
Issues of Global Competency

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Creating opportunities for students, faculty, staff, and administrators to enhance global perspectives and intercultural competencies will facilitate the internationalization of the CSUF campus—in line with the Mission, Goals & Strategies of the university and UPS 320.100 *International Education Policy* (6-17-82). The issue of internationalizing the curriculum is not new and is reflected in a variety of documents including the CSU (1992) *Internationalizing the California State University* report, the recommendations of the 2000 International Education Committee, the Ad Hoc International Programs Discussion Committee (Klammer, 2007) report, the 2008 Second Language Graduation Requirement Ad Hoc Study Group and the CSU Academic Senate (2008) resolution: *Support of International Experiences and Global Perspectives in CSU Education* (AS-2818-08/FA [Rev]).

No standard definition or blueprint for achieving or measuring global competency exists. I find the following definitions (Farleigh Dickinson University, 2008) useful:

A global education is a process that encompasses the knowledge and understanding of culture, language, geography, and global perspectives through the ongoing development of key global competencies. It enables students to understand their roles in a global community and teaches them how their actions can affect others throughout the world.

Global competency is more than having international campus partners or exchange programs. It is also a curriculum that ensures that all students will be able to succeed in a world governed by interdependence, diversity

and rapid change on a global scale. It provides knowledge and understanding of culture, language, geography and global perspectives. It trains students to rapidly access and evaluate a wealth of international information resources. It enables students to understand the world through the eyes of others and teaches them how their actions can affect, and be affected by people throughout the world.

California needs to prepare academic, business, and technical professionals with the knowledge and skills to work and succeed in an international context (Alquist, 2002) and who understand

- the cultures, economics, politics, and languages of other countries; and
- the cultures of California's immigrants who are bringing their diverse talents and perspectives to the state.

While there is clear consensus at senior levels that enhancing international perspectives throughout the campus is a goal, it is less clear that the entire campus community shares this mission or that a centralized process exists to develop it or measure the effectiveness of or "value added" impact of such desired outcomes. The first step would seem to be to create a sense of ownership across campus that this is a necessary and, in fact, priority area. Converting the mission statement to a sense of mission on campus would help create the environment for change. A commitment of resources to ensure success is also required. The creation of the new position of Associate Vice President, International Programs is one sign of that commitment.

There are many excellent examples of existing curricular and co-curricular international/global activities on campus; however, a coordinated sense of mission across all sectors of the campus would be beneficial. Strategies to achieve this might include:

- defining global competency and internationalization in operational terms that can be understood by all and can be measured;

- developing a new university policy statement on global competency as an academic outcome;
- incorporating language that promotes global competency and enhanced international perspectives in the campus strategic plans;
- developing a specific strategic plan to enhance international programs on campus; and
- challenging each Division, College, Department and Program on campus to discuss their global competency agenda, and develop standards for their disciplines/constituencies, if not already done.

It seems clear that a global education includes multiple strategies to produce globally competent graduates. Questions for further discussion include:

- Can students receive a global education without leaving the CSUF campus?
- Does a global education mandate an international experience/exposure of some kind?
- How can the diversity of the campus population as a whole be used to foster a better global education for all students?
- What are the requirements for faculty who are able to provide a global education for students; and, how do we develop faculty for that role?

A first step might be to identify required global competency outcomes at various levels of academic programs, such as:

- creating global competency outcomes as a measure of general education for all students;
- creating global competency outcomes (and assessment measures) for each discipline on campus as part of the learning goals for students and identifying a concurrent curriculum plan to achieve those outcomes; and
- creating global competency activities for faculty that contribute to retention and promotion processes.

A second step would be to identify campus outcomes for “internationalizing” activities, such

as:

- increasing the number and visibility of degree seeking foreign students on campus: an active recruitment strategy;
- increasing the number and visibility of visiting scholars;
- increasing the number and visibility of formal exchange programs, including study abroad opportunities;
- considering global education objectives during faculty recruitment searches; and
- encouraging more faculty and student research collaborations.

A third component would be to develop strategic processes to ensure the identified outcomes can be implemented and achieved, such as:

- internationalizing the curriculum at the discipline and program levels, including:
 - review of content for degree and quality of inclusion of global themes;
 - development of new courses and certificate programs as appropriate;
 - enhanced use of the internet—“bringing the world to the students” (online courses with international partners, “guest speakers”);
 - international internships/service learning projects with global focus;
 - foreign language study;
 - course specific imbedded international activities/experiences; and
 - summer school programs/special session options.
- faculty collaborations for research/scholarship, teaching, and service activities;
- collaborative partnerships with International agencies (e.g. UN, WHO);
- institutional self study assessing outcomes of internationalization efforts to date on campus;
- highlighting student, faculty, staff diversity on campus; and
- study abroad opportunities, exchange programs, and visiting scholars.

A final component would be to identify and implement an assessment and evaluation plan for

the various components of international activities at CSUF to consider and monitor the value added impact of these activities.

Finally, a central coordinating group should help to guide and monitor the process across campus, set target deadlines, prepare progress reports, and outline evaluation strategies to measure the success of changes made. One plausible group would be the International Education Committee of the Academic Senate. The Global Competency Task Force recently created by the Senate would be complementary to that process. And, input from all sectors of the campus would be essential.

References

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