

WRAP-UP SESSION – GLOBAL CHALLENGES AND U.S. HIGHER EDUCATION

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This has been a valuable and important conference. Over the past two days issues have been discussed and new ideas have been put forward that will have an impact on international teaching, research, and outreach for years to come. This meeting differs from many others that I have attended because its tangible outcomes will influence teachers and administrators as well as education leaders and national decision makers. We are all indebted to Miriam Kazanjian and Gil Merkx for bringing us together and organizing the different panels and sessions.

I would like to present my thoughts on some of the ideas discussed in the plenary meetings as well as in the break-out sessions. My overall impression is that the programs funded under Title VI of the Higher Education Act have been a dynamic and responsive presence and that they need to be enhanced and expanded. In his presentation, David Ward, President of the American Council on Education, aptly summed up their contribution when he emphasized that we need to “preserve established success.” We need to reaffirm what has been accomplished with limited funding as we consider moving in new directions and meeting the needs of different constituencies. This is an historic moment for our nation characterized by rapid change and significant new demands and opportunities. Never before has international knowledge and understanding been more essential.

To start with, I have identified four interconnected themes, K-12 education, teacher education, undergraduate student fellowships and undergraduate study abroad. All of these aim at early internationalization; they seek to create globally aware young people through the enrichment of curricula, better informed teachers, and more undergraduate opportunities for involvement in international activities and learning. Implicit in these are new ideas for language instruction, better ways to integrate knowledge about other cultures, and the connection between technology and pedagogy. Intrinsicly these goals all have enormous merit and validity and some of them might even be directly related to the current emphasis in the US Department of

Education on “No child left behind.” However they all call for extensive resource allocations. Their value is clear but the scale for implementing them is enormous. Although there have been real achievements in outreach activities through Title VI funding, proposed initiatives for K-12 and teacher education go beyond these. The emphasis on K-12 and teacher education at the conference opens up rich opportunities for the early introduction of global learning and awareness. Both these call for new funding as well as new partnerships but bridges should be built with schools of education, national organizations, accrediting agencies and state boards of education.

The merit of undergraduate Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships is also worthy of serious consideration. FLAS awards for undergraduates could make an important contribution and could increase the pool of students proceeding to graduate international study. This is not a new idea but one that should be reconsidered. It would be important to have a clear understanding of the purpose of such awards, the necessary student credentials required for support, and clear expectations of outcomes. An over-riding question is whether the U.S. Department of Education would be ready to move away from need-based undergraduate support which is currently the norm. How this would be done and what structures would be used are the key questions.

In looking at study abroad, I believe that a range of options must be taken into account. These include short-term and long term academic programs, opportunities for students at two year and community colleges, and internships. Universities and colleges already have substantial investments in study abroad. National funding should not be merely be providing additional support for those who would be committed to such programs anyway. The aim should be to encourage those who have not previously contemplated going abroad, to establish programs for students in disciplines that do not currently send students abroad, to encourage minority participation, and to provide innovative new programs. This calls for better student advising and new perspectives by accrediting agencies. Partnerships with universities and colleges should also be an important consideration.

It appears to me that what is being advocated in each case demands wider and more concerted efforts and collaboration. Whether these initiatives should be free-standing or subsumed under Title VI is open to debate. Extending undergraduate study abroad, for example, is a goal to which all of us are committed but is Title VI the right vehicle for its implementation? In a time of budgetary constraints, could a major initiative, estimated at \$100 million, deflect resources from Title VI? If there is no injection of new funding, should some aspect of study abroad be included as part of Title VI? If so, what would be the trade-offs?

I would also like to share my impressions on some other topics addressed at the conference. David Ward's injunction to "rethink language acquisition" is an important recommendation. Many participants at the conference seem to be calling for innovation in language pedagogy, the use of new technology in delivery of courses, and meeting diverse language needs. The study of languages has always been a pillar of Title VI and I am confident that strategic national needs and new thinking about language instruction will be reflected in future competitions. Specific goals include developing high proficiency levels, language instruction for professional schools, summer language institutes, and overseas opportunities for studying languages, especially those that are less commonly taught.

This conference differs from the UCLA meeting in 1998 because of the strong emphasis on technology. At various panels at this year's conference technology was implicitly and explicitly present: in the classroom, as a part of information-gathering, in relation to libraries, as means for sharing instruction between universities. To these I would add communication between scholars in the US and those abroad, and fostering global interaction between students.

The presentations on professional schools and on government agency staffing were highly informative. How best to meet the needs of government calls for a level of communication between government agencies and the universities that must be nurtured. Similarly, the CIBERs have become an invaluable bridge to the business community. Nonetheless, while businesses are international and global, further dialogue needs to take place to address specific demands of the business sector. In addition, there should be greater

internationalization of the curricula of schools of business and the inclusion of some language instruction as a requirement.

Attrition through retirements and other changes appears to be a problem for most world areas. Graduate students should be encouraged through conference participation and other professional opportunities as soon as possible. Drawing faculty from schools of engineering, medicine, public health and architecture may also be a way to begin to redefine the boundaries of some of the area centers.

Finally, I would like to consider two issues that affect the International Education and Graduate Programs Office of the U.S. Department of Education (IEGP). With the increasing importance of technology, the demands for knowledge about strategic world areas, changes in language pedagogy and new modes of delivery of information, it might be timely to have special and more flexible Title VI funding for projects that respond to the immediacy of these important directions. Dynamic changes are occurring and their exploration should be encouraged and addressed at the federal level through funding for innovative ideas, best practices and the rapid dissemination of ideas.

The second issue, is that of the staffing of the IEGP office. With increases in federal funding, there is a pressing demand for site visits and monitoring, as well as time to reflect on new directions. The size of the staff is simply inadequate. If this problem is not addressed soon it will be detrimental to the effectiveness of Title VI. The administration of international programs calls for a high level of knowledge, expertise that cannot be relegated to those who lack the professional background in order to deal with the inherent complexities of such programs. To ignore this could ultimately be harmful to our national interest which has been so well served in the past.

This overview does not attempt to be definitive. It is rather an attempt to share ideas which were debated during the conference. I hope some of these themes, proposals and ideas might be considered by working groups and others over the next months. It is clear that there are

new international challenges. At the same time, university and college administrators, faculty and students are increasingly aware of the centrality of international study to their institutions. Reaching out to K-12 and other constituencies is also a priority. Unless there is an increase in federal funding, Title VI will find it difficult to address all of these new demands and directions. In the face of these challenges, realistically defining the identity and scope of Title VI is essential. It must be able to incorporate change and maintain the essence of its mission.