

Tomorrow, The World_ Vice Prov...h of The Ohio State University

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SPEAKERS

Janet Box-Steffensmeier, Gil Latz, David Staley, Eva Dale

E Eva Dale 00:00
From the heart of the Ohio State University on the Oval, this is Voices of Excellence from the College of Arts and Sciences, with your host, David Staley. Voices focuses on the innovative work being done by faculty and staff in the College of Arts and Sciences at The Ohio State University. From departments as wide ranging as art, astronomy, chemistry and biochemistry, physics, emergent materials, mathematics, and languages, among many others, the college always has something great happening. Join us to find out what's new now.

D David Staley 00:32
Gil Latz is Professor of Geography at The Ohio State University College of the Arts and Sciences. He also serves as Vice Provost for Global Strategies and International Affairs. He previously served as Associate Vice President for International Affairs at Indiana University, Professor of Geography, and Associate Vice Chancellor for International Affairs at Indiana University, Purdue University, Indianapolis. He is a world recognized expert on curricular internationalization, including the intersection of internationalization, diversity, and community engagement, and he has a long standing research interest in Japan's modernization process, which we will get to later in the interview. Welcome to Voices, Dr. Latz.

G Gil Latz 01:15
Thank you, I'm glad to be here.

D David Staley 01:16
Thank you. Tell us about your role, please, or your portfolio as Vice Provost for Global

Strategies and International Affairs.

G

Gil Latz 01:24

Ohio State really stands out in the field for having created an Office of International Affairs about 15 years ago, and this is a feature we see now increasingly at major universities where there's a commitment to global engagement through research, through instruction, and through service. And I've been aware of the program here for quite a while and admired it, and now I have the great privilege of being the leader of it.

D

David Staley 01:53

So what does that entail, what does global strategies or international affairs entail?

G

Gil Latz 01:59

It's an unusual title, I must admit, sometimes it's Vice Provost for International Affairs or Global Studies, or a variety of terms along those lines to combine the two, I think stands out in the field. Global strategies is looking at how the university, as I believe already engages with the world. But the strategic question is, how do we do that uniquely in terms of our resource talent and our land grant mission? And then the international affairs part, I think it's appropriate to think of the office as the Department of State for the campus. It's where we handle diplomatic matters related to welcoming visitors, where we prepare the President for his trips overseas, or whatever project he's working on. It relates to global questions, where we try and hire professionals who are experts on different parts of the world. And, if you wish I can go into the details of the organization.

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David Staley 02:58

Yes, please do.

G

Gil Latz 02:59

I think it will be interesting for people to know that about 80 people who work for the Office of International Affairs, it has directors in the areas of communication, of partnerships, typically with universities around the world, but locally as well. It has a support unit for international students and scholars, which is partly advising and partly compliance related, as these visitors are on visas and there are definitions of what you can and can't do as visitors in the United States, just as is true when we go to another country. And then we have several unusual features, Ohio State made the decision about a decade ago to begin to develop gateway offices, and there are three: one is in Sao Paulo, Brazil, that's the newest, the second newest is in Mumbai, India, and the first one, the oldest is in Shanghai, China. And these operate as both portals in and out regarding, what is Ohio State, what is our identity, how do we connect up with our alumni, how do we recruit the best international students? But they also can be destinations for research conferences or researchers, study abroad groups; in other words, we

have a commitment to those particular places, arrived at through careful selection, where we have a critical mass of activity, could be research, or a critical mass of students who come from that destination. And we're doing priority work with that office to communicate the identity of the university, but also to facilitate research and engagement with that part of the world.

D David Staley 02:59

And to be clear the gateways are not campuses, in the sense we're not teaching classes there or something?

G Gil Latz 04:45

No, that's a very important point. We're not going to establish a branch campus like New York University has in various parts of the world, and nothing wrong with that, but that's not the Ohio State way. And prior to this, when I was in Indiana, wasn't the Indiana State way. And instead, this office approach methodology really seems to be a middle ground between a bricks and mortars investment and having a small expert staff that can facilitate who we are and how we can help broaden understanding about that particular area in our connections.

D David Staley 05:21

You mentioned, New York University have branch campuses internationally and this is not a plan that Ohio State is following, nor Indiana. Why is that?

G Gil Latz 05:29

I think that the land grant mission - I'll just refer to Ohio State in this answer - as I understand it, the land grant mission is, of course, committed to engagement in all 88 of Ohio's counties. It has a commitment to bettering the world through our research and our education of our students, and we've traditionally done that through established collaborations. That's very different from establishing, creating, building a bricks and mortar facility, which is expensive and carries a certain amount of risk and requires the university to think about setting up an operation elsewhere that may not fit with its traditions. I would argue that this might change someday, because you never say never, at least not in the academic world, you don't, that will never happen. But I do think that our approach, we already have methods for being engaged with the world, and we're now elaborating on that with this gateway idea. And I think that's a better fit.

D David Staley 06:34

You had mentioned previously that part of our global strategy or international profile are partnerships with international universities. What's the nature of those partnerships?

G Gil Latz 06:44

G Gil Latz 00:44

Those are often twofold, they could be related to study abroad, reciprocal relationships where our students will go to a certain university in another country and their students will come to study with us. They also could be research based, where there are two researchers or a variety of researchers in different disciplines who are working on a common project. Increasingly, as we find that problems transcend borders, transnational issues, we can't solve or address all these problems with researchers only in the United States, we need to put together networks of teams of the best and the brightest around the world. And increasingly, the funding is for transnational research questions like climate change.

D David Staley 07:31

So I know at present, you are leading a campus-wide discussion of our international strategic plan at Ohio State. What are some of the main features of that strategic plan?

G Gil Latz 07:42

Well, I want to go back for a second to an earlier question as I answer this one. In addition to that, the gateway office, which we talked about in more detail, the office also has three nationally funded area study centers, one for Slavic and Eastern European studies, one for East Asian Studies, and one for Latin American Studies. This also is a unique feature of the Office of International Affairs. And we also have a Global One Health program that originated in the Veterinary Medicine school, and now has campus participation from a variety of different colleges and is working in Ethiopia, West and East Africa, and elsewhere in the world, in Latin America. These are all examples of how an Office of International Affairs can help coordinate cross-campus conversation about global engagement. So, that's the background to the strategic plan question. First of all, it has to be a strategic plan, and it must build on our history, and these are examples of historical commitments that we've had. We had a strategic plan at Ohio State from 2012 to 2017, that's when the gateway offices came into existence as a feature of that effort. 2017 the plan expired, and now the Provost has asked me as my primary charge to develop a new strategic plan, and one of the things that it needs to do is to ask questions across the campus as well as within the office. An example of a cross-campus question is, President Drake has created Time and Change, and there are priorities within that strategic plan for the university. What's the global dimension of those priorities? Research is one of the priorities, for example, and so we'll be working very closely with the Office of Research and my office to identify new strategic priorities for global research that build on the talents of the university and the challenges that we see around the world. And I'll take a quick minute to define some terminology.

D David Staley 09:49

Please do.

G Gil Latz 09:50

This word, internationalization, is somewhat well known within the academy, not everybody agrees on its definition or has deep familiarity with it. But when we talk about it outside the

university, it can really raise one's eyebrows and one might wonder what it is. And it sometimes is used synonymously with globalization, and very briefly, I'd like to offer a definition of how each is different from the other, but related. Globalization is a phenomenon where we see increasingly a globally interdependent world as illustrated by the movement of goods, obviously, trade, migration, disease, and examples along those lines, where borders are no longer operating to limit in the same way as has been true in the past. How we deal with opportunities and challenges, and those three examples I just gave, I think, illustrate opportunities in terms of trade, but also challenges in terms of migration, and the global transmission of disease. Internationalization is the academy's engagement with that reality. How do we prepare students for this increasingly interdependent world, what are some of the benefits and challenges that go along with that? One example in trade, which we see right here in the Midwest, is the political reaction to the changing dynamics of manufacturing; some of the decline in employment is related to technological innovation and some of it is related to fierce international competition, and there's a political reaction to that, that may say we should impose tariffs on other countries. As we look at that question of as a university, we need to ask, who benefits and who loses? Who is adversely affected by globalization of the economy? And there are beneficiaries, our farmers benefit from international trade opportunities, where our major agricultural exports states, so you can't just divide it into a rural, urban divide. But of course, there are other employees in the state who have been suffering from global competition. In manufacturing, for example, we need to engage with that reality, prepare our students for their role as citizens in the state or in the country or of the world, to look at how we arrive at an accommodation between the changes that are inevitably going to occur, and the best response from a community point of view. So with that, let me go back to the strategic plan, we need to think carefully about what connections we can make to the President's Time and Change strategic plan. We need to look internally at, how well are we supporting our international students and scholars, the basic units in our office? How well are the gateways operating? How well are our study abroad programs working? What kinds of new partnerships might we pursue that address some of these challenges, as illustrated by the global phenomenon of trade, migration, and disease, and therefore reinforce the traditional land grant mission of The Ohio State University that's always been committed to solving problems, no matter how complicated they might be, but which have a different form in nature today? And I have convened a steering committee of deans and senior leaders, charged by the Provost to look at this question of the connection to Time and Change, to investigate, how do we lift ourselves up to the next highest level within the Office of International Affairs, as illustrated by the various activities; and when we think about this, the faculty are the key. If we're trying to prepare students for the world, the faculty are the main touchstones for those students as they learn. If the faculty are pursuing international research, are there ways to encourage that to be embedded in the curriculum, that gets at this internationalization of the curriculum or curricular internationalization question? I'd like to see the university develop many more global themes within its curricular offerings for all of our students, general education and otherwise, because every student is going to be involved in some activity that relates to another part of the world, and we hear this over and over again, from government, from the nonprofit sector, and from business.

J Janet Box-Steffensmeier 14:19

I'm Janet Box-Steffensmeier, Interim Executive Dean and Vice Provost for the Ohio State University College of Arts and Sciences. Did you know that 23 of our programs are nationally ranked as top 25 programs, with more than ten of them in the top ten? That's why we say the

College of Arts and Sciences is the intellectual and academic core of the Ohio State University. Learn more about the college at artsandsciences.osu.edu.

D David Staley 14:45

How would you compare Ohio State's global or internationalization efforts? How would you compare Ohio State to other institutions?

G Gil Latz 14:52

I think like other schools in the Big 10, which are typically our peers, were doing well. I think that we could do better, I'd like to see us not just do well, but be the best of the best. The Provost likes to say that he seeks more international research by the campus, he knows that we are obviously doing quite a lot now, and one way he puts that is to say, when we're talking about a global research question in the United States, I want people to be asking for Ohio State to be in the room for that conversation. And I think we do need to develop more of an identity and demonstrate more applied research findings in order to lift ourselves up to that level of recognition.

D David Staley 15:36

I note that over the last few years, and this has been going on at least for five, six, seven years, there's been a decline in the number of international students coming to the United States. Does this trend alarm you?

G Gil Latz 15:47

It concerns everyone in the field, and the explanation for it is quite complex.

D David Staley 15:52

That was my next question, what's... what is causing this?

G Gil Latz 15:55

We have a dramatically increasing body of students around the world who want to seek education in other countries. So, when I was in university, this was a relatively small number, this has increased by many millions since then. And it reflects the emergence of the middle class in a variety of countries beyond the developed world and in the developing world, and it represents the importance of education to the kinds of jobs that are going to be available in a global economy, as found in the United States and in most other countries. So, there's an increasing demand on the part of students, there's been an increasing supply on the part of countries. So, there are more students who want to go to Canada or New Zealand or Australia or Britain now than has been traditionally been the case, and we don't have the same corner on

the market that we used to have. So, I think that's one objective fact to put out there, that there's more competition, and there is greater demand, students have more choices. I think it's also true that the current geopolitical climate has had an effect on the attractiveness of our country. It starts with whether we are a welcoming country to visitors, whether they're students or immigrants, and that has changed under the current administration in comparison to previous years. We have rhetoric in Washington, D.C. that identifies people coming from outside the United States as potential harm-doers, and that is a brush that paints all visitors to the United States, that then creates media reporting, which leads parents and their students to think in new ways about, well, is the United States the best option? I don't think there's any question that we still have the best educational system in the world, but I do think there are more and more questions out there as to whether we're as welcoming and supportive of international students. I think Ohio State is approaching this in a very enlightened way, we have a better than average support systems for our international students in my estimations, and we're seeking to improve them all the time. I think that we have, in our mission, global engagement, as I said earlier, and that's an attractive quality for these international students, and it permeates the openness that we have toward them and the way in which we encourage them upon arrival. And if you look at the trends, we're doing a little bit better than our peers with regard to the declining numbers of international students coming to the United States and holding steady. So, I'm optimistic about the future.

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David Staley 18:37

I'm interested in the research that you've conducted on Japanese modernization, and I note that you draw upon Japanese history in particular, in this research, and that interests me, of course, as a historian.

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Gil Latz 18:48

Yes. I'll tell a little story. I went to Japan as a study abroad student, so my life was changed through that experience, as is true of most study abroad students, in my case, going to Japan in ways that -

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David Staley 19:01

As an undergraduate?

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Gil Latz 19:02

As an undergraduate, in ways that were immediate and unforeseen. So, in the immediate experience, I realized that the world wasn't like the United States, and I had to learn to think and behave in a different way because I was in a different culture. But in the long term, it planted some questions in my mind, which played out in a number of interesting ways. Once I got back to the United States and graduated, I worked for a couple of years in Indiana, where I'm from, for land use planning, county government office, which was in charge of creating, for example, a strategic plan for the county and guiding growth through zoning policy. And I kept asking myself, I wonder why the landscape of the Midwest looks so different from the landscape

of Japan. And it wasn't only the physical landscape, it was the cultural landscape. It was the way villages were laid out, you know, the typical case would be, you'd have an agglomerated village in Japan, and you have independent farmers living on their farms, and they're distributed quite differently if you look at the pattern. So I wondered about all of that, and it eventually led me back to graduate school - this is a very abbreviated version of the story - initially to ask a question at the Master's level about American land use practices. And after completing that, I was so enthralled with graduate school, I was at the University of Chicago, I proposed going on to the PhD. program, going back to my interest in Japan and looking at an agricultural question there, which would, by definition, be very different because it's predominantly irrigated agriculture, which relies not upon water from the sky, which is typically the case, not completely in the Midwest, and instead relies upon the distribution of water in fields. And that's what I looked at in my dissertation research, was government policy investments to modernize the agricultural irrigated rice production sector in Japan. But as I went into my teaching career, I found myself asking more and more historical questions, I couldn't really make sense of the present. I was generally familiar with the 20th century, but I wanted to know what the precedents were to the 20th century as a way of understanding the reality that we find ourselves in it, whether it's Japan and the United States. And that's the background to this study that I now do in Japan, which looks at traditions of philanthropy. I'm very interested in civil society and how that idea grew in a country that not so long ago, prior to 1868, was futile. It modernized very quickly, as we know, it developed a democratic system of government and imported concepts of capital and Western forms of economic development, grafted those on to their own traditions. And for a time, challenged the United States, now is still the third largest country in the world in terms of its gross national product. These questions of how individuals made that transformation, how they felt part of change, intrigued me, and that's the background of some of the work that I'm doing with the study of the philanthropic notion of giving to causes, nongovernmental causes, to make a difference, to make the world, to make your community a better place.

D

David Staley 19:05

And thank you for that nice plug for history. I noticed, of course, you've taught students at all sorts of levels, but I was drawn in particular, two courses that you teach, first of all, what is transpacific leadership, what is this course?

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Gil Latz 22:35

This course came out of the work that I did in Japan and the United States in philanthropy, and it argued that leadership emerges in unusual ways. If we look at the President of the Sony Corporation, who's very famous, Akio Morita, or if we look at some of the early leaders of Japan, one of whom is Eiichi Shibusawa. These are people who saw a need to be more than simply a businessman; they were trying to make their country into a modern competitive power, but they knew that values had to also be inserted into that discussion. And at least in the research I've done on transpacific leadership, focusing on the other side of the Pacific, these values have to do with the public good as well as the private good. And we have great leaders in the United States, if you look at the history of philanthropy, the Rockefeller example, the Carnegie example. These were all people who came out of the business world, but they also had a tremendous interest in the public good, or the common good, and what are the roots of, of that value system? That's what we were trying to explore in the course on transpacific leadership; in

other words, these are people coming out of different cultural and social and historical environments, but they had certain common denominators when it came to values that led them to transcend their place in society and encourage others to do more than they might otherwise do.

D David Staley 24:07

In which department have you taught that course, is that out of geography, is that out of...?

G Gil Latz 24:11

That course was a transdisciplinary course.

D David Staley 24:14

Excellent.

G Gil Latz 24:15

It wasn't so much a geography course, I must admit it was more of a business course and a public policy course

D David Staley 24:21

No worries there. And so, are those similar themes in the course you've taught on culture and philanthropy?

G Gil Latz 24:26

Yes. This, of course, is an even deeper dive, because you can look at philanthropic traditions - and they're found everywhere in the world, they often have a religious basis - and the question that these religions often ask is, what are my obligations beyond myself, you know, and they often relate to a definition of what it means to be a human being. And all the major religious traditions have this philosophy, but the way in which they are acted out differ from country to country, so there might be more of a social justice theme in the West than you would find in some of the traditional Asian or Middle Eastern religions, but there might be more of a helping hand for the poor through religious activity as the dominant theme in Eastern and non-Western religions. So, we wanted to make sure that students who graduated from this class, and this was a class in our School of Philanthropy at Indiana University, understood that there were unique aspects to philanthropy in the United States, including a tax system that gives us a benefit if we contribute to charity. But at the same time, there are similarities across the world.

D David Staley 25:07

D David Staley 25:37

Well, see, I tend to think of philanthropy as a uniquely American sort of phenomenon, and the suggestion here is that's not the case?

G Gil Latz 25:44

I think it's a uniquely American phenomenon in a couple of ways which, to reinforce your thought, one is that we are among the most charitable people in the world, there are all sorts of statistics that reinforce this or reflect this. And I also think that we're unusual in that we've set up a non-governmental way in which to effect change for the benefit of the public good. But it's not unique to the United States, and there's a non-governmental track or set of activities that can be found in most countries. And then, there are religious examples of giving that are well established throughout history, and that is a form of philanthropy or that's a root cause or impetus for philanthropy as well.

D David Staley 26:30

Gil Latz. Thank you.

G Gil Latz 26:31

Thank you.

E Eva Dale 26:33

Voices from the Arts and Sciences is produced and recorded at The Ohio State University College of Arts and Sciences Technology Services studio. Sound engineering by Paul Kotheimer, produced by Doug Dangler. I'm Eva Dale.