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# A Plan for Internationalization: Creative and Administrative Framework for Global Learning

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## **MEMORIA ELECTRÓNICA**

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**A PLAN FOR INTERNATIONALIZATION:  
CREATING AN ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR GLOBAL LEARNING**

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*Abstract: Institutions of higher learning increasingly have engaged in strategies of comprehensive internationalization. Comprehensive internationalization involves a range of approaches aimed at incorporating international and intercultural concepts into teaching, learning, research and service. An effective strategy for comprehensive internationalization requires an internationalization plan. Most plans are developed and implemented at the level of the University, and most research on internationalization plans has focused on University-level plans. This paper presents the experience of developing a plan for a college within a University. The College of Business and Public Affairs, one of five colleges at West Chester University developed an Internationalization Plan in 2014. This paper presents the goals and objectives behind developing the plan and the formation of the draft plan itself.*

American institutions of higher learning are important actors in facilitating international exchange, and, by extension, international cooperation. Recognizing this role, institutions of higher learning increasingly grapple with challenges to

internationalize and globalize. These efforts can take on many forms including internationalizing the curriculum, developing and incentivizing study abroad and international exchange opportunities, and more. There are many institutional challenges to the support of international efforts including prioritizing strategies and resources, engaging faculty and other stakeholders, coordinating institutional responsibilities, and guiding curricular revisions. This paper presents a recent initiative in the College of Business and Public Affairs at West Chester University to craft a deliberate strategy for internationalization at the level of a College within the University. A keystone of this effort was the development of a *Plan for Internationalization*. The College-level plan was developed to address a specific institutional need to enhance global awareness, which was identified as a strategic priority in the 2013 University Strategic Plan, *Building on Excellence*.

Internationalization is a commonly used term in higher education. There is not, however, a standard definition of internationalization. In higher education, the term is used in a variety of ways. The concept itself has been studied across disciplines and subsequently has taken on a multitude of definitions (Childress, 2010). The range of internationalization practices and definitions contributes to confusion about its purpose and meaning. Until recently, higher education leaders conceptualized internationalization as a series of individual components and activities within a University that were international in nature. In 2003, the National Association of Foreign Student Advisors (NAFSA), described internationalization as a set of international activities including study abroad by domestic students, study in the United States by international students, faculty exchanges, foreign language and cultural studies, and international

activities. Separate from these activities, others viewed internationalization from a curricular standpoint. In this framework, internationalization was conceptualized as a process of integrating international perspectives into the curriculum (Groennings & Wiley, 1990; Mestenhauser, 1998). More recent conceptualizations bring the two concepts together and regard internationalization as an integrative process that involves all institutional activities, including curricular and co-curricular programs and activities (Green & Olson, 2003; Olson et al., 2005).

The term *comprehensive internationalization* has emerged to capture the ever-widening scope of activities and perspectives. NAFSA has broadened its focus and presently defines comprehensive internationalization as "...a commitment, confirmed through action, to infuse international and comparative perspectives throughout the teaching, research, and service missions of higher education." The American Council on Education (ACE) defines comprehensive internationalization as "a strategic, coordinated process that seeks to align and integrate policies, programs and initiatives to position colleges and universities as more globally oriented and internationally connected institutions." While a common definition still does not exist, current working definitions indicate that comprehensive internationalization is a process that is wide-ranging, comprehensive, and deep.

Research has found that an essential element to the realization of an institution's internationalization goals is the development of an internationalization plan (Knight, 2004; Olson et al., 2005; Paige, 2005). Plans are effective because they articulate explicit goals and develop interrelated strategies to support the goals (Engberg & Green, 2002). Three primary goals are served by internationalization plans: articulating an

institutional commitment, providing a road map, and serving as a tool to develop buy-in (Childress, 2010). Fundamentally, plans are important because they explicitly articulate and affirm the institution's commitment to infuse a global and international perspective across the campus and its sub-units. Internationalization thereby becomes central to the mission of the institution. As a road map, the internationalization plan helps to provide a coherent direction by identifying a set of objectives, strategies and actions to achieve an institutional priority. Numerous studies have found that a lack of understanding of what internationalization means impedes the attainment of institutional goals (Knight, 1994). By delineating the practical steps, a plan can help stakeholders to understand how they can participate. An internationalization plan is also important as a tool to develop buy-in. Faculty, administrators, students, external stakeholders such as alumni and foundations, and other key stakeholders are more likely to become involved in internationalization efforts when institutional rationales and goals are explicitly stated and supported in a well-crafted plan.

At West Chester University, internationalization was first identified as a priority for the College of Business and Public Affairs (CBPA) in the 2013-2014 academic year. Internationalization activities across the college had expanded over time, but not as a deliberate strategy and without the guidance of a deliberate framework. It was recognized that internationalization would be a multi-faceted endeavor, with curricular and co-curricular components, and would thereby require a comprehensive strategy. Internationalization in CBPA was regarded as having two essential components: curricular and co-curricular. The curricular component would be supported by continuing to introduce and build global themes into the classroom. All programs in the college

would contribute to global learning by teaching students to become global citizens.

Comprehensive global learning involves an understanding of the many components of a global setting including the structure of global economies and the role of multinational corporations, and an appreciation of global-scale social issues such as environmental challenges and human rights concerns, some of the biggest challenges of our times. The programs within the College of Business and Public Affairs had begun to incorporate these themes independently. One aim of the plan was to coordinate and ultimately further these efforts.

The second key component of internationalization involves encouraging and enabling international experiences – moving students to other places -- study abroad programs, international internships, international service opportunities, and similar high-impact learning experiences. While some of the curricular developments and a handful of faculty-led study abroad experiences were already underway in the College of Business and Public Affairs, there was not a comprehensive strategy in place to guide these activities. The development of the plan was designed to provide a roadmap to build on these efforts, engage additional stakeholders, create deeper learning experiences organized around global perspectives, and enable more opportunities for international learning experiences by developing a comprehensive approach to internationalization.

In fall 2013, the Interim Dean of the College of Business & Public Affairs charged a team to develop a strategy for internationalization for the College of Business & Public Affairs at West Chester University. As part of that strategy, the team developed the *Plan for Internationalization*. Following good principles of plan-making, the plan was created

by a representative group of the College, was appropriately embedded within the institutional setting and campus culture, and was designed to engage stakeholders in a meaningful way. As a college-level plan, the plan has to consider its connection to relevant campus organizations such as the Center for International Programs, the University Strategic Planning Group and the general education committee.

West Chester University did not have an institutional plan for internationalization, per se. As a sub-unit in the institution, the College of Business and Public Affairs developed the goals and activities of its plan to align with and support the goals of the University as defined in the WCU Strategic Plan, which highlighted the importance of international education to the institution and its stakeholders. The overall purpose of the plan is to provide a framework at the College level to connect institutional activities to global learning outcomes for students and reflect an integrated strategic approach to internationalization. Specific functions and benefits of the plan include:

- *Conceptualizing an internationalization vision*
- *Engaging faculty and other stakeholders*
- *Defining concrete action items and measures for progress*
- *Providing a guide for action or roadmap*
- *Establishing a framework to guide resource decisions*

Institutions of higher learning play a critical role in supporting and enabling international cooperation by incorporating global learning throughout the curriculum and enabling international exchange opportunities. The experience of developing a college-level plan within a broader University provides important insights regarding institutional



strategies and approaches to guide and further these important objectives. A college-level plan can be tailored to the specific goals and objectives of the college, and can set measurable outcomes to help gauge its success. Yet the comprehensive nature of internationalization means that any college-level effort requires support from organizations outside the college. The ultimate success of the effort will be determined as the plan is implemented.

The plan is currently in a draft form and the draft version is included as an appendix to this paper. The plan is expected to be completed before the end of the spring 2014 semester and implementation will then begin. By the time of the conference, we expect to have preliminary findings regarding the challenges and opportunities related to implementation.

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## **DRAFT CBPA Strategic Plan for Internationalization: 2014-2017**

### **Vision**

Inspired by the Strategic Plan: *Building on Excellence*, the College of Business and Public Affairs (CBPA) will “continue to support and expand programs for WCU students, faculty and staff to participate in global literacy, international education and cultural exchange.” CBPA is committed to the goal of *comprehensive internationalization* at West Chester University. *Comprehensive internationalization can be defined as a commitment to action – to infuse international and comparative perspectives throughout teaching, research, and service missions of West Chester University.* CBPA will provide curricular and co-curricular learning approaches to equip graduates with knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors to function as globally competent citizens, prepared to lead and serve in an increasingly interconnected global environment.

### **Goal 1: Support Academic Excellence in Global Education**

*Promote academic excellence by integrating global perspectives and issues throughout the curriculum.*

Objectives:

1.1 Strengthen the general education curriculum by integrating global knowledge and skills.

#### Actions:

Support University efforts to incorporate global knowledge and skills into the General Education curriculum revision that is currently underway, including the development of culture cluster and diversity course offerings as relevant.

1.2 Internationalize the curriculum in the majors and programs in the College

#### Actions:

Every undergraduate program in the College should require at least one course with global or cross-cultural themes, area studies focus, or international learning opportunity by the end of the 2014-2015 academic year.

An international experience should be available for students in every major in the College either directly associated with the major, or through collaboration with other programs, by the end of the 2016-2017 academic year.

There should be a number of courses that offer global exposure by linking students at WCU with peers in other countries through the innovative use of technology, by the end of the 2016-2017 academic year.

### 1.3 Develop new academic programs in the College with a global focus

#### Actions:

Create an interdisciplinary minor in International or Global Studies

Create a new major in International Business

### 1.4 Develop opportunities for education abroad for students in all disciplines.

#### Actions:

Increase by 20% the number of undergraduate students in the College who participate in either a short-term, semester, or year-long study abroad experience, by the end of the 2015-2016 academic year.

Identify, obtain and promote new scholarships and resources for augmenting study abroad opportunities for students.

Develop new faculty-led study abroad experiences and faculty involvement in education abroad.

Work with the Center for International Programs (CIP) to establish reintegration programs to assist students upon return from education abroad.

### 1.5 Support faculty development and engagement with internationalization of the curriculum and mentoring students for effective global citizenship

#### Actions:

Promote and support opportunities for faculty to engage in curriculum development on global issues.

Provide support for faculty exchanges with partner institutions abroad.

Increase resources for faculty to participate in conferences, workshops, and seminars related to international education

Coordinate faculty development workshops and seminars on campus on specific issues to internationalize the curriculum.

Support faculty to develop expertise to lead students for study abroad experiences, and prepare students for experiences abroad.

Provide a forum for faculty to present best practices for infusing globalization in the curriculum, and to share their work.

Award or recognize faculty members for outstanding contributions in the area of internationalization.

## **Goal 2: Encourage Global Learning Opportunities for Students**

*Provide an affordable, quality education, as well as an enriching environment that attracts, retains, and supports a diverse group of students in achieving success in a global context.*

Objectives:

2.1 Expose students to sources of local and global diversity on and off campus.

### Actions:

Provide opportunities for students who participate in study abroad programs to make presentations for students and faculty across campus.

Support and promote international educational and cultural activities on campus through collaboration among various campus academic and administrative units.

Collaborate with community groups, including local businesses and community-based organizations, such as those representing immigrant groups, to organize multi-cultural programming and activities.

Invite representatives of regionally-based multi-national corporations to come to campus to make presentations and/or arrange field trips for students to visit the businesses.

Promote activities and events of the Center for International Programs (CIP) and other campus international programs on the CBPA website.

Work with the Office of Service Learning and faculty to develop community partnerships and liaisons with international groups in the community to engage students in service learning and cross-cultural experiences.

2.2 Increase the number of degree-seeking and exchange international students and integrate international students and faculty into the academic and extra-curricular life of the campus and the College

### Actions:

Improve coordination with exchange partners and individual partner institutions abroad, to attract exchange students to WCU.

Coordinate with the Admissions Office, Student Services, CIP, and academic departments to strengthen the processing of international student admissions, registration, housing and other essential support services including oral and written communication skills and instruction in English as a second language.

**Goal 3: Leverage Institutional Resources and Support**

*Develop and maintain high quality administrative support, facilities and infrastructure to promote and support international programs.*

Objectives:

3.1 Develop an effective organizational structure and acquire resources to govern and manage the functioning of international programs at WCU.

Actions:

Coordinate with the CIP to leverage the resources and services of the Center and assist in promoting study abroad opportunities.

Develop a CBPA International Programs Committee to support and promote international programs in the College.

Collaborate with key campus units such as Advancement, Sponsored Programs, and Office of the Provost to obtain adequate funding and resources to support international educational activities as identified in Goals 1 and 2.

Engage alumni with international experience to assist in internationalization efforts.