

THE GLOBAL IMPERATIVE: MAKING UB AN INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Report of the International Strategy Task Group

In today's global economy, and in a world of increasingly complex networks of human mobility, it is imperative for an institution of higher education to train students for the challenges and promises of the global community. It is also important for the institution to recognize and celebrate ethnic, cultural, and linguistic differences in its educational and scholarly mission. It is only through an educated global citizenship that we may reach a kind of international conscience that promotes justice, peace, and humanity while protecting culture and the environment in the academic pursuit of creativity and innovation: artistic, scientific, and technological.

The University at Buffalo, an international university situated at a major international border, is poised to address this very complex task, by expanding its leadership role in developing, promoting, and supporting international education and scholarship. This role is consistent with the mission of international education: fostering student appreciation of cultural, linguistic and social diversity around the world; facilitating scholarship in globalized research communities; and enhancing understanding among all the world's peoples.

In order to achieve these goals, the members of the International Education Task Group believe that the University at Buffalo must make substantial new investment in international education. The imperative of the moment and the University's excellent track record in international recruitment, overseas programs, and study abroad make this not just a necessary investment but an institutional strength. We must take best advantage of our assets; we must also acknowledge that there are significant structural impediments and disincentives and important lacunae in our array of international activities.

Our report consists of both findings and recommendations. Both are organized under three categories: **student experience**, the **faculty**, and the **institution**.

I. THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

FINDINGS

A major goal of higher education at both the undergraduate and graduate levels is to cultivate global awareness and competence in our students. Despite UB's strong international reputation and long history of international engagement, the Task Group has found that the university has had limited success in internationalizing its curriculum and affording a large number of students the opportunity to gain international experience. Therefore, in order to effectively prepare students for success in an increasingly globalized workforce and marketplace of the future, UB must make a major institutional commitment to infuse international content into UB courses, strengthen foreign language and area studies programs, provide a variety of meaningful international learning opportunities on campus, and make it possible for a much higher percentage of UB students to go overseas for study, research, service and work abroad programs. Internationalizing the student experience will require changes to UB's foreign language and General Education requirements and structural reforms to the delivery of foreign language instruction and support for area studies. While UB boasts a growing, diverse and high-quality international enrollment, the number of international student service staff has not increased. Many international students are not properly integrated into campus life. Further increases in enrollment will require expansion of international student services and the addition of new staff.

The internationalization of the student experience has been identified as a major priority by many leading research universities in the U.S. Harvard, for example, recently redesigned its General Education requirements to better address the global context of their core curriculum. Universities such as Michigan State University (MSU) and the University of Minnesota are achieving very ambitious study abroad participation rates through effective curricular integration of academic programs abroad and substantial financial support and other incentives for students going overseas. Many institutions are getting students involved in international programs during their first year of study through short-term education abroad programs like MSU's Freshman Seminars Abroad; UB has been doing this on a small scale in engineering for several years but should expand such opportunities to more freshmen, and take advantage of UB's proximity to Canada to initiate students in the international experience.

Increasing numbers of students are interested in earning formal recognition of their international studies and experiences in higher education — and thus of their successful acquisition of global skills and competence. A best practice in this regard is Georgia Tech's innovative "International Plan," a substantive and coherent set of specific undergraduate requirements — in foreign language, education abroad, international course work, and international extracurricular activities — that are formally recognized on their transcript and in a certificate of completion which they receive at graduation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to internationalize the UB student experience, the University must

1. integrate global perspectives across the length and breadth of the curriculum
 - a) internationalize teaching in every discipline by revising curriculum and funding proposals for new or revised courses;
 - b) where appropriate, incorporate/enhance international content and perspectives in General Education courses;
 - c) devise creative approaches to incorporate international experiences, international content, and language study in professional school curricula.
2. replace the current language requirement with a meaningful insistence on competence in a foreign language
 - a) implement proficiency requirements in select undergraduate programs;
 - b) phase in a language proficiency entrance requirement as an expectation for undergraduate admission and a higher level as a requirement for graduation;
 - c) make language competence a plus in graduate admissions and fellowship competition;
3. begin the internationalization of the student experience in the first year
 - a) require all entering students to have a passport and enclose a passport application with admissions awards;
 - b) incorporate travel to Canada in required freshman courses such as UB 101 and EAS 140;
 - c) include information about international opportunities in new student orientations
 - d) promote Discovery Seminars and Undergraduate Academies which emphasize international perspectives;
 - e) develop short-term introductory study abroad programs for freshmen;
 - f) provide guidance and encouragement for study abroad as part of mandatory freshman advisement.
4. require, enable, and recognize a range of international student experiences
 - a) identify and promote discipline-specific study abroad, service abroad, research abroad and international internship destinations; give priority to longer, more substantive programs abroad that are effectively integrated into students' academic programs
 - b) designate travel scholarships as an institutional development priority;
 - c) remove curricular impediments to study abroad (transfer, articulation, grading policies, Gen Ed equivalencies);

- d) involve students actively in the promotion of international study by conscientiously soliciting their feedback on the quality of all programs and utilizing returning students both in promotion of programs;
 - e) involve returning study abroad students in the intellectual life of the campus.
5. further internationalize extracurricular programming
- a) support and promote artistic, cultural, and athletic exchange activities, as well as cultural programming organized by international and ethnic student clubs, and encourage the participation of domestic students and the larger community in these activities;
 - b) enhance campus cable television to enable international news broadcasts and other international programming;
 - c) make available video-on-demand for international films;
6. award a formal certificate at graduation and/or the Celebration of Excellence to recognize undergraduate and graduate student international achievement
- a) certify international studies and experiences, including study abroad;
 - b) certify student language proficiency using internationally recognized standards and credentials;
7. better integrate international students into campus life
- a) enhance services and support for international students as required by current and projected enrollment growth;
 - b) expand conversation and cultural partnering programs that bring together international and domestic students;
 - c) involve international graduate students in languages-across-the-curriculum initiatives; increase cross-cultural training opportunities for UB faculty and staff organized by ISSS and involving international students and scholars as presenters/interlocutors;
 - d) develop programming and living/learning spaces in campus housing to facilitate meaningful interactions between international students and interested domestic students;
 - e) organize student affairs programming so as to integrate foreign and domestic students in groups organized around shared disciplinary or area studies interests, to better draw upon international student experience.

II. THE UB FACULTY

FINDINGS

The full engagement of the faculty across UB's tripartite mission of teaching, research, and service will be required for the institution's goals in international education to be met. Key to the internationalization of the student experience and of the institution itself is the commitment and involvement of the faculty. It is well known that an increasing number of the university's faculty were born in other countries and thus bring to UB the benefit of an international perspective; this trend will only increase in the future, as UB, like all major research universities, seeks to attract the best faculty and researchers from around the world. Moreover, UB has many internationally renowned faculty whose work is followed and respected around the world. The university boasts globally significant research centers and programs at the forefront of their disciplines. In addition, UB is fortunate in having a small but very dedicated and talented group of faculty who are active in developing and directing international programs such as study abroad and exchange programs. Another important advantage that the Task Group noted is UB's Council on International Studies and Programs (CISP), which comprises internationally active faculty from across the university and advises senior administration on international programs and policy. CISP plays a vital role in the governance of international education at the university.

However, while many UB faculty attend international conferences and have colleagues overseas with whom they collaborate, a relatively small number of these faculty are involved in international endeavors in a way that impacts the larger institution in a substantive way. Much of the international work that faculty do is ad hoc, opportunistic and driven by the imperatives of their discipline. These international activities are not tracked systematically and typically are not part of a coordinated institutional strategy. In general, UB faculty (and staff) receive little recognition and institutional credit for participating in international activities. In fact, there are few incentives and many disincentives to faculty participation in such activities as collaboration with colleagues at universities abroad, involvement in exchange programs, research and teaching overseas, developing and directing study abroad programs, and initiating new international programs and projects. The Task Group identified a number of structural impediments to increased faculty participation in international activities, including policies for faculty hiring, tenure and promotion; policies governing teaching load and FTE; and a lack of funding and support at the institutional, decanal and departmental levels for international travel and for international initiatives. Moreover, international activities of faculty and units should be systematically inventoried and publicized through annual reports, the web and other means to foster increased coordination and synergy.

Recognizing the central role of faculty in internationalization, many institutions have developed ways to increase the involvement of faculty in international programs. Yale University has developed a web-accessible database inventorying international faculty research activities—part of the “Yale and the World” initiative. Duke University has a similar resource called “Global Gateway.” Many universities now have centrally administered travel grants for faculty to initiate or expand international research and collaborative activity. Many provide structured opportunities for faculty to develop international collaborations. Two Virginia institutions have notable programs in this regard. Virginia Tech's International Faculty Development Program enrolls up to 20 faculty per year in a semester-long program focused on a ten-day intensive experience overseas and the development of a research project involving international collaborators. The University of Richmond conducts Faculty Seminars Abroad focusing on a specific country or region; these seminars enroll faculty from across the disciplines in a semester-long program of preparatory work for a research project that is implemented following a three-week experience overseas to meet with colleagues, visit institutions, and lay the groundwork for ongoing collaboration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to internationalize UB faculty by promoting, supporting and rewarding substantive faculty activity in the international area, the University must:

1. integrate the work of the faculty with institutional internationalization efforts
 - a) create funding for faculty leadership of international exchanges, study abroad, and international research travel;
 - b) take advantage of faculty mobility to increase international recruitment capability and better align it with academic strengths of the University;
2. in all appropriate disciplines, identify international experience, internationally oriented research and fluency in a foreign language as a plus in faculty hiring and an asset for promotion and advancement
 - a) standardize phrasing for inclusion on position announcements (just as Affirmative Action language has been standardized);
 - b) articulate expectations for international activity through faculty mentoring;
3. create incentives and eliminate barriers for faculty to incorporate international activities in their teaching, scholarship, and service
 - a) provide seed funding as an incentive for international collaborative activities that may be leveraged to obtain longer term funding;
 - b) provide travel grants for faculty to attend major international conferences, conduct research, and visit exchange partner institutions overseas;
 - c) provide grants to internationalize curricula through the development of new courses or the enhancement of existing courses;
 - d) promote awareness of existing international partnerships and opportunities for faculty collaboration with colleagues overseas;
4. promote faculty participation in study abroad and exchange programs
 - a) make it clear that such participation will assist faculty to advance;
 - b) credit departments for overseas teaching;
 - c) credit individual faculty for summer overseas teaching by counting this teaching as part of their annual workload of teaching and administrative service;
5. assign appropriate value, in appointment, tenure and promotion dossiers, to internationally oriented work
 - a) articulate at the time of initial appointment expectations for the impact of international activities and for research visibility inside and outside the United States;

- b) identify non-US peer institutions and leading international publishers in advance of personnel actions;
- c) recognize the legitimacy of letters from leading researchers at non-US institutions in tenure and promotion dossiers;
- d) award appropriate credit to work written in languages other than English, or published outside the United States.

III. UB AS AN INSTITUTION

FINDINGS

The University at Buffalo must promote international education in its mission on campus, in the local community, and through its presence overseas. The Task Group found that UB has not fully inventoried or leveraged its existing strengths in the international area to internationalize the institution as a whole. Moreover, UB's current decanal/departamental structure, administrative and resource-delivery mechanisms, and faculty incentives represent significant impediments to the growth of the university's international activity. In addition, there is a glaring disconnect between UB's impressively large international student population and successful overseas programs on the one hand, and the institutional resources committed to provision of international services on campus and to relevant international research, curricula and teaching, on the other. The former illustrates UB's success in going out into the world; the latter suggests UB's lack of success in conferring the benefit of its international engagement on the university community as a whole.

While UB has recently become better known in the U.S. for its pioneering efforts overseas and as a major destination for international students, international education is not generally perceived as a distinguishing feature of UB's mission and "brand"—one that sets it apart from other public research universities. By more effectively inventorying its international activities and incorporating its international dimensions in its branding, UB could better leverage its success internationally going forward. As noted above, UB could follow the lead of institutions such as Yale and Duke in developing a "virtual (web-based) gateway" allowing visitors to learn about the full scope and range of UB's international endeavors. Although, overall, UB is one of the most active centers of research and education about Canada, the university has not taken full advantage of its strategic position at the major gateway to the economic heartland of Canada, which also happens to be a major center of international trade and finance.

A more coordinated international research program built around strategic partnerships in key countries would advance UB's international agenda in a number of ways. Such an approach has been embraced by a number of major research universities, including MIT with its GEM4 (Global Enterprise for Micro-Mechanics and Molecular Medicine) initiative, which involves a "new paradigm in global interactions" among ten leading institutions around the world. The University of Pennsylvania's Global Development Initiative (GDI) involves faculty and students in research and service projects working with local partners and NGOs in the developing world.

UB has one of the strongest and most entrepreneurial offices of international education in the country; however, the internationalization of the university as a whole—its faculty, students, curricula and research—will require a commitment from each of the decanal units and the appointment of a senior officer at the associate dean level charged with international programs and services to coordinate and leverage activities in concert with Office of International Education and a budget designate to support internationalization activities. While UB has been very successful in bringing in external funds through its overseas sponsored programs, little of this money has been directed to supporting the internationalization of UB through scholarships for study abroad and funding to support the international initiatives of faculty. Moreover, UB has only just begun to tap the huge potential for philanthropic support, including from international alumni and friends, for its international activities, including area studies, study abroad, and faculty travel.

In the view of the Task Group, the structural changes required to strengthen UB's foreign language and area studies programs in order to enhance the global competence of undergraduate and graduate students will require a specialized task group with the necessary expertise to evaluate the many models of best practices that might guide reforms at UB going forward. One model of particular interest to the Task Group is Yale University's, which comprises a Center for Language Study to deliver basic instruction in all languages at the beginning and intermediate levels, in addition to traditional language departments for more advanced study of language, literature and culture. Leading public research universities with major area studies centers have developed highly successful international institutes which serve as multidisciplinary "umbrella" structures to coordinate, facilitate, and leverage their activities. The international institutes at the University of Wisconsin at Madison and UCLA are prime examples.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to internationalize the institution, the University must:

1. make UB's location and international programs a key part of its identity and "brand"
 - a) make the University's website and its public relations materials reflect its identity as an international university;
 - b) publicize UB's position as the nearest research-extensive U.S. university to the Canadian border;
 - c) strengthen and enhance opportunities for research, educational and scholarly exchange with Canada and Canadian colleagues;
2. integrate the administration of international education with administrative and governance structures
 - a) designate an associate dean (or equivalent) for international education in each decanal unit;
 - b) revise guidelines for composition of Office of International Education's faculty advisory group (CISP) to better include departmental and decanal perspectives;
 - c) create a standing Faculty Senate Committee on international education.
3. reorganize the delivery of language instruction
 - a) identify and adopt the optimal institutional structure for language study;
 - b) significantly expand the range of languages available for study and the proficiency level attainable through the curriculum;
 - c) provide proficiency testing for language students against national norms;
 - d) provide upper-level study in a broad spectrum of languages and cultures, including those critically under-resourced or under-represented, particularly Asian, Middle Eastern, and Slavic;
 - e) provide funding and credit for language instruction to graduate and professional students.
4. develop an institutional infrastructure for area studies
 - a) complement language, literature and culture offerings with offerings in many disciplines involving lectures, discussion, reading or research conducted in the vernaculars;
 - b) enable interdisciplinary concentrations in area studies.
5. prepare a long-range international enrollment plan and recruitment strategy
 - a) base the recruitment strategy on the academic strengths of the University, present and emerging;

- b) fund students from under-represented regions so as to create momentum and diversify the international student cohort;
 - c) coordinate the strategy with enrollment goals established by UB 2020 growth plans.
- 6. inventory and raise awareness of UB's international activities
 - a) gather data about international research interests, travel experience, and language capabilities at the time of appointment and by creating a high-level category for international activities on the annual report;
 - b) display this information as well as all study abroad and exchange data through geomapping on the University's home page;
 - c) disseminate information about overseas opportunities to faculty and staff.
- 7. enhance campus infrastructure to support expanded international programs and services
 - a) provide housing for international students and returning study abroad students;
 - b) create on-campus housing which promotes cross-cultural learning opportunities;
 - c) increase visibility and accessibility of international services offices, particularly the Study Abroad office;
 - d) equip Career Services to provide information and support for international internships and job placement.
- 8. initiate or adapt international partnerships so that, collectively, they serve all three missions of the University (research, teaching, service)
 - a) maintain single-purpose agreements;
 - b) identify and build or maintain research partnership opportunities in agreements which have been primarily curricular or service-oriented and vice versa.
- 9. develop policies and processes for international technology transfer, patents, and licensing in anticipation of expanded international research collaborations
- 10. resolve to be a positive presence on every continent
 - a) recognize the need for engagement on every continent;
 - b) look for opportunities to bring UB's resources and expertise to bear on the problems of regions where we recruit, do research, or teach;
 - c) seek out opportunities to reciprocate by using the expertise of international cultures and institutions at home.
- 11. designate international education and programs as a priority for the Office of University Development

12. expand UB's international knowledge and resource base
 - a) expand international library collections including monographs, journals, and multimedia materials in languages other than English;
 - b) hire faculty whose research focuses on regions inadequately represented on campus;
 - c) create professional development funding categories for staff to have international experiences;
13. identify international experience and fluency in a foreign language as a plus in administrative and staff hiring and advancement
 - a) standardize phrasing for inclusion on position announcements (just as Affirmative Action language has been standardized);
 - b) articulate expectations for international activity in appointment letters, where appropriate.
14. focus on selected regions or countries for a full academic year, such as the "year of Japan" or the "year of Mexico"
 - a) follow example of year-long comprehensive multidisciplinary programming focus on Tibet and Buddhism in conjunction with visit of the Dalai Lama;
 - b) establish a five-year calendar to facilitate planning across the campus;
 - c) invite curricular proposals for special topics related to the year's theme and have the focus be reflected in extracurricular activities.
15. become a more significant international resource for the local community
 - a) provide information and context for current world events whether political, cultural, medical, environmental, etc.;
 - b) make more effective use of local heritage and immigrant communities to diversify institutional expertise and offerings;
 - c) bring international perspectives to the community through performances, lectures, radio programming;
 - d) provide language services on a fee basis;
 - e) encourage internationalization of local school curricula by sponsoring awards for high achievement in language / geography;
 - f) become a more effective advocate and support for international members of the UB community vis-à-vis law enforcement and immigration authorities, among others.

IV. CONCLUSION

It should be noted that these recommendations do not exist in isolation, but rather represent a fabric of synergistic opportunities and inter-related needs. As an example, the recommendation, “designate travel scholarships as an institutional development priority” does not simply promote study-abroad participation. That single recommendation likewise supports artistic, cultural, and athletic student exchange activities, enhances student mobility between the University at Buffalo and its international branch campus programs, enriches the international undergraduate academy and ultimately makes any formal certificate in international experience more attainable by any given UB student. Ever increasing student mobility, in turn, further reinforces recommendations such as increasing language competency requirements, while simultaneously linking to issues ranging from campus housing to faculty workload models.

Some recommendations are “imperatives of the moment,” such as those addressing the infrastructure required to maintain the University’s leadership in international enrollment. Others represent investments to unleash greater value from existing assets, such as expanding faculty housing and office space at the host site of a teaching branch campus, for the purpose of making that same international location accessible to faculty expressly interested in research. Further recommendations, such as those addressing the recognition of international activities in promotion and tenure, are central to fostering the University’s long-term global presence. Together, these recommendations comprise a strategy intended not to simply protect the University at Buffalo’s current leadership position in international education, but to move that position forward to defining global excellence in the next decade.

Finally, the Task Group recommends that the University Council on International Studies and Programs be charged with overseeing the implementation of the recommendations in this report, developing a sequencing strategy for initiating and completing the action items included in these recommendations, and prioritizing those tasks to respond most effectively to the opportunities and challenges confronting UB.

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