



CLICK HERE FOR THE WINNERS OF THE THE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT AWARDS (THELMAS) AND FOR PHOTOS OF THE EVENING

# Anglo-American universities must lead the way to a 'global civil society', says report

29 July 2009

By [Hannah Fearn](#)

**Transatlantic institutions to combat 'centripetal forces' of globalisation. Hannah Fearn reports**

The UK and US must build on their "primacy" in world higher education to lead the development of a "global civil society", binding countries together through common values and principles.

That is the message of a new report, *Higher Education and Collaboration in a Global Context*, commissioned by Gordon Brown and drawn up following conversations between leading academics from both sides of the Atlantic.

The report, published today, states that the "special relationship" must continue but must no longer focus solely upon Anglo-American interests.

"The biggest challenge ahead is to focus on ways of extending the UK/US model to third locations," the report says. "This will enrich immensely the universities of both countries, foster the growth of an open, competitive and accessible higher education sector in other nations, and constitutes a vitally important form of soft diplomacy and power.

"Most critically, it will foster the development of a 'global civil society', which will bind universities and countries together through common values and principles, and counter the centripetal forces of the globalised era."

The "study group" that drew up the report included senior names such as Eric Thomas, vice-chancellor of the University of Bristol, and Katherine Fleming, vice-chancellor of New York University.

As part of an improved relationship with other countries, universities in the UK and the US should set up overseas campuses, the report says. Other recommendations include the creation of an "Atlantic Trust" to award scholarships to talented overseas students to study in the UK or the US, while helping Western students to move between the two countries.

The aim of universities on both sides of the Atlantic should be to help "build and support tomorrow's idea capitals and knowledge centres", it says. The report concludes that "a combination of UK and US universities in this joint effort would be a formidable one".

Rick Trainor, president of Universities UK and principal of King's College London, said: "Now, more than ever, collaboration across borders among our leading universities is absolutely necessary. The strength of the UK/US partnership, the longstanding pre-eminence of the two countries in the higher education sector and more recently the crisis in the global economy validate the case for deepened and internationalised collaboration."

John Sexton, president of New York University, said: "In the future, the UK/US higher education agenda must go beyond seeking simply greater mobility and partnership between the two. Instead, universities must focus on ways to expand the strengths of the UK/US model in multilateral ways to create a worldwide network of co-operation and excellence."