

Internationalization at Drake University Interim Report

Prepared by the
Internationalization Planning and Advisory Council
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Introduction:

Drake University's *Mission Statement* reads, in part:

Drake University provides an exceptional learning environment that prepares students for meaningful personal lives, professional accomplishment and responsible global citizenship.

As illustrated by the comments below, higher education officials frequently stress the importance of internationalization.

ACE's (American Council of Education) view is that internationalization is a key element of a high-quality education and institutional relevance... (A Guide to Internationalization for Chief Academic Officers, Hill and Green, ACE, 2008, p. viii)

International education cannot be seen as an add-on. It's not an extra in higher education or K-12. ...The skills and knowledge acquired in international education are the same skills graduates need to succeed in a global economy (Martha J. Kanter, US Under Secretary of Education http://chronicle.com/article/US-Officials-Assure/64212/?sid=at&utm_source=at&utm_medium=en)

The question isn't whether American higher education will become more internationalized ... but rather what a fully internationalized university will look like, and how long it will take for such changes to occur. (Attributed to Arthur Levine, President of the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship, Foundation http://chronicle.com/article/Internationalized-Academe-Is/64230/?sid=at&utm_source=at&utm_medium=en)

Recognizing the need to take additional steps to achieve *Mission Statement* goals and *Strategic Plan 2008-12* objectives, the International Planning and Advisory Council was appointed at the beginning of the 2009 fall semester. At the same time, Drake University accepted the invitation to join the American Council of Education (ACE) Internationalization Laboratory 2009-10 cohort. Membership in this group provides access to a variety of helpful planning documents and guides, to consultants, and participation in discussions with other universities who have adopted comprehensive internationalization as an institutional goal.

IPAC spent the fall semester gathering information about the numerous international initiatives at Drake University. In addition to meeting with many of the individuals

involved, surveys of faculty, staff, and students were conducted. IPAC also met with David Attis from the Advisory Board Leadership Council for a presentation of best internationalization practices found at American colleges and universities. After considering the information gathered, IPAC prepared the following assessment of the current state of internationalization at Drake University.

Strengths

As Drake University moves toward comprehensive internationalization, the institution brings the following significant assets to the process.

1. The general condition of the University is strong.

The University has maintained its strong financial position, even with the economic downturn. Enrollment has grown and the academic quality of enrolling students has been retained, if not slightly improved. Recent accreditation visits, both for the entire university and professional programs, led to glowing reports about academic programs. The University's reputation for academic rigor among its peers, as reflected in a number of ratings, is exceptional.

2. Key University documents contain a powerful commitment to internationalization.

The University's *Mission Statement*, *Mission Explication*, and *Strategic Plan 2008-2012* all contain statements strongly supportive of internationalization. These goals are frequently referenced during the admission presentations, orientation programs, and other settings. In other words, internationalization is a key feature of public messages.

3. Support is strong among various University constituencies.

President Maxwell and Provost Renner strongly support comprehensive internationalization. Creation of the Senior Counselor for International Initiatives, joining the ACE 2009-10 Internationalization Laboratory cohort, and numerous public statements indicate strong support for internationalization. Surveys of faculty and staff members also revealed endorsement of the goals and a high level of involvement in various initiatives. Finally, the Board of Trustees has endorsed internationalization and several donors have provided financial support.

4. The curriculum and related activities already provide diverse international opportunities.

In addition to the high quality of the International Business and International Relations majors, the Global and Comparative Public Health Concentration and the Global Ambassador Certificate program offer students the opportunities to enhance their international academic credentials. The number of languages students can

pursue is a strength. In addition to these formal academic opportunities, the Center for Global Citizenship sponsors speakers, an international film series, and organizes many opportunities for students, faculty, and staff members. Students who wish to study abroad may choose from a wide range of options.

5. The receptive campus environment and the quality of the academic experiences available to international students are major assets.

There has been significant growth in the number of international students in recent years. The Admission Office's emphasis on the "personal touch" and the availability of scholarships and financial aid are part of the reason for the growth. The emphasis on experiential and active learning and the availability of internships to international students are especially helpful in the recruitment of these students. The vitality of the total student experience is another strong point. International student organizations are active and vital to campus life and many international students participate in a broad range of campus activities.

Drake University and the central Iowa community provide a welcoming environment to international students. The International Center staff provides high quality services to students and faculty visitors. Faculty members welcome and go out of their way to work with international students.

6. Drake University has some strong international relationships.

The partnership and exchange agreements developed with universities in other countries and other international organizations are active and vital. Perhaps most notably, the connections in China provide opportunities for faculty, students, and graduates through exchanges and teaching programs.

Limitations

During its deliberations, IPAC identified some things that currently inhibit comprehensive internationalization. The good news is that actions can be taken to overcome these limitations.

1. The University's organizational structure and decision-making for international activities and initiatives lack clarity and accountability.

Drake University has taken a decentralized approach to internationalization. The result has been an astonishing growth in the number of initiatives by individual units and faculty members. This growth, however, has resulted in a lack of coordination of efforts, overwhelmed some offices with additional work, and led to ad hoc decision making. The latter happens because there is no internationalization strategic plan to provide guidance in assessing which opportunities should be pursued. Another persistent theme during the conversations IPAC had with those involved in

international activities was that resources have not been allocated or reallocated to accommodate growth that has occurred. Some examples include inadequate support for faculty desiring to lead international study seminars, limited funds for recruiting international students, little marketing of opportunities to internal and external audiences, inadequacy of support for international visiting scholars, and limited support to take advantage of technology. Perhaps the best summary is that there is no person to serve as the lead advocate and spokesperson for internationalization, to coordinate activities across campus, and to assume primary responsibility, at the President's and Provost's direction, for the achievement of *Mission Statement* and *Strategic Plan 2008-12* goals.

2. The support for internationalization among some constituencies could be stronger.

IPAC notes that some segments of the campus community have not assumed ownership of internationalization. There is little question that a majority of faculty and staff support the goal. What is not clear is whether the goal has become a guide for planning and action among administrative and academic units. This may reflect the concern among some that attention to internationalization will translate into less support for other activities. That is, for some internationalization is seen an "unfunded mandate", an add-on rather than an effort to be integrated into current activities. Countering this zero-sum thinking requires some attention.

3. The reward structure does not consistently support international activities and initiatives

From the evidence IPAC gathered, it appears that international activities are not adequately recognized during promotion and tenure considerations and annual faculty performance evaluations. In addition, there is little incentive and encouragement for faculty members to lead international study seminars or get involved in other international initiatives. Publicity about the availability of faculty development funds has been limited and the support available has focused too much on initial contacts rather than strategic development of long-term relationships. In addition, those seeking funds for international efforts are often directed to multiple possible sources increasing the amount work required. Further, support for developing long-term collaborations and relationships has been inadequate.

4. The diversity of international students needs to be enhanced.

While the number of international students has grown, the *Strategic Plan 2008-12* strategy to "diversify the recruitment of international students" remains a challenge. The number of countries represented among our international students has not significantly changed. In addition, international students tend to be concentrated in certain majors. A proactive approach to address this situation is needed.

5. *The opportunity to recruit international faculty members needs to be kept in mind.*

IPAC was unable to gather reliable data about number of international faculty at the University. As best we can tell, approximately 10% of faculty members are natives of countries other than the United States. We recognize that some may consider this impressive but raise the question about whether it is sufficient for a truly internationalized university.

6. *Student perceptions about study abroad must be addressed.*

The survey of students revealed that there is strong interest in studying abroad. Perceptions that the cost is prohibitive, second language skills are required, and their academic program does not permit scheduling of a study abroad experience inhibit students from actively pursuing the possibility. It is important that there is an examination of the accuracy of those perceptions and an analysis of how to deal with them if they are well founded. If the perceptions are erroneous, then a strategy for combating them must be developed.

7. *Student experiences can be strengthened.*

Additional measures can be taken to strengthen international experiences. Greater integration between international study and languages, developing stronger programs after the study abroad experience, and integrating international study into the academic major are all examples of measures that will enhance the quality of the student experience. Just as important, direct evidence of the outcomes of international experiences must be gathered.

Opportunities

The review conducted by IPAC reveals the following opportunities as the University pursues comprehensive internationalization.

1. *The interests and backgrounds of Drake University faculty members present an opportunity to deepen internationalization.*

The survey of faculty members revealed a high level of interest in internationalization. The responses suggest that Drake should focus on Asia (China and India) as the top priorities. There is also support for developing new relationships with Europe, Africa and Central/Latin/South America. Young faculty members appear to have a strong interest in internationalization. Interest was also expressed in faculty development activities that would assist in internationalizing courses. Ways need to be found to build upon these opportunities.

2. *Taking advantage of the curricular development opportunities will enhance the student academic experience.*

Building on the opportunities available at both the University and in the community will enhance comprehensive internationalization. Examples include building on the changes, should they be adopted, contained in the Drake Curriculum Task Force Report, integrating international opportunities offered by Des Moines businesses into academic programs, pursuing the possibilities technology affords, and asking departments/academic majors to identify study abroad options for their students.

3. The Des Moines Community offers opportunities that can help advance internationalization.

The number of organizations in central Iowa concerned with international affairs is remarkable. Collaboration with these groups, when consistent with University goals, can enhance the experience for Drake students. One example is working with the Des Moines Public schools as the International Baccalaureate is developed. Efforts should also be made to offer members of the Des Moines community the opportunity, when appropriate, to take advantage of activities at Drake University. It is also important to encourage and recognize faculty and staff members who work with community groups.

The number of international populations residing in central Iowa represents a potential resource for the University community. Finding ways to productively engage these groups in mutually beneficial ways should be explored.

4. There are opportunities to enhance current partnerships and develop new agreements with international and US institutions of higher education

Drake University already has agreements, often Memoranda of Understanding, with a number of international higher education institutions. Several of these have developed into strong partnerships. Drake University could launch an initiative to develop existing agreements into stronger partnerships by offering more possibilities for collaboration. As one example, international faculty visiting Drake University can learn much about active and experiential learning. As another example, a Drake University team might travel to international universities to talk about active learning techniques or how to involve undergraduates in research. In addition, the University should develop more course equivalency agreements with exchange partners and other international universities, a move that would facilitate the movement of students among institutions. Finally, active pursuit of partnerships with US higher education institutions that have programs abroad is another way of expanding opportunities for faculty members and students.

5. Developing closer connections with international alumni and taking advantage of funding opportunities can also enhance achievement of internationalization goals.

It seems advisable to seize opportunities that have been underutilized in the past. International alumni, for example, can provide assistance with recruiting students, help arrange internships, and may be a source for fund raising to support

internationalization. Additionally, continuing to seize opportunities for grant funding of key programs is important.

Challenges

Several challenges emerged during IPAC deliberations. It will not always be possible to address them but it is important to prepare for the contingencies.

1. *As Drake University increases its international and global activities, awareness and planning for possible external contingencies is highly desirable.*

To note that there is much uncertainty in the world merely states the obvious. Political instability, economic uncertainty, natural disasters, outbreaks of disease, and a variety of other events will occur. Drake University faculty members and students traveling abroad and international students considering Drake will be directly affected by such events. Careful planning, including risk assessment analyses, is especially important for all proposed international activities.

In addition to natural disasters, there are also challenges posed by those involved in the internationalization higher education arena. Competition for international students is intense and increasing as colleges and universities devote more resources to recruitment and financial aid. As the competition increases, the temptation to cut corners also rises. Illegal, unethical, and lax practices by a few could tarnish the internationalization movement.

Finally, the increase in isolationist attitudes by the American public portends the possibility of a less favorable environment for internationalization. Isolationist sentiment among the American public is at a four-decade high (see the *America's Place in the World 2009: An investigation of Public and Leadership Opinion About International Affairs*, Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, December 2009.) It is uncertain what the consequences of this attitudinal change will be but it is important to monitor developments.

2. *As Drake University increases its international and global activities, we need to be prepared to respond to a variety of possible internal challenges.*

It is inevitable that voices expressing reservations about comprehensive internationalization will be heard as the University moves forward. During IPAC's fall semester activities, concerns that internationalization will result in diminishing efforts to enhance domestic diversity, that resources will be diverted from existing programs to support the effort, and worries about the cost of internationalization surfaced. Responding to these concerns is important and should include the following. First, *Strategic Plan 2008-12* commits the University to recruiting "students, faculty, and staff of exceptional abilities who are committed to the mission, goals, and core values of the institution, and who represent the diversity of American

society and the global community.” Explicit discussion of how that commitment translates into strategies and actions that mutually reinforce both domestic and international diversity should be a part of the internationalization strategic plan. Second, IPAC needs to spell out in the plan how the resource concerns are to be addressed.

We must also be ready to respond to several potential student concerns. The student survey revealed exceptionally strong support for study abroad and related activities. Failing to meet students’ rising expectations for international opportunities is a real possibility. Related to that expectation is the concern that students from less privileged economic backgrounds will have fewer opportunities. This may require finding institutional supports for these students so they do not miss out on a key feature of a Drake University education.

Finally, the worry has been voiced that internationalization is highly dependent on a relatively small number of advocates. What happens when those advocates are no longer at the University?

3. The location of Drake University can be a challenge.

The location of Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa can be a tough sell when a prospective international student is seeking the perceived glamour associated with the coasts. For American students, sometimes there is the perception that, upon graduation, international job opportunities available in central Iowa are not plentiful. These perceptions can be addressed by citing the nature of students’ relationships with Drake University faculty members, the welcoming environment on campus and in the larger community, the presence of international populations in central Iowa, the quality of the educational experience, the relative safety of the campus, and that international job opportunities are not limited to those available through central Iowa firms.

Next Steps

Members of the Drake University community are invited to send comments about this Interim Report to Ron Troyer at ronald.troyer@drake.edu. This report and the comments received will provide the basis for developing an internationalization strategic plan.

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