

# Drapers' Lecture: Queen Mary University London, 14 November 2024

## The UK global research university in turbulent times

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### [The UK global research university in turbulent times: *The Drapers' Lecture QMUL, 14 November 2024*]

I warmly thank you for this kind welcome. I am deeply honoured to give the Drapers' Lecture for 2024, grateful to the University and especially Stephanie Marshall for the invitation.

### [The UK global research university in turbulent times – *contents slide*]

This is the order I will follow. First, I draw out the global and international side of universities, arguing that this has always been inherent. Second, I present the evolution of the UK global research university in three parts. In the first two parts I reflect on research universities all over the world, their golden age from 1990 to 2016, and the transition to partial deglobalisation and more assertive states in 2016-2024. The last part discusses the current predicament of the global research university in the UK. I close with thoughts about where we go from here. I will do all this without using fake news, fictional narratives, conspiracy theories, deep fake images, or the other devices that make communications compelling and persuasive, sell products and win elections. We'll see how that goes.

### [Universities are both local-national and global]

The university is a social institution which at its core is dedicated to learning and teaching, certification on educational grounds, and scholarship and research, which all require immersion in structured knowledge. Much more is wrapped around that core. The hallmark of the university is *multiplicity*, the way it combines a vast array of heterogeneous worldviews, missions, agendas, fields of knowledge, structures, projects, internal groupings and external stakeholders. It does so by compromising sufficiently to bring in each without upsetting the whole. The most important compromise, foundational to the institution, is *spatial*. The university lives in two different kinds of space. On one hand it is local, city-based and national. On the other hand, it is international and global. It is place-bound, and it is universal, in the forms of knowledge, and its practical reach. Its knowledge and people move freely across borders. The university combines two mega-missions, two identities. We stitch them together and pretend it's seamless, but the combination always has to be worked on.

This dual spatiality is not new. Graduates from the Imperial academies in China, the first higher education, were sent by the state to administer localities all over the country. The scholarly Buddhist monasteries of Northern India, such as Taxila, Vikramashila, and Nalanda, that flourished between 500 BCE and 1200 CE, had visiting scholars and students from all

over Asia. Mobility was part of the scholarly madrassas in mosques in centres such as Damascus, Cordoba and Samarkand at the apogee of medieval Islamic scholarship, and this dual spatiality was also part of the early European universities.

**[Local/national and global – *Bologna picture*]**

The first European university was Bologna in Italy in 1088 CE, followed, among those that have lasted, by Paris, Oxford and Cambridge, and Salamanca in Spain. They were founded by Papal charters in a Catholic Church with European reach. Latin was the shared language, knowledge was couched in universal terms, students and teachers could go anywhere. Teaching was led by ‘Masters’, faculty with a qualification. When the University of Toulouse opened in France in 1229 the Papal decree stated that its Masters could teach in any other university without further examination. This normalised international mobility.

**[Local/national and global – *Bologna picture – two circles*]**

While the European universities began in the church, they became legally incorporated, with partial autonomy from all of the church, city and state. This partial autonomy was strengthened by their universality and mobility, their global identity. This was the foundation on which von Humboldt built in 1810 with his blueprint for the University of Berlin, which was *the* shaping moment in the evolution of the research university.

The Humboldtian university served the state, on the basis of institutional autonomy and freedom to teach, learn and research. The doctoral university model spread through Germany and within 66 years it had reached Johns Hopkins in the United States. From there it radiated across the world. In the more seventy countries housing research universities with scientific capacity, both their embeddedness within national laws, regulation, policies and funding, *and* their global identity, are strongly entrenched. And the partial autonomy continues: contested, ambiguous, variable in place and time, but integral to university, protecting its capacity to maintain the functions of learning, teaching, certification, scholarship and research. University autonomy is continuously negotiated.

**[Local/national and global – *Bologna picture – Hannah and Emma quote*]**

Two spaces, two missions, two identities, both necessary to the university. Yet they are heterogenous; they have distinct trajectories, and are impacted by differing conditions and causal relations. The local identity of the university does not wholly determine the global identity, and vice versa. Nor are they a dialectical pair that ultimately synthesises into a single identity. They are a non dialectical pair held together by strenuous effort. Maintaining them in balance is essential to the autonomy of the university. But universities are continually vulnerable to a double set of changes, on one hand local and national, on the other hand international and global. So they are wide open to the present upsurge in nativist forms of bounded nationalism, and geo-political conflict. But I’m jumping ahead of my story.

**[How we got here: (1) golden age of the global research university 1990-2016]**

As I said, the story is in three parts. The first is the golden age of the global research university; the high time of *globalisation*, meaning convergence and integration at the level of the world as a whole, and *internationalisation*, meaning the expansion of relations in higher education that spanned national borders. This period had limitations - the narrow economic terms in which policy was couched, and the neocolonial relations between Anglosphere universities and the global East and South - but it was also creative, productive, and transformative. There was a tremendous expansion in global and international activity. That process is still rolling out, though the global space is now more contested.

**[World growth of tertiary enrolment: 1970-2022]**

The golden age began with the end of the Cold War, Pax Americana in geo-politics, and the Internet, facilitating the Americanising globalisation of trade, finance, communications, culture, higher education and research. The proliferation of global practices coincided with two other tendencies: the accelerated growth of tertiary participation over most of the world, which continues in most countries; and the adoption of neoliberal governance and management. Higher education was imagined as a competition between firms producing education and research as quasi-commodities for the 'global knowledge economy'.

**[Growing activities in the global space 1990-2016]**

Neoliberalism did not create globalisation, but they articulated each other, converging in the primacy of economic ideas in higher education policy, profit-based student mobility in the Anglosphere, and the performative ordering of universities in global ranking.

The Internet put every university instantly in touch with every other. Their websites taken together created a simulated global university world. Air travel was cheapening. All forms of mobility, connection and collaboration were enabled. The Internet opened online learning and certification, from MOOCs to doctoral degrees. In university strategy, most were, as usual, cautious and imitative, but there were startling initiatives like the early branch campuses in East and Southeast Asia, New York University's first degree in three countries, the global e-universities (which failed) and MOOCs which became widely used, and multi-country consortia of 10-50 universities. Singapore's Global Schoolhouse made an innovation hub. European nations built a distinctive Higher Education Area and the Framework research programmes, with their cross-country teams, pumped up regional research capacity. The ASEAN countries adopted regional recognition and mobility protocols. Some global developments were fostered by governments, others by universities themselves.

**[Total cross-border/foreign tertiary students (millions)]**

Students crossing the border for education of a year or more grew by over 5 per cent a year, from 1.96 million in 1997 to 6.37 million in 2021. There was even more spectacular growth of TNE. Two in five onshore students entered Anglosphere systems, often paying a profit margin. The non-commercial element was larger, subsidised, free degrees and Erasmus in Europe and Japan. Worldwide competition for graduate talent was mediated by scholarships. By 2021, 22 per cent of doctoral students in OECD countries crossed national borders, facilitating global integration in research. The networked global science system formed in the early 1990s, and in the natural sciences, global work was soon the epistemic leader. Science papers have also grown by over 5 per cent a year and now exceed three million, and almost one in every four papers has international co-authors.

British universities were well positioned to build their international role in the Golden Age. English was the global language, the US research university, which was close to British templates, was the world leader; science was strong; and national policy saw neo-colonial and soft power benefits in internationalisation. The UK enrolled the second largest number of cross-border students, reaching three quarters of a million in 2022-23, sustained the largest TNE sector, and became third largest producer of high citation science after China and the US. In the Leiden ranking of individual universities, based on highly cited papers in 2019-2022, the UK had seven in the top 100 and three in the top 15. The whole Russell group, and many other institutions, became visible, recognised, attractive global research universities. At a time when national regulation was becoming more centralised and prescriptive, the global space offered universities more autonomous room to move.

**[QMUL in Leiden ranking for 2010-2021: top 5% papers on the basis of citation rate, by discipline group]**

The Golden Age saw Queen Mary University of London become a significant global player. By 2022-23 it had 9,260 international students in HESA, 34.7 per cent of the intake, one in every three, well above the England-wide proportion of 25.8 per cent.

The table shows Queen Mary in high citation global science as measured by top 5 per cent papers in Web of Science over the four years 2019-2022. The University was in the world 200 in volume of top 5 per cent papers and 15<sup>th</sup> in UK. It was 8<sup>th</sup> in UK and 125<sup>th</sup> in the world in mathematics and computing research, and 12<sup>th</sup> in UK and 135<sup>th</sup> in the world in biomedicine and health sciences. This measure favours large universities. The middle column is a pure quality measure, the *proportion* of all papers in the top 5 per cent. At Queen Mary 9.1 per cent of papers were in the high citation group, 0.1 per cent below Imperial and above UCL and KCL. In this period, researchers affiliated to Queen Mary published 9,896 papers with international collaborators, 71.9 per cent of papers, again ahead of UCL and KCL.

**[Conditions fostering internationalisation]**

The Golden Age internationalisation did not 'just grow'. The conditions were unusually favourable. These conditions were of their time, and not permanent. The most important condition was the almost unanimous support, in UK policy and across the world, for any and every cross border link, normative internationalisation. Governments, media and public organisations were committed to liberal capitalist globalisation. The EU, OECD, UN agencies and WTO all legitimated liberal openness and global convergence. Until the 2008 recession in the US, and the mid 2010s in most countries, governments saw integrated open markets as key to prosperity, and social, cultural and educational engagement as facilitating capital accumulation. Every increase in international students and cross-border research collaboration was seen as intrinsically positive.

**[Conditions fostering internationalisation – *with text*]**

Governments in Euro-America were comfortable with global openness in higher education because it was structured and limited. It was Western dominated and partly neo-Imperial in form. Commercial international education secured transfers of capital and talent from the global East and South to the North and West, in continuity with colonialism. Global academic and scientific networks were technically open but culturally closed, confined to the English language and the Euro-American episteme, dominated by leading Anglo-American universities and reproducing their deeply felt assumptions of superiority. Further, neoliberalism was a guarantor. Governments believed that shaping higher education as a competitive consumer market in a knowledge economy would optimise its relevant and efficient contribution to national economic performance. Leaders in higher education were mostly comfortable with this. The knowledge economy legitimated the sector, encouraging it to expand in size and status. Its autonomy was maintained, though refashioned as corporate autonomy. While regulated by ordinal indicators like the REF and rankings, universities were free to determine their programmes provided these were economically viable.

It was all of a piece. Cross-border student mobility would foster graduates committed to international business in future. Cosmopolitan cultural inclusion in education would optimise world market reach. Free flowing science would maximise innovation and productivity all round, while talent flowed into global centres able to use it profitably. All was expected, at least in the Anglo-American world, to foster Anglo-American global power. But the commitment of nation-states to liberal internationalisation could hold only while global economic openness was seen to benefit capital accumulation, Pax Americana provided a safe neo-imperial space in which Euro-American countries could focus on economic goals rather than national security, and electorates would continue to tolerate economic globalisation, and cosmopolitan internationalisation in education.

**[The golden age has led to a multi-polar higher education world: the non-west is rising]**

However, Western advocates of globalisation did not anticipate that the Golden Age would so quicken the non-Western world, in economy, state-building, education and science, that

the global hierarchy began to change. The gap between Euro-America and the non-Western world shrank. China's economy passed the US in size on a Purchasing Power Parity basis, though the US retained global economic leadership through finance. India, Indonesia, Iran, Brazil, South Korea, Turkey and other non-Western powers accumulated size and momentum. The Euro-American dominated world gave way to a multi-polar world. This meant that the Euro-American West no longer controlled the world. Not every one in the West yet understands this, but it is well understood outside the West.

In participation in tertiary education, East Asia and Latin America have moved towards European levels. China's 2023 the Gross Tertiary Enrolment Ratio of 75 per cent was just behind 79 per cent in the US. Participation remains low in Sub-Saharan Africa, Pakistan and Bangladesh but India has a national target of 50 per cent in 2035 and participation is climbing in Southeast Asia, Central Asia and many Arabic-speaking countries.

**[Science systems have spread to middle income countries and some low income countries]**

Participation in open global science has facilitated higher education capacity in middle income and some low-income nations. China now has twice as much published science in English as the US. Between 2003 and 2022 India's output of papers grew by 11.4 per cent per annum, Iran's by 15.6 per cent and Turkey's by 7.5 per cent. Output in East and Southeast Asia will soon exceed the whole of Europe and North America. Science has moved from the rich world to the middle-income and some low-income countries. Of the nations producing more than 5,000 science papers a year, 16 have income per head below the world average, including Ethiopia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. Science and higher education are no longer a preserve of the Anglosphere, Europe and Japan. The global diversification of capacity in research is now in tension with the old neo-Imperial ordering of universities. Models of higher education from the non-West will start to gain traction, and pressures will build for multilingual publishing of global journals.

**[China's universities now lead in STEM research]**

Multi-polarity is also about China. Between 2003 and 2022 papers with authors in China increased by 13 per cent a year, from 89,000 to 899,000, and Chinese research universities moved to number one in high citation science in STEM. In top 5 per cent papers in 2019-2022 China had nine of the world's first 14 universities. Seven years ago there were *no* Chinese universities in this list. China is now the overwhelming world leader in STEM research. In physical sciences and engineering, it had the top 13 universities, with MIT 14<sup>th</sup>. In mathematics and computing China again had 13 universities of the top 14, the other being Nanyang in Singapore. China is behind the US and UK in biomedical and health sciences but beginning to catch up. In those disciplines it has three of the top 14 universities.

**[Graphic of fragmenting world]**

So the Golden Age was a win-win all round – or was it? That depends where you sit. To me global multipolarity is very positive. But what is clear is that in the last decade the Golden Age conditions have fragmented, in higher education and everywhere else.

**[How we got here: (2) partial deglobalisation and the university 2016-2024]**

The present era is less favourable to universities and cross-border activity. There are continuing global systems in the economy, communications and science, with ongoing integration and convergence in science and education. For example, South Korea and New Zealand recently joined Horizon Europe. But we are now in an era of partial deglobalisation, geopolitical destabilisation and episodic disruption of universities, mobility and cooperation.

**[Changing conditions for higher education]**

The first term Trump term started the global trend to economic protectionism. It is not just Trump in the US. The reversal on economic globalisation is bipartisan. International trade seems less profitable for American capital. The roles of multinationals, global supply chains and offshoring are declining. There are also political and cultural factors. I think the rise of the non-West, pushing through the old colonial hierarchy and white supremacy, has been a key factor in generating Western anxiety about globalisation. In the US it is widely believed that China profited more from global openness and closure must be in American interests. In both the US and UK free trade is opposed in manufacturing districts hallowed out by automation and austerity. Both the elections in 2024 were contests for those votes. For government trade maximisation is no longer number one priority. It is not surprising that the UK is sacrificing education export earnings to accommodate resistance to migration.

**[Resistance to migration – *no text*]**

The pushback against globalisation is widespread in the West though not the world as a whole. As you know, this pushback is expressed in terms of singular nativist identity, which is very bad for culturally mixed populations, cosmopolitan higher education, and all cross-border mobility. The issue that concentrates and amplifies nativism is migration.

**[Resistance to migration – *with text*]**

There is no statistical evidence that migration is increasing, or that the share of migrants who are refugees is increasing. It's the politics that have changed. Opposition to migration surged in Europe after the 2015 migration crisis. Populists play on fears of downward social mobility among people who are struggling. With little prospect of improvement, they fear being displaced by outsiders who are ranked below them. Tough migration regimes have been introduced in Germany, France, the Netherlands, Sweden and Finland, and we know what Trump has promised. Still, governments do little to reduce permanent migration because low paid migrants are crucial to a capitalist labour force. When governments want statistical reductions in migration, the easy target is international students.

**[Nativism's payout in higher education: barriers to international mobility – *without text*]**

The central role of migration resistance in national politics, its status as a touchstone issue, is fundamentally undermining of internationalisation in higher education.

**[Nativism's payout in higher education: barriers to international mobility – *with text*]**

The payout to nativism has been a succession of unprecedented government interventions in international student mobility, beginning with Brexit. Both sides of UK politics have refused to support a new inward mobility scheme from Europe to replace Erasmus +, though the UK subsidises outward mobility by UK students. Both Netherlands and Denmark are concerned about the cost of inward EU students. Denmark has reduced international students in English language programmes. Norway has abolished its scholarship programme in the global South. In 2023 UK, Canada and Australia all announced large reductions in international student numbers despite the major financial problems this created for universities. In each case the real political driver is electoral resistance to migration.

**['New cold war' decoupling in science and higher education]**

Then there is geo-politics. The Russia-Ukraine war triggered a flood of faculty and students from each country, decimated Ukrainian universities and isolated Russia's. Putin wants to cut academic contact between Russia and Euro-America, as in Soviet times. China does not want to cut ties with the West, but there the geo-political boot is on the other foot. The West wants to cut ties with China.

It is a sad story. In quantity terms partnerships between US and Chinese researchers have been the most productive in world science. Surveys show that researchers in both countries strongly want to maintain cooperation. But the number of joint papers is falling. Trump's 2018 China initiative was marked by aggressive and discriminatory investigations of scientists with joint appointments and projects, many American citizens of Chinese descent. Nearly all of the 150 prosecutions failed, but the innocent parties were damaged. A survey led by Jenny Lee found that 20 per cent of American citizen scientists of Chinese descent had broken ties with China after the China Initiative began, and 12 per cent of other American scientists. Visas to enter US are restricted, not only in security sensitive areas.

**[Problems of a zero-sum approach in research]**

Biden stopped the China initiative but maintained the hostile environment, with body searches and other border harassment of Chinese faculty and students holding valid visas at the point of their return to the US. In 2012 China shared in 47 per cent of internationally collaborative science papers in the US. In 2022 it was 32 per cent. In February 2019 there were 1,219 scheduled direct plane flights between China and the US; in February this year there were 269 such flights. Contact is breaking down.



**[Costs of decoupling]**

The US should “focus less on keeping China down and more on pushing itself ahead”, states *The Economist*. But instead the U.S. State Department is stepping up pressure on the EU and Western countries to monitor, securitise and restrict their China ties. Collaboration is now hedged with extra layers of risk management. Hostility towards China is building in the UK government. Trump will be more aggressive than Biden. The non-Western world has not joined the decoupling movement. But it is harming higher education and science.

Governmental interventions that destabilise or limit international people mobility or research cooperation are especially problematic for us because they threaten the global identity of higher education. They undermine its essential dual spatial character, its double mission, dragging it back towards a solely local and national orientation. Autonomy and the double mission are interdependent. If one is eroded, this tends to undermine the other.

**[Governments becoming more assertive – *without text*]**

The common pattern in these interventions is the greater willingness of governments to assert themselves regardless of university interests and autonomy. This has a larger meaning than the global mission alone. Many nations are becoming more controlling of universities and science, whether seen as tools of global competitiveness, or dangers to the state.

**[Governments becoming more assertive – *with text*]**

A recent paper by Turnbull, Wilson and Agoston called ‘Revaluing and devaluing higher education beyond neoliberalism’ throw light on the present policy era. They find that governments are more impatient with autonomous decisions by universities and want to more directly secure employability and ‘job-ready graduates’, as a recent Australian policy states. The OECD supports micro-credentials, and sees degree programmes as more in the interests of universities than students or the economy.

**[Trump’s election foreshadows more intensive culture wars – *without text*]**

Populist critiques have even more transformative implications for the essential mission of higher education and science, including their global relations. Certain governments are moving on the inner core of learning, knowledge and research, for example the curriculum prescriptions in Florida and the prohibition of gender studies in Hungary.

**[Trump’s election foreshadows more intensive culture wars – *with text*]**

In Arizona a State Senate bill prohibits the use of public funds to address climate change and allows state residents to file lawsuits to enforce the prohibition. In Trump’s second term the US universities will be targeted, as stated by Vice-President CD Vance. The strategic agenda of conservative populism is to embed value conflicts in higher education, facilitating repeated incursions into institutional autonomy and faculty control of knowledge, so as to

deauthorise university leaders and enable a wholesale cultural restructuring. In the UK Reform will focus on Culture Wars. To avoid being outflanked the Tory party, egged on by the tabloids and GB News, will follow, mainstreaming the critique of universities. The populist right will not try to compromise with the universities, and the universities be unable absorb populist critiques in the manner they have absorbed other social currents in the past. The politicisation of the universities will not be reversed.

**[The mission of the university is up for re-negotiation]**

The new willingness of states to intervene in higher education, coupled with the prospect of multiple populist campaigns, places in question the national embeddedness of the sector in government and the population. There is no natural constituency for the Humboldtian model, aside from ourselves. We need to build the public case for free intellectual inquiry.

**[Governments want a more national mission, less global – like this:**

In this environment the global mission is especially problematised. If we were to follow the present political logic we would place more emphasis on the national and local mission, and less on global relations and rankings, research cooperation, and international students. In theory the local-national mission does not have to conflict with the global mission. They do conflict in the present system because neither are funded properly.

**[How we got here: (3) specific challenges in UK]**

In the UK we have yet to see blatant interference in the curriculum or science as in Florida, Arizona or Hungary. But our universities have a special problem with internationalisation, because of their exceptional dependence on high international student fees.

**[Revaluation and devaluation in the UK – *no text*]**

Turnbull and colleagues argue we are in a post neoliberal era. This does not mean the 2012 market is giving way to social democracy. Rather, both the governments focused on the economy, and culture warriors, want to supplement neoliberalism with direct intervention.

**[Revaluation and devaluation in the UK – *with text*]**

They are disillusioned with the outcomes of a quasi-market in which universities have autonomy in course provision and students study what they want. Prestige competition in neoliberal markets has not delivered courses more tailored to the economy. It has led to expansion not efficiency, continued enrolment in ‘unproductive’ courses, and not enough STEM. On this path the next step would be to limit numbers in arts and humanities (the Australian government raised fees in the humanities to deter students, though it did not work) or, if the culture warriors are in charge, to ban ‘unsuitable’ courses. Turnbull et al. note also a diminished appetite in UK for the expansion of university access and widening participation, fostered by the long-standing elite conservative belief that too many people go to university. Abandoning equity is no more a Labour theme than are the culture wars, but

the government may encourage some transfer of university enrolments to further education without adequately funding FE, fulfilling the conservative agenda.

Turnbull and colleagues do not discuss the global mission. It has been undergoing reevaluation since Brexit. And this is integral to the specific challenge in UK.

**[Governments want a more national mission, less global – like this:]**

I have said that if we tailor our trajectory to the present political logic, universities would be both more specifically local and national, and also less global.

**[But in UK funding incentives prioritise global more than ever before]**

There's no doubt our universities need to strengthen the local and national mission, to more effectively engage the whole community. But our funding incentives are driving us aggressively in precisely the opposite direction, pulling us away from the local and national which is radically under-funded. We are ever-more dependent on international student fees, and hence on the global prestige of our research, which determines global rankings.

**[Income (£s billion) from non EU international students compared to income from UK resident students: England 2016-17 to 2022-23]**

Since 2017 the domestic fee has lost 30 per cent in real value. The £285 increase picks up only a small part of this. In the year after the Brexit referendum, 2016-17, income from non-EU international students was 39 per cent of domestic fee income. By 2022-23 that ratio was 74 per cent. Note also that while the international share of students rose sharply, EU student entry halved, diminishing cultural diversity. Yet now the international fee growth has been arbitrarily halted by the block on dependents. We are left struggling, *in vain*, to secure an extreme mission balance that works *against* us as it undermines our social support. The economics of the UK global research university are totally out of whack with the politics.

**[Non-EU international student fees (average £22k per year) as a proportion of income: England only, 1994-95 to 2022-23 (%)]**

In England the proportion of income from non-EU students rocketed from 13 to 21 per cent in eight years. This again shows the lack of mission balance. The average international first-degree fee is £22,000. That shows the level of exploitation.

**[Proportion of all students at QMUL paying overseas fees 2019-20 to 2023-24 (%)]**

At Queen Mary in 2022-23, 47 per cent of students were fee-paying international students, including 5,424 TNE students in China.

**[Proportion of all students at QMUL paying overseas fees 2019-20 to 2023-24 (%) – with table]**

The University is not wrong to enrol large numbers of international students. The system settings demand exactly this. The alternative would be large scale programme cuts, job losses, and damaged research infrastructure. Under the present financial settings, plus the arbitrary ceiling on student visas, this could happen anyway.

**[Where we might go next]**

The universities are in a bad place. The financial position is the worst since the mid 1990s. Solutions need to go further than 'business as usual plus a £2,500 increase in student fees and no visa caps'. We need a new system framework

First, we must accept the 2012 full fee system is bankrupt in both economic and moral terms. Initially the fee was set high enough to deliver strong funding for three years, buying off the sector. But look at the key elements. Three quarters of first degree places are solely student funded. Students finance the *public goods* created in higher education, as well as the private goods. It is politically impossible for any government to maintain fees at the level of costs. The only solution is to return to mixed public and private funding, which is used by every other nation in the world, and was recommended by Augar in 2019. If government reduces the headline fee, lowering the level of unpaid student debt it subsidises, that releases resources that could be deployed as direct government grants.

Second, we need to partly decentralise policy and regulation to ground higher education institutions more effectively in society. I support those who advocate a more regional approach, in which higher education institutions plan and collaborate with FE, local government, local business and other organisations and stakeholders. Third and fourth, UK international education is fundamentally unhealthy. Universities are too dependent. It makes them economically and politically vulnerable and unstable. The level of fees is exploitative: only wealthy families have ready access. That would be shocking nationally, why is it OK internationally? We need a smaller programme, with a mixture of fees, scholarships and subsidies, more balance in the country mix, and incentives to bring back European students.

Finally, UK international education carries neo-colonial baggage. We sell ourselves by playing on perceptions that only English language education is truly global, our culture is superior, we are the bastion of science and critical thinking, and our universities the best in the world. This suppresses the languages, knowledge and dignity of the rest of humanity. To return to constructive globalisation, in a multi-polar higher education world, and bring the global mission to a more inclusive next level, we should spearhead efforts to open up multi-lingual global publishing. The software is there to do this and the development is long overdue.

**[sign off slide]**

Thank you kindly for listening, and I hope we have time for discussion.