

# Charting the new territory of the Scholar-Practitioner in U.S. Higher Education

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*International Higher Education's Scholar-Practitioners: Bridging Research and Practice.*

Streitwieser, B. & Ogden, A. (editors)

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Long before smart phones and global positioning systems, cartographers designated unknown parts of the world by drawing dragons or mystical creatures. If the modern landscape of U.S. higher education were painted like those medieval maps, there would be the known lands of the *faculty* and the *administration* that would be etched out with clarity. The land of faculty would be familiar and invoke ideas of those individuals who create, evaluate, and share knowledge by researching, publishing, and teaching. The land of the administrators would also be recognizable to many and would bring to mind those people who coordinate, manage, and orchestrate the multiple stakeholders within an institution to keep the academic enterprise functioning on a daily basis. On this imagined map, the terra incognita in between these two lands would be filled with darkness and dragons.

Streitwieser and Ogden's (2016) *International Higher Education's Scholar-Practitioners: Bridging Research and Practice*, charts the territory in between the lands of the faculty, or *scholars*, and the administrators, or *practitioners*, within the terrain of international education. In this ambitious edited volume, Streitwieser and Ogden have assembled an extensive number of authors who have in fact illuminated this type of hybrid professional who serve as a living bridge between the worlds of faculty and administration. They have shown how the scholar-practitioner is especially well-suited for higher education since colleges and universities are spaces where both rigorous research and thoughtful administration are valued. These scholar-practitioners can carry out academically rigorous scholarly agendas that live up to the principles of sophisticated research, while they also engage in the day-to-day administrative practices that serve the numerous stakeholders at their institutions. As the editors point out, scholar-practitioners have been recognized in public discourse since the 1980s, but this book draws attention to their work in important ways for today's twenty-first century context. The editors and authors within this collection argue that these hybrid professionals can play a key role in both coordinating comprehensive internationalization efforts on university campuses and in systematically producing new knowledge that will contribute to the academic field of international education as a whole.

The strengths of the book lie in its organization and comprehensiveness. The editors have divided the book into five sections. The first section introduces the scholar-practitioner and describes the broader context for this type of hybrid-professional (Streitwieser & Ogden; Hudzik), as well as historical surveys on the place of the scholar-practitioner in international education research and practice (Heyl; Comp). The second section provides “Views from the Profession” which includes a variety of perspectives from current practitioners in areas of international education such as senior international officers (Scarboro), education abroad (Beaudin & Berends; Whalen) and international student scholar services professionals (Austell). There are also offerings in this section from those in one-person offices (Reinig) and leaders in community colleges (Raby). The third part of the book offers “Views from the Field” which presents a series of perspectives that encourage utilizing practitioner driven research about the field in ways that will help answer pressing questions while also moving professional work toward the center of academic life (La Brack; Brewer; Slimbach; Woolf; Light; Edwards). The fourth section of the book, “Leveraging the Scholar-Practitioner: Education Research and Future Opportunities” offers a way forward for those seeking to pursue the life of the scholar-practitioner, by offering theoretical frameworks to draw from for intercultural development (Deardorf), describing lenses through which to assist scholarship and practice (Breslauer), categorizing different types of formal graduate training (Woodman & Puntney), and projecting the promises and potential perils for future scholar-practitioners (Hunter and Rumbley). Finally, the book closes with a section describing the “Pathways of the Scholar-Practitioner” for each author. Since the collection is a who’s who of notable scholars, esteemed practitioners, luminaries and leaders in international higher education, these pathways emphasize the point that there are many roads that may lead to this new hybrid professional space.

This important work does a comprehensive job of providing multiple perspectives on the need for scholar-practitioners in international education, but readers looking for a clear “how to” guide to becoming a scholar-practitioner may be frustrated. The collective works in this book show that there is no one-size-fits-all model to become a scholar-practitioner. Indeed, there is no easy or established path to this hybrid third-space; instead, the book provides several possible paths, and leaves it up to the reader to consider how best to approach her/his own work. Readers pressed for time would be wise to read the entire first section, and then scan the chapter titles in the remaining sections to focus on those areas most relevant to their needs. This is less a fault of the authors in the collection, than a function of the ever-changing (and expanding) nature of international education. Finally, readers should note that this is a book about the scholar-practitioner in U.S. higher education. The majority of the authors work in postsecondary institutions in the United States; therefore, the book is most relevant to a U.S. context. As Hans De Wit points out in the forward, the situation of international education leaders in other country contexts are different and should be considered in a different light. It is important for readers to know this beforehand. Future publications could consider what role the scholar-practitioner plays in other national contexts. In the United States at least, the authors of this book demonstrate that the scholar-practitioner can play an important role in advancing international education research, coordinating campus internationalization efforts, and bridging the gap between the lands of the administrators and scholars.

Indeed, although the bridge is the dominant metaphor in the book, this collective work is a laudable piece of academic and professional cartography. It illuminates the landscape of international higher education by demonstrating the work of scholar-practitioners, and it shows new

professionals in the field the many ways to position themselves in the space in between the lands of scholarship and practice. Although this liminal terrain is still fraught with challenges of maintaining scholarly integrity without showing bias, or finding time for research in the face of professional commitments, the critical role of the scholar-practitioner is ever more evident now as a result of this book. Now, thanks to the scholar-practitioner, there are no longer dragons in between scholars and administrators.