

Rapporteur's Report on
THE STATE OF INTERNATIONALIZING EDUCATION AT THE
UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL
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The session began with Madeleine Green, American Council on Education (ACE), summarizing recent ACE research (soon to be published) on the state of internationalization on college and university campuses. ACE research between 2000 and 2002 – funded by the Ford Foundation -- showed strong support for internationalization among high school seniors and the public. At the same time, the data demonstrated a lack of follow-through when the students reached college -- a clear disconnect between good intentions and actual behavior. Research also revealed a significant gap between the rhetoric of internationalization and actual institutional practice and funding. Green then analyzed barriers to internationalization, including:

1. Prevailing beliefs and attitudes, including the notion that everyone speaks English, so we do not need to learn other languages and cultures;
2. Institutional barriers to internationalization, ranging from insufficient resources and lack of leadership, to unproductive administrative and faculty assumptions, often based on lack of personal international experience and institutional disincentives.

Finally, Green proposed strategies to achieve internationalization, focusing on having a coherent institutional strategy for internationalization, engaging top leadership in the process of internationalization, adapting extant institutional structures to promote and support internationalization, and creating new intra- and extra-university partnerships to support it. Federal funding can support a sound institutional internationalization strategy, but it cannot create one. That remains up to the institution.

Moreover, there are strategies and activities that institutions can and should pursue, regardless of whether or not there are public funds to support them. Commitment to the concept of internationalization comes first -- from faculty, students, and administration. Internationalization begins at home. And leadership matters. Excellent international programming cannot migrate from the periphery of the institution's vision to the center without institution-wide commitment. Is internationalization in the mission statement? Does it play a role in the strategic plan? Institutions that have made these commitments and started following through are positioned to make a real difference.

The discussion session, led by Linda Korbel, was integrated with the presentation, promoting give and take between participants and speaker. Almost immediately, it became clear that we needed to **define terms**. The participants used the terms “international,” “global,” regional,” “thematic,” and “area” studies, but definitions of the terms were not precise and clearly meant different things to different people. Also problematical was the word “internationalization” itself: is internationalization just a list of activities? a shift in perspective? or a completely different approach to education with a new curriculum and a new conceptual framework? What does it mean to “add international content”?

If we are to have a productive national discussion, we need to agree on what are terms mean, or we are headed for frustration. The group proposed no definitions for these terms, but did generally agree that “internationalization” must include, at a minimum, study abroad, foreign language study, and the presence of international students on the campus.

The discussion soon exposed a philosophical problem that relates to the GOALS of internationalization: If internationalization is more than a set of related and unrelated activities (and participants agreed it was), then is it the creation of “an international mindset”? An “international perspective”? “Global literacy”? These are not the same thing; neither are they a synonym for “international knowledge,” consisting of real proficiency in one or more foreign languages and sophisticated interdisciplinary knowledge of a specific world region. So what outcomes are we anticipating when we pursue internationalization? And should all institutions be anticipating the same outcomes?

Various needs were mentioned consistently throughout the discussion:

1. The need to insert international content into the undergraduate general education requirements if it is not already present in the curriculum.
2. The need to develop or maintain a variety of study abroad programming, to make this programming accessible (by providing financial aid), and to ensure that study abroad programs articulate directly with the campus curriculum. Even short-term “academic tourism” can be useful when attached to a culture, history, or societies course. The extended study abroad experience, based on advanced language and deep culture study, remains the ideal, but something is better than nothing.
3. The need to find innovative approaches to language learning. A number of participants called for the complete overhaul of the American approach to language instruction at the college and university level; others advocated starting foreign languages in grade school, following the European model; no participants defended current practices.
4. The need for partnerships and joint programming, both intra- and inter-institutional. Collaboration makes more effective use of scarce resources, helps to maintain sight of mutual

goals, and creates a larger advocacy base for international studies.

5. The need for interdisciplinary collaboration, which often carried internationalization with it. Unfortunately, there is also a national disconnect between the administrative desire for interdisciplinary collaboration and the discipline-based reward structure that inhibits it.

6. The need to identify useful sources of funding that will support the search for new strategies -- whether these consist of pedagogical innovations, curriculum development, or other relevant activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The breakout group had four recommendations:

1. Seek initiatives and programming that improve articulation between K-12 and institutions of higher learning in the area of international education. Engage the Schools of Education in the international mission. To do the best they can with undergraduates, college and university faculty need a “better educated client” coming out of the schools, ready and anxious to take full advantage of the international opportunities he or she will find on campus. Institutions can certainly build on existing outreach efforts by NRCs, Group Projects Abroad grants, and Seminars Abroad for K-12 teachers, but this alone is not enough if we are to see real commitment to international education in both public schools and in Schools of Education.

2. Seek better support for undergraduates who study foreign cultures and languages, especially LCTLs. One funding model is suggested by the currently defunct undergraduate FLAS Fellowship; such fellowships could be used to target and fund the most talented and promising students to pursue real language proficiency and international knowledge. Whether these students are engaged in “international,” “regional,” “area,” or “global” studies is less important than the fact that it is this particular student pool that will become the principal source of the AIFLs, the cadre of Area, International, and Foreign Language specialists who will be needed to replace the specialists now retiring from the nation's civil service work force. (See Nancy Ruther, “Government Employment Needs”).

3. Provide a funding source for initiatives that promote radical rethinking or creative new thinking -- about curriculum, structure, delivery -- and test new ideas. In times of transition and rethinking -- and our profession certainly finds itself in these proverbial “interesting times” -- we need funding that will allow us to beta-test innovations, the best of which can be

replicated. As we consider over-hauling our language teaching structures, developing new pedagogical strategies that maximize the possibilities offered by constantly developing instructional technologies, forging new interdisciplinary alliances, and so on, we find such initiatives come with costs not every institution can absorb unilaterally. We need to find ways to share lessons learned more effectively and to make our best ideas happen.

4. Our final recommendation is to **“do no harm”** -- a suggestion first made in David Ward's presentation, which truly was a keynote to this meeting. Let us preserve our successes. Existing Title VI programs, especially NRCs, have been meeting their defined mission and responding appropriately as that mission has evolved and expanded. NRCs have been key players in internationalization on campus, in the region, and nation-wide for decades, meeting their federal obligations as language and area training programs with an important, mandated outreach mission to K-12. Let us not give them yet another job to do, the nature of which threatens to overwhelm them and break them down by stretching them too far.

In conclusion: if we are to turn the challenge of internationalizing undergraduate education into a real opportunity for American education, we need to promote movement on all sides, from K-12 through the entire range of college and university programming. We need to collaborate, to develop structures that cut across units and institutions and open lateral lines of communication; we need to “work” our institutional leadership to support the international vision; we need to share resources effectively; and we need to share the turf with colleagues and units who have not been in the business of internationalization as long as we have, but who also have fresh ideas, innovative strategies, and useful networks to contribute to our common goals.