https://www.thenationalnews.com/uae/education/michigan-state-university-shuts-most-of-its-dubai-campus-1.521893>; and Larry Abramson, “Michigan State to Close Dubai Campus,” *All Things Considered*, NPR, July 6, 2010, <https://www.npr.org/2010/07/06/128342097/michigan-state-to-close-dubai-campus>. For the University of Connecticut’s short-lived effort to establish a campus in Dubai, see Don Michak, “Bye Bye Dubai? UConn Abandons, for Now, Plans for Branch Campus in Persian Gulf,” *Journal Inquirer*, February 20, 2007, https://www.journalinquirer.com/archives/bye-bye-dubai-uconn-abandons-for-now-plans-for-branch-campus-in-persian-gulf/article_25c58b9e-4bbb-5aa0-ac6e-94aba972868f.html. Today, Dubai is home to very good public international institutions, including the University of Wollongong from Australia and the UK Universities of Middlesex and Birmingham. The private Rochester Institute of Technology has offered successful programs in Dubai since 2008.
- ¹¹ For data as well as anecdotal snapshots of NYUAD graduates, see *Life Beyond Saadiyat: NYUAD Graduates 2014 – 2019*, <https://nyuad.nyu.edu/content/dam/nyuad/academics/undergraduate/career-development/life-beyond-saadiyat/report/life-beyond-saadiyat-2019.pdf> (accessed December 12, 2022).
- ¹² With a large umbrella research institute, NYUAD has established a major research position ahead of its graduate program rollout. Since opening in 2010, its faculty have published more than 6,200 peer-reviewed papers and books, and according to *Nature Index*, they are the UAE’s top producer of articles in the leading global science journals. The faculty have filed 145 patents. The arts faculty have contributed more than 550 creative works. NYUAD’s economics faculty is ranked fourth for research productivity in all of Asia by Research Papers in Economics. “Top 12.5% Asia,” Ideas: Research Papers in Economics, <https://ideas.repec.org/top/top.asia.html> (accessed June 30, 2023).
- ¹³ “World University Rankings 2023,” Times Higher Education, <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2023/world-ranking> (accessed March 15, 2023).
- ¹⁴ Kirby, *Empires of Ideas*, 196, 296; Anju Mary Paul, *Asian Scientists on the Move: Changing Science in a Changing Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021). Paul, a professor of sociology at NYUAD, hails from India and spent her earlier career at the National University of Singapore.
- ¹⁵ For example, First Year Writing Seminars—critical as English is not the first language for most NYUAD students—take students into the UAE to develop projects about the society they live in. Counter to the typical fate of writing requirements, it is one of our best-loved courses. Similarly, all engineering students must take Engineering for Social Impact, and most take on a follow-up community project at home or abroad.