

Dear international speakers, Iranian academics and higher education administrators, my colleagues and all other respected guests; Good morning and welcome to Internationalization of higher education seminar held by Tehran University of Medical Sciences.

I should extend my cordial thanks to all of our international guests for coming to Iran and also your valuable participation in this event. As I learned we have 16 international speakers from 9 countries. I also want to thank our colleagues from the University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain; for their contribution in sponsoring the seminar.

Internationalization is a reality in this era of human life. We are faced with different words like globalization, internationalization, cross border, borderless and so on. These are terms you will hear about more today and tomorrow and I just want to share my viewpoints on 3 selected topics very briefly, based on limited experience of TUMS in the past 5 years and what is happening in the higher education globally.

- 1- One aspect of internationalization is academic competition. Those universities who want to remain in this competition must keep good standards and seek for excellence. This is a universal benefit of internationalization that motivates academic society.
- 2- The second point is cultural aspect of internationalization. Mobility, which is one of the major pillars of the internationalization for both students and faculty members, facilitates inter- and transcultural exchanges. International communications with academic background create the opportunity of multi-lateral conversations and help all of us to learn more about other cultures. This will result in better understanding of the world for next generations, who will hopefully run high rank jobs in their home countries or at international levels.
- 3- From a totally different view, higher education is a big and competitive market nowadays. Market has its own rules and regulations which sometimes are imposed to educational environment. One of these rules is to make more benefits with more customers. This can be a good goal primarily but may become a negative point if financial benefit intervenes and commercialism comes up, so the quality problem will emerge and maintaining good standards may be at risk. The real example is some institutions that offer degrees without enough trainings and quality that is lower than even very low standards.

I'm sure you will have good discussions besides plenary lectures about these 3 topics among many other dimensions of international higher education and wish this seminar be useful for everybody working in the field.

I also hope you enjoy your time in the Capital of Islamic Republic of Iran; especially in April which is the best month to visit Tehran. Please accept my apologies for any possible shortcoming in our hosting during your stay with us, and thank you for your attention.