# Week 2 Activity

Universities, City-Regions, and New Territorial Configurations

Option A: Is higher education fit for the global urban era? On spatial-organizational strategies for serving the world's (urban) majority

Our era of 'global urbanization' — one where the majority of the world's population now lives in 'urban' areas – raises some interesting opportunities and challenges for higher education systems and institutions. In particular, as people around the world are moving to cities, cities themselves are spreading out and becoming less dense. This emerging pattern is associated with terms like sprawl, extended metropolitan regions, exurbs, edge cities, borderless cities, megapolitan areas, megalopolises, mega-urban regions, and the '100 Mile City'. Moreover, one of the underlying arguments of this week's text is that in our global urban future, city-regions will matter more and more to national and regional economies, and the global economy as a whole. See this recent article ('Why Big Cities Matter in the Developing World') in *The Atlantic*, for example, and this "urban productivity ratio" map, which compares the "per capita economic output of metros to the per capita economic output of their nations":
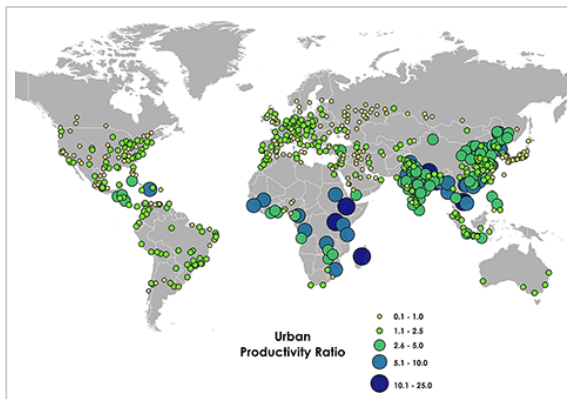
Reprinted with the permission of Richard Florida and Zara Matheson

But higher education cannot easily adapt to these new socio-spatial orders, at least in its 'bricks-and-mortar' incarnation, for it is relatively *fixed in place* and arguably slow to grow and adapt. In the context of such a major global structural change, can we really carry on assuming that people should physically come to *a* centrally located campus to receive all or a majority of their formal higher education? We think not, though feel free to disagree.

Now, if city-regions are getting larger and larger, and mattering more and more to society and economy, how do we ensure our higher education systems and institutions better serve the world's urban majority?Two of many options include:

- Higher education funders and providers progressively adjusting institutional infrastructures, pedagogical practices, and broad ways of operating, to better serve people IN PLACES, rather than drawing people to A PLACE? This could occur via mobile learning facilities (e.g., 'pop-up campuses'), or the creation and dispersal of a plethora of basic (to keep costs down) buildings for teaching served by *mobile faculty* that would reduce the mobility responsibilities currently concentrated on students.

- More seriously supporting online learning. On this latter note, perhaps this is why some of the private for-profit sector (often online, or more basic facilities) providers have grown so quickly in many city-regions and countries in that they are structurally required (given their for-profit nature) to serve students wherever they are, and as efficiently as possible, first and foremost.

In short*, what spatial-organizational strategies and practices need to be designed and implemented by the higher education sector to better serve the world's (urban) majority?* Please discuss with reference to actual examples and/or hypothetical scenarios. And if you need a kick-start, also think about last week's discussion about models and mechanisms for globalizing universities, as well as the case studies in Week 2 above.

Go here to post your **Option A** contribution

Option B: Is higher education fit for the global urban era? On spatial-organizational strategies for accessing, embedding in, and engaging with global cities

As noted above, global cities, and the archipelago of global cities that are playing key roles as nodes where the forces of 'globalization' are constituted and managed, are also mattering more and more to societies and economies. These are not ordinary cities – they are extraordinary cities in that they are critically important spaces of knowledge production and control. This is, as we argued, the reason Cornell University (with Technion), and Warwick University, reached out across space to deepen their relationship with New York City. This is also why Amsterdam University College was established in a manner that reflects its diverse global city base, as is captured in its motto *Excellence and Diversity in a Global City*. And this is why, if you head back to the top of this week's material and look at the branch campus map, you will see what is a very city-centric map.

Let's be realistic, though – few of the world's 14,000+ higher education institutions have the resources available to a Technion, a Cornell, an Amsterdam University College, a New York University, a Warwick University. This comment applies to universities worldwide, in the Global South and the Global North.

Your challenge is to devise a realistic strategy to enable resource constrained universities to deepen their research and teaching/learning presence in powerful and often expensive global cities like Shanghai, Singapore, New York, Chicago, Cape Town, Toronto, etc. One

Aliiance Francaise

option of many is:

Photo courtesy of [Alliance Française de Singapour](#)

- Universities from one city-region and or regional consortia collectively developing and running collective educational and research spaces in a distant global city. Imagine, for example, a collectively owned and developed structure modeled on the wonderful [Alliance Française de Singapour](#) building, and placing it in Mumbai or New York or Boston or Beijing or Shanghai or Paris or Abu Dhabi. It could include a small hotel, cinema, lecture spaces, marketing space, flexi-labs, meeting spaces, a range of video conferencing technologies, etc.

In short*, what spatial-organizational strategies and practices need to be designed and implemented to enable resource constrained universities to access, embed in, and engage with global cities.* Please discuss with reference to actual examples and/or hypothetical scenarios. And if you need a kick-start, also think about last week's discussion about models and mechanisms for globalizing universities, as well as the case studies above.

[Go here to post your **Option B** contribution]

How to submit your contribution:

1. Submit your response as a new thread in the corresponding discussion sub-forum (linked above)
   - *Deadline:* 10:00 AM (CDT/Chicago-time) on Thursday, 10 April. ([Time Zone Converter](#))
   - Please review the expectations provided in the *Activities* section of the [syllabus](#).
2. Read and debate with your fellow students. You are encouraged to discuss in both topic areas.
3. Vote-up the posting(s) that you feel provide(s) the most insightful contributions.

For those seeking a Statement of Accomplishment, please click the button below to attest your completion:

[⭐ I've Completed This Activity]

Sharing Policy Reminder:

By posting materials, you license that content under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 license](#) ([legal code](#)). This license means that you irrevocably grant anyone permission to use, copy, modify, and sell the material without notifying you, as long as they credit you.

Edit Page