

IEU Thought Leadership Bulletin

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Article 1: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in Higher Education and Business

Author: Dr Robert Murray

In today's interconnected world, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) are widely spoken about as essential values. Governments, universities, and corporations publicly champion DEI through statements, pledges, and campaigns. Yet, while the conversation has gained momentum, translating words into concrete action has been far slower and more inconsistent.

The Case for Diversity

A diverse group of people brings varied perspectives, experiences, and problem-solving approaches. This richness of thought enhances creativity and improves decision-making. However, many institutions still struggle to move beyond symbolic representation. For instance, despite years of corporate pledges, a 2023 McKinsey report found that women and minorities remain significantly underrepresented in senior leadership across Fortune 500 companies. Similarly, while universities celebrate international stude...

Equity in Action

Equity means recognising unequal starting points and actively addressing them. While policies promoting fair opportunities exist, their outcomes often fall short. A striking example was the rollback of diversity hiring initiatives across several large technology firms in 2023–24. After committing billions of dollars to DEI efforts in 2020, major players like Google, Meta, and Twitter faced criticism for scaling back diversity teams during restructuring. This pattern demonstrates that equity is too often ...

Inclusion as Everyday Practice

Inclusion requires more than policy; it must be woven into daily culture. Yet, many organisations stop at formal initiatives without addressing underlying power dynamics. For example, employee surveys in global firms reveal that while DEI is frequently mentioned in strategy documents, many workers particularly women and ethnic minorities report exclusion from promotion pathways and decision-making. In academia, similar patterns emerge, with underrepresented faculty reporting slower career progression des...

The Global Outlook

As societies become more mobile and digital, the urgency for DEI grows stronger. However, the recent scaling back of corporate DEI teams, combined with uneven progress in higher education, shows that current efforts remain fragile. DEI is too often celebrated in public discourse but underdelivered in practice.

For DEI to become a true driver of sustainable success, institutions and businesses must

accelerate action embedding equity in systems, setting measurable targets, and holding leadership accountable. Only by moving beyond words to genuine structural change will DEI shift from aspiration to real impact.

Article 2: Geopolitical Risks and the Challenges for Global Business

Author: Mr Lawrence Leslie

The global business landscape is increasingly dominated by geopolitical risk a volatile mix of trade disruptions, diplomatic rivalries, and strategic realignments that companies and institutions can no longer afford to ignore.

Strategic Turbulence: U.S. Tariffs and Global Pushback

In 2025, the second Trump administration launched sweeping tariffs under emergency powers, raising the U.S. average tariff rate from approximately 2.5% to nearly 27%, the highest in more than a century. Key developments include:

China–U.S. trade war escalations, with retaliatory tariffs pushing effective duties on Chinese imports above 140%, sparking global market turbulence. A federal appeals court ruling in August 2025 declared most of Trump's tariffs unlawful, citing that the International Emergency Economic Powers Act does not authorize such sweeping measures. Though still temporarily in effect, this legal battle has injected deep uncertainty into U.S. trade policy. India hit with 50% tariffs, after Washington condemned New Delhi's continued oil imports from Russia. This has triggered one of the worst trade crises between the U.S. and India in recent decades, straining defense cooperation and trade partnerships.

Emerging Dynamics: India, China, and the BRICS Realignment

As U.S. trade policy becomes unpredictable, new dynamics are emerging: India and China, despite long-standing mistrust, have recently signaled warming relations through trade talks and summit diplomacy. Analysts suggest this could form a new counterweight to U.S. dominance in Asia.

The BRICS alliance (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa— now joined by Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Indonesia, and the UAE) is pushing for green industrialization, stronger South–South cooperation, and reduced reliance on Western-controlled financial systems. Yet, internal contradictions remain. India and China continue to face unresolved border disputes, and not all BRICS members share identical strategic goals. This makes BRICS less of a unified bloc and more of a flexible platform to balance Western power.

Why This Matters for Business

These developments demonstrate how politics and economics are now inseparable.

Businesses must plan for:

Sudden policy shifts that change trade rules overnight.

Diplomatic friction that disrupts supply chains, contracts, and investments.

Uncertain alliances that can open or close market access depending on the geopolitical climate.

For small firms, these risks can be existential. For global corporations, they demand constant recalibration of strategy, supply chains, and partnerships.

Preparing Future Leaders: IEU's Role

At the International Entrepreneurship University (IEU), we recognise that tomorrow's entrepreneurs will build businesses in a world shaped by uncertainty and rapid political change. Our programmes embed geopolitical awareness, scenario planning, and strategic adaptability into the core of entrepreneurship education.

By combining entrepreneurship with an understanding of global risks, and aligning education with AI-driven foresight tools, IEU prepares graduates not only to survive but to thrive amid turbulence. The goal is clear: to empower leaders who can navigate complexity, anticipate disruption, and turn geopolitical challenges into opportunities for innovation and sustainable growth.

Article 3: Building Entrepreneurship Education with AI Alignment at IEU

Author: Dr A.K. Don

Entrepreneurship is evolving and fast. Traditional models are giving way to dynamic, tech-driven paradigms. Today's global education landscape is witnessing profound shifts in how entrepreneurship is taught and experienced. At IEU, we're at the heart of that evolution, aligning entrepreneurship education with AI and preparing students to lead in a complex, fast-changing world.

Global Shifts in Entrepreneurship Education

Educational institutions across the globe are rethinking how to equip students with entrepreneurial mindsets:

In India, Panjab University is rolling out a credit-based "Entrepreneurship Mindset" curriculum in over 200 affiliated colleges. Designed to foster real-world business skills such as leadership, financial literacy, and adaptability, the program emphasizes practical learning 30% of assessment stems from actual business outcomes, 70% from reflections and presentations.

In Kerala, India, reforms like 'Industry on Campus' and 'Connect Career to Campus' are aligning education with employment and entrepreneurial outcomes. Over 500 techno-business incubators and programs in AI, data science, and cybersecurity are preparing graduates to be not just employees, but job creators.

In Australia, UNSW's Michael Crouch Innovation Centre engages around 10,000 participants annually through workshops and startup pitching competitions, nurturing entrepreneurial curiosity and connecting students directly with venture funding.

AI: The Game-Changer in Entrepreneurship Education

AI integration into education is no longer optional, it's imperative:

The global AI in education market is forecasted to reach \$32 billion by 2030, growing at more than 30% annually. Generative AI is revolutionising entrepreneurship training by simulating business scenarios, generating ideas, and providing personalised feedback to students. Countries like South Korea are embedding AI into their national curricula, offering AI-focused electives, digital textbooks, and innovation labs as part of mainstream education. Business schools such as American University's Kogod School of Business have successfully integrated AI across all courses in under six months, showing how quickly institutions can transform.

Why This Matters for Today's Entrepreneurs

AI is a competitive necessity. Industry leaders like Steve Blank argue that startups which fail to embed AI are already obsolete. Generative AI is also democratising entrepreneurship by lowering barriers of cost, coding expertise, and geography opening the field to diverse

founders and sustainable ventures worldwide.

IEU: Where AI Meets Entrepreneurship Education

At IEU, our vision aligns with these global shifts. We embed AI into teaching through immersive simulations, live case studies, and digital entrepreneurship labs, all paired with a focus on ethics and sustainability. Our programmes prepare students not only to master tools, but to lead ventures responsibly in a volatile world.

As a French-based online university with a global reach, IEU connects students from across continents, encouraging them to collaborate on AI-powered projects that tackle both local and international challenges. Our mission is to shape entrepreneurs who are innovative, resilient, and globally impactful leaders ready to turn AI's potential into meaningful, sustainable change.

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