International Education at Western Washington University: Contributions and Means

A WHITE PAPER
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INTRODUCTION

A. The Growing Need for Internationalized Education

Over the past quarter century it has been widely acknowledged that there is a growing need to internationalize U.S. higher education. A pressing global agenda, competition from abroad and an awareness of the increasing interconnectedness between the local and the international communities suggest that the teaching, research and service missions of American universities need to incorporate more international and comparative content and experience. As the U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan recently remarked: “In today’s world the line that separates purely domestic matters from those that are international in nature is increasingly blurred, and the world’s economies and societies are now connected as never before….Ensuring that students acquire global competencies is critical to America’s economic competitiveness, national security, and capacity to work with other countries. Our graduates should be global citizens prepared to work on solving challenges that transcend borders, and they should be able to work well with people from diverse backgrounds, whether it is an individual who is a recent immigrant to the United States living in the community, or a business client or colleague located halfway around the world.”

Those who have studied the process of internationalizing the American campus suggest that action needs to be taken across several fronts. These include: enhancing the curriculum; providing new opportunities for students and faculty to study and teach abroad; expanding international research networks and linkages; incorporating international students more visibly into the overall educational mission of the institution; and securing adequate resources to support all these endeavors. In a recent study of the effort to internationalize the U.S. university, the leading professional organization in the field noted that there was not a single strategy that needed to pursued but, instead, that there were multiple paths towards achieving the desired end. There were two common threads, however, that ran throughout most successful undertakings. The first of these was the “opening and sustaining of a dialogue on campus” regarding the purpose of international education. The second was a creating a campus commitment to its “transformative role from the ground up and from the top down.” This is precisely what the present White Paper on International Education at Western seeks to achieve.

B. Past Efforts at Internationalizing the Educational Mission at Western
Western’s effort to address its needs in international education is not a new undertaking. For over three decades campus faculty, staff, students and the administration have been striving to create a vision and a program that might successfully embrace the demonstrable interest and enthusiasm that exists on campus for study and research within the global community. Starting in the 1970s, Western, like many other universities of the day began its effort to “internationalize the campus” by creating a Foreign Study Office that would help to promote study abroad opportunities for Western students and faculty while also assisting a growing number of in-coming international students. A small but dedicated staff within the Foreign Study Office endeavored to dispense appropriate information and advice to its varied clientele and to provide “in the trenches” support for both the international and American students who made use of its services. The FSO was also given the responsibility to work with faculty in developing new ideas on how the university’s teaching and research efforts might better reflect the broader global community. In this latter regard, it encouraged two major initiatives.

The first of these was the establishment of a Center for Canadian-American Studies that was created in 1972 to encourage an enhanced understanding of the important relationship between the United States and its immediate northern neighbor. This Center soon proved to be quite effective in stimulating faculty teaching and research on Canadian-American concerns across a wide number of topics and disciplines. A number of new courses related to Canada were introduced to the university’s curriculum during the 1980s. In the early 1990s, an interdisciplinary major was established. The Center has continued to grow and now serves as one of two U.S. Department of Education designated Natural Resource Centers for the study of Canada in the United States.

The second significant curricular-based international undertaking by Western during that decade was the creation of the Center for East Asian Studies in 1974. The goal behind this effort was to provide additional campus exposure to the languages, cultures and peoples who live on the other side of the Pacific. The Center encouraged the offering of several new courses focused on East Asia as well as the creation of some initial student and faculty exchange programs with partner universities in that region. A minor and major in East Asian Studies were subsequently established. Likewise, a program of faculty research related to Japan, China and Mongolia was initiated.

However, there were no connecting bridges between these separate international initiatives. Therefore, in the 1990s, there was a growing interest on part of both the WWU faculty and the administration to provide additional focus and direction for international education on campus. In 1991 a faculty committee on internationalization was established to consider various options. The following year, it issued a report calling for: 1) an expanded effort to international curriculum; 2) the creation of an umbrella organization to coordinate international activities at WWU; 3) the consolidation of all existing campus offices related to international matters under this new umbrella organization; and 4) the provision of infrastructural support—staff and funding—to support internationalization at Western. In 1994 a new Center for International Studies and Programs was created to further these efforts. The Center and its Director undertook a variety of useful initiatives. Chief among these was the creation of a new Minor in International Studies which came into effect during the 1996-97 academic year. Other salutary efforts included an expansion of study abroad programming, the encouragement of faculty exchanges and the beginning of international
seminars and discussion groups on campus. Unfortunately, lack of sustained infrastructural support and encouragement from the campus administration ultimately curtailed any additional undertakings on the part of the Center. By the end of the 1990s much of the initial energy and enthusiasm for internationalization efforts on the campus had declined.

Major global events over the next decade, however, were to bring about a resurgence of interest on the part of Western faculty, students and the administration. In the wake of 2001 tragedies and the beginning of the wars in the Middle East, it became apparent that an expansion of international education on campus was urgently needed. Fairhaven College, among others, responded to this challenge by instituting its quarterly World Issue Forum programs which assisted in bringing knowledgeable experts on a variety of international topics to the campus for discussion and dialogue. President Morse and Provost Bodman suggested the need for expanding international education as important campus priority. The University Senate, the Academic Coordinating Council, and the individual colleges undertook discussions of what new initiatives should be pursued. Ultimately it was decided to establish a new Center for International Studies and to hire a new Executive Director to provide focus and direction for these efforts.

In December of 2007 the new Executive Director came on board and began working with faculty, staff and administrators on campus to develop and enhance Western’s international undertakings. New international linkages and partnerships were established. A new weekly lecture series featuring Western faculty, staff and students was instituted. A seed grant program for international curricular development was put into effect. New faculty-led study abroad programs were created. (Please refer to Appendix A for a full listing of such new initiatives.) Discussion of overall curricular priorities in the area of international studies was undertaken along with the submission of a Title VI-A Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language Grant to the U.S. Department of Education in the spring of 2009. Equally important, during the 2008-09 academic year the Center for International Studies undertook a series of Consultation Sessions across campus which asked the academic community to put forth their highest priorities for international education on the campus. More than 100 faculty and staff participated in a dozen sessions. Among the top concerns raised were the following:

- How can we develop a broader menu of study abroad programs?
- How do we better integrate the study abroad experience into the curriculum?
- How many international partnerships and linkages should we pursue and with whom?
- How can we better promote reciprocal exchange programs with partner universities abroad?
- How do we better provide for visiting faculty participating in these exchanges in terms of housing, visa support, office space and integration into the community?
- How do we bring more international students to our campus?
● How do we a better job in providing our international students with the specific support services that they require (immigration, English-language support housing, academic and personal counseling?)

● How might we facilitate greater interaction between our international and American, students, faculty and staff?

● How do we encourage more Western faculty to teach or conduct research abroad?

● How might such efforts be recognized more directly in the promotion and tenure processes?

● How much of our international activities should be internally/externally funded?

● How do we secure external funding to support study abroad participation and the needs of international students?

The coming of a new administrative team to Western has also brought the question of the future of international education into higher profile. President Shepard has identified international education as being among his highest priorities for the campus. In speaking to the campus community in February of 2009 he noted that:

I heard widespread interest in expanding our attention to international programs. I learned of the excellence and the variety in that which we already do. Many see opportunities to do much more and spoke of the significant value in so doing….This is an area that, necessarily, has not been fully developed as we focused upon reaching eminence through engaged excellence. It is now time, though, to ask how can we hope to move from regionally best to nationally esteemed without fully developing and reaping the benefits of vibrant international programs. This again, requires careful, thoughtful, strategic, collaborative thinking. What is important to do first? What can we experimentally do that others have not thought to do? This is precisely the kind of creative activity that we can pursue even as budgets tighten and that we must do if we are to effectively move ahead as the economic outlook improves.6

C. The Creation of the White Paper Committee on International Education

It was with these myriad thoughts in mind that Provost Murphy created in July of 2009 a White Paper Committee on International Education to consider the present and future needs of the campus in internationalization. The Committee was asked to focus its attention on six significant dimensions of international education at Western. These included:

● International Curriculum Development
● Establishment of International Partnerships and Linkages
The Committee’s charge was to study each topic and to make recommendations for the enhancement of program delivery in each area. It then was to present its findings to the campus community during the 2009-10 academic year.

D. Operations of the White Paper Committee on International Education

The White Paper Committee was constituted in August of 2009, drawing its membership from faculty, staff and senior administrators from across campus. It held its first meeting at the end of that month. After considering its charge and the parameters of its inquiry, the Committee established a series of six working groups to gather pertinent information and to consider the primary concerns falling under each of the topical headings listed above. These working groups proceeded with their inquiries during the months of September and October, producing the first drafts of their findings. In November 2009 each group, in turn, presented their initial observations to the Committee as a whole in order to secure from that body important feedback and comments that would be incorporated into their revised draft reports. In December and early January the White Paper Committee heard presentations from several units within the Center of International Studies regarding their present work in international education. It also heard from the Executive Director of the Center regarding what he saw as the challenges and opportunities confronting international education on the campus. In late January and early February 2010 the Committee as a whole reviewed the revised drafts of each of the working groups as well as the specific recommendations that each set forth. The month of March was spent integrating the various elements of the reports. The following document is therefore a vetted compilation of those individual working group reports along with their recommendations.

I. SOME INITIAL THOUGHTS

The members of the White Paper were agreed from the outset on two major points. First, any successful effort to further build international education at Western would require the active interest and participation of all parts of the campus community. The task is one which cannot be undertaken by the Center for International Studies alone. All departments, colleges and academic support units needed to be deeply involved in the undertaking and have a regular means to contribute to the planning and implementation processes. As noted above, international education on a campus is best undertaken through sustained dialogue and from a bottom-up as well as a top-down approach. With this in mind, the White Paper Committee believes that it is important that a forum for on-going discussion and problem solving be established:

Recommendation 1: An International Initiatives Council should be appointed from across the campus community to propose, provide oversight and counsel, and evaluate
Western’s international curricula, international study and research opportunities, international partnerships and exchanges and other international activities. Representatives from the following entities should be named to the Council: The Center for International Studies, the Registrar’s Office, each of the academic colleges and from the Associated Students.

Equally important, the White Paper Committee believes that there is an important need for additional collaboration and information sharing between the various parties involved in the internationalization effort. In particular, it was felt that the Center for International Studies should play a greater role in facilitating consultation and collaboration among the various entities involved. In this manner, important ideas, activities and resources in support of international education can be more effectively shared and promoted:

**Recommendation 2:** As far as possible, each unit on campus should endeavor to develop their international initiatives in mutual consultation with the Center of International Studies. Following this approach the Center can act effectively to provide needed information and services, promote collaboration among units and help facilitate international education for the Western community as a whole.

**II. INTERNATIONAL CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT**

The past decade has witnessed the academic discipline of international studies develop into one of the fastest growing areas of the curriculum across US campuses. Students from a broad spectrum of academic interests are increasingly seeking to gain a greater international perspective from their college education. This has increased demand for degrees in international studies. More broadly, and perhaps more significantly, this growing shift in student interest has increased demand for faculty who are able to provide links to cultures and countries outside the borders of the United States. In keeping with President Shepard’s call for increased emphasis on international studies, measures should be taken to raise the level of international expertise among faculty and staff on campus and to reflect this raised level of interest in the curriculum. As part of this initiative, Western should plan toward strengthening its current international studies minor and working toward the eventual creation of a major. The discussion below begins with suggestions on how Western’s curriculum and faculty could be developed to expand the internationalization of the campus. It ends by assessing the strengths and a weakness of Western’s IS minor, suggesting ways that current limitations in the program can be remedied. The remaining text explains how an international educational focus could be made a more visible part of Western’s curriculum more generally.

**Recommendation 1:** Create a Campus Plan to Focus and Coordinate Western’s International Curriculum

A campus-wide strategic plan should be established to focus and coordinate Western’s efforts at internationalizing its curriculum. The plan should identify areas of
existing strength as well as future needs. Both regional and thematic approaches should be considered. A survey should be undertaken to ascertain what each college and department is doing to internationalize the campus curriculum. An examination should be made of present GUR offerings and of their role in fostering global perspectives. The strategic plan should suggest ways of fostering cross-collegiate collaboration in international curriculum development. It should also identify specific key curricular investments that need to be made for the benefit of the campus as a whole. The latter should include the creation of new tenure-track faculty positions in areas deemed to be a priority as well as funding for international curricular enhancement and revision on a recurring basis. The plan should address ways to send more of our students and faculty abroad and to incorporate our international partners more effectively into Western’s learning and teaching efforts.

**Recommendation 2: Support Efforts within Colleges and Departments to Develop Curricula with International and Global Perspective**

In terms of expertise, Western’s faculty already offers a rich trove of teaching and research experience in multiple areas that crucially inform the discipline of international studies. However, these resources must be better focused toward a common goal. Cross-disciplinary courses such as the FIGs program should be expanded, and collaborative efforts between colleges should be encouraged and supported at the university level. It needs be emphasized at every opportunity that achieving a well-rounded education in the 21st century requires developing an international perspective regardless of individual academic discipline. Efforts should be undertaken to demonstrate to students how gaining an international perspective within the context of any major or minor can be a valuable asset to an undergraduate educational experience. Western’s curriculum should encourage students to pursue the study of international languages and to utilize them in their course work on campus in a number of disciplines and while studying abroad. The goal should be to develop greater “transcultural” and “translingual competence” on the part of our students. In this regard, Western’s Department of Modern and Classical Languages provides an important resource and hub for such curricular undertakings. Additional students should be encouraged to pursue double majors and minors involving a world language. WWU faculty who bring an international perspective to either their teaching or their research should be rewarded by having this dimension of their academic work weighed more heavily in tenure and promotion processes. Academic units who propose hiring new faculty who can bring such perspectives to campus should be given some priority in the allocation of funding for new positions. The present International Seed Grant Program developed by the Center for International Studies, whereby two grants of $1500 apiece are available to support faculty in their efforts to add international content to the curriculum and to the campus community, might be expanded to include support for the hosting of international conferences at Western.

**Recommendation 3: Partner with the Community in Providing International Education Opportunities**

Partnering with local institutions is another way to make progress in international curricular development. We need to look for opportunities to draw upon and incorporate the expertise and experience of community groups, NGOs and our regional educational partners
in developing and sharing international curricular efforts throughout our region and state. It should be recognized that some initiatives such as the Global Advantage and Global Partnership with Whatcom Community College that focus on the transfer of international students and the global literacy of all transfer students already exist. Additional efforts along these lines need to be pursued. We need to consider the utility of co-sponsoring more international speakers and events with our regional community college partners. We need to think more imaginatively as to how local international resources can be brought into the Western classroom and how we can share our knowledge and expertise with community groups and schools through partnership with EESP and other entities. Finally, increased partnering with K-12 schools in such areas as preparatory foreign-language instruction should be investigated more vigorously. This is particularly the case as we expand our curricular undertakings with respect to the Asia-Pacific region.

**Recommendation 4: Grow the International Studies Minor and Provide Additional Advising and Course Support.**

Western’s current Minor in International Studies consists of a solid introductory course, INTL 201 (Introduction to Global Studies), which exposes students to a range of contemporary global issues. The remaining requirements involve the study a foreign language into the second year level, participation in a Western-approved study abroad program, and finally a capstone course, where students write a research paper on a topic of their choice. Depending on the number of credits received during study abroad, the student may also need to take additional electives.

Three steps must be taken to strengthen the existing IS minor. First, with a growing number of students choosing to minor in international studies, demand for the introductory course already exceeds enrollment limitations. The number of declared IS minors has risen from a dozen in Winter quarter 2009 to over 30 in Winter 2010. INTL 201 is currently offered once per quarter, but a second section needs to be added every Fall Quarter. The second problem concerns the existing capstone course, which is essentially an independent study that instructors assume as an overload. Ideally, this important course should be configured as a true capstone course pulling together IS students into a seminar where they can build on their previous course work and experiences. It should also be part of the regular teaching load of designated faculty. Finally, courses across a variety of specific academic disciplines need be developed to provide upper-division electives for students planning to minor in international studies. As the minor currently is configured, there are few courses beyond the introductory course and the final independent study research project that are designed specifically for students seeking proficiency in international studies.

One step toward this needed revision of the IS minor in the creation of additional courses that give additional structure and content. The recent award to the Center for International Studies of a US Department of Education Title VI Grant ($175,000 for the period of August 2009 to August 2011) entitled “Entering the Global Community: Enhancing Student and Faculty Participation and Involvement in Asia-Pacific Studies” can assist in this endeavor. (Please refer to Appendix B). The grant provides funding to develop six new courses (including a revamped capstone course) designed to add new cross-disciplinary curriculum offerings in such areas such as human rights, international business, and environmental studies. Once created, these courses will help strengthen Western’s
international studies program. However, after the new courses are created, there must be a guarantee that they will be offered frequently enough to meet student need on an annual basis. In addition, it is necessary to provide regular, accessible IS minor advising to an increased number of degree seekers.

III. THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND LINKAGES

A. Introduction

International partnerships are deemed to be long-term, mutually-enriching relationships between two or more academic institutions, colleges, schools, or departments involving student and faculty exchanges, joint curricula ventures for courses, degree programs, dual and/or joint degree programs, and collaborative research. In order to fully develop the international programs at Western Washington University in a period of very tight resources, it is necessary to effectively use partnerships with universities abroad. Partnerships allow the university to develop deep and rich relationships with institutions and individual professors, thereby create options that will significantly strengthen international programs at Western. These relationships must have a significant flow of students, faculty and ideas in both directions to be effective, so the choice of partners and the systems that manage these relationships are going to be a very important element in Western’s international strategy.

Thus, developing academic partnerships with institutions abroad should be part of an overall international education plan. As each of these relationships will require significant investment from both sides, they will need to be chosen carefully. This will require targeting specific areas of the world for concentration of Western’s resources, while at the same time satisfying areas of strong student and faculty interest. It should be noted that we must consider the benefits to the university that are not directly international, but that also increase international cooperation among faculty.

Western’s natural geographic location and the interest of the students, faculty and staff move us toward greater emphasis on Asia and neighboring Canada in developing our international partnerships and relationships. Some efforts have already been undertaken to establish firm bonds in these areas. Additional initiatives may be required to solidify our partnerships in the Asia-Pacific region. However, it should be noted the student interest in study abroad at Western has been traditionally been directed toward Europe and Latin America. Both these tendencies will have to be considered in the future development of Western’s portfolio of relationships. Because the challenge of developing deep and rich relationships with other parts of the world requires substantial time and effort, this means that new resources and mechanisms may have to be secured and explored. New faculty-led study abroad programs, consortium arrangements (e.g. International Student Exchange Program or ISEP, Northwest Council on Study Abroad or NCSA) and affiliated study-abroad programs may have to be heavily relied on in developing new partnerships beyond those that presently exist. Since the maintenance of existing exchange partnerships also requires significant administrative and support costs, there will be a need to assess how many of the existing, but less active international relationships with which WWU is presently partnered can continue to be funded.
B. Current International Partnerships

At present, Western currently has formal exchange agreements with academic institutions in 12 countries:

- **Australia**: Edith Cowan University, University of Newcastle, University of Tasmania
- **Austria**: Karl-Franzens Universitäts de Graz
- **Canada**: Trent University
- **Finland**: Aalto University School of Economics, Mikkell Campus
- **France**: Bordeaux School of Business
- **Japan**: Akita International University, Asia University, Nagoya University of Foreign Studies, J.F. Oberlin University, Tsuda College
- **Korea**: Yonsei University, Seoul Women’s University
- **Mexico**: Universidad Latina de America (UNLA)
- **Netherlands**: Erasmus University Rotterdam
- **Sweden**: Luleå University of Technology, Umeå University
- **Turkey**: Bogazici University
- **UK**: University of Hull, University of Plymouth

Most of these relationships represent active, ongoing exchanges of students with some regularity, and in a few instances, with faculty being exchanged in both directions. Some, however, have proved to be less active. In planning for the addition of any new reciprocal partnerships, the contributions of existing exchanges should be considered. Western should develop criteria for assessing the effectiveness of existing exchanges. Ineffective linkages should be terminated. The additional involvement of Western faculty and staff in such academic partnerships should be given a high priority.

Western should also develop a method of integrating partnerships that presently function only at the college level into its overall campus-wide plan of academic exchange. Because of the specialized needs of certain programs, some relationships will necessarily remain focused on only a few departments or colleges, nonetheless ways should be devised for integrating these exchanges into the overall mission of the university and in assessing the overall attractiveness of the portfolio of exchanges in specific countries or areas.

C. International Partnership Characteristics

The set of characteristics desired by the university in its choice of partners abroad needs to be carefully reviewed. The following dimensions should be taken into consideration, though no one institution is likely to offer them all. In the case of multiple relationships with any one country or region, the university may want to judge the utility of the overall “portfolio” of ties in assessing the need to continue or end an individual international linkage. The following are deemed to be important features around which such partnerships might be established:

- Potential for intellectual relationships across several academic fields;
Opportunities to study the language of the country at various levels;

Opportunities to study with local students, perhaps in a local language;

Opportunities to take focused subject courses in English;

Opportunities for collaborative research and teaching

The likelihood that university will move in similar academic directions to WWU.

The partner university’s experience in handling international students in terms of the services they provide, the integration of students into the classroom, the available accommodations, etc.;

The partner university’s experience hosting visiting faculty and providing benefits such as housing, faculty office, etc.;

The likelihood that the partner university will maintain its academic status over the next five to ten years.

**Recommendation 1: Develop Principles Governing International Partnerships and/or Guidelines to Establish International Partnerships.**

The above principles can be utilized as a starting point for the development of governing criteria for the establishment of international partnerships involving Western. Such principles can assist us in determining whether a new partnership makes sense and the extent to which time and resources should be directed toward it. We should seek partnerships with a number of academic institutions around the globe. However, rather than adhering to any set formula that would dictate a specific number of exchanges or partnerships per country or region, there should be a degree of flexibility that takes into account the reality that some linkages may satisfy specific needs and priorities within individual colleges and departments at Western. Likewise, having multiple ties with any one region or country may enable Western to develop its expertise in that area. It needs to be remembered that such partnerships exist to encourage collaborative faculty research as well as student and faculty exchange.

**Recommendation 2: Assess Current International Partnerships and Linkages in Accordance with the Principles and Guidelines in Establishing International Partnerships.**

Western must develop criteria like those outlined above for measuring the effectiveness of active exchanges. Also, these same criteria should be used to terminate weak or inactive exchanges so as to improve and refocus international energies and resources on campus. Resources in support of new exchanges must be carefully calculated and allocated. This will involve assessing the start-up costs of new exchanges and may, ultimately, affect how many relationships will be required in any particular country or region. Such an
assessment will also be required in determining the degree of resources required for sustaining an existing partnership. A strong base of support in relevant academic and administrative units is essential for any institutional partnership to be effective. Partnerships dependent upon the interests and activities of one individual or a small number of people on either side of the relationship are more likely to become inactive over time as the personnel and interests on campuses change over time. An effort must be made to assure that there are multiple points of continuing research and professional contact between the faculty of any institutional partnership and that these connections are with several academic units. Determining upon which countries or regions to focus our energies needs to be guided by a long-term assessment of the rationale for engagement rather than being guided primarily by transitory student or faculty interests. The goal is to have a reasonable number of active partnerships with universities abroad that encompass student, faculty and staff exchange, collaborative research, teaching, personal and professional development.

Recommendation 3: Increase the Number and Diversity of Direct Exchange Opportunities as a Proportion of Total Study Abroad Offerings at WWU.

Direct exchange advising for both in-coming and out-going students and faculty is complex and labor intensive. Therefore, any increase in the number of direct exchange opportunities must be accompanied by a commensurate increase in professional support for such efforts. Criteria for determining the need for new exchanges in significant areas of the world need to take into consideration the following factors: How much academic interest is there in a particular country or region on the part of WWU students and faculty? It would seem appropriate to focus our energies on those areas where the Western curriculum spurs an interest. Secondly, we must consider what alternative options exist for faculty and students for learning abroad. If there are already many other ways for students or faculty to engage other international communities, we need not necessarily build new direct exchange linkages. Existing ISEP, group study options, and faculty-led programs may meet the needs of many of our students. However, the important need for individual students and faculty to experience other societies directly, using their languages, living in their cultures and participating in their classrooms as a regular student or faculty member suggest that direct exchange opportunities be more broadly available to the members of our campus—especially if they are set in the context of on-going inter-institutional collaboration in learning and research. Direct exchanges need to become a more visible part of the study abroad option at Western. As noted above, however, resources need to accompany such direct-exchange undertakings. An addition and/or reallocation of staff resources within the Office of International Programs and Exchanges needs to take place. Furthermore, we need to identify and give support to faculty members who have prior experience with our partner universities and who can assist in promoting such academic opportunities with their students and colleagues.

Recommendation 4: Work to Increase the Faculty and Staff Exchanges with Western’s International Partners and Provide Necessary Support for These.

Western should ideally seek to establish exchanges that would enjoy natural support and interest by various faculty and staff belonging to more than one program or department. This goal should be pursued in the interest of the long-term vitality and continuity of the
academic partnership. A new focus should be given to actively involve such faculty and staff as well as Western students in institutional exchanges. The Center for International Studies should expand its efforts to assist departments and colleges in identifying potential exchange participants and assisting them in making the appropriate contacts with their opposite numbers abroad. Additional attention needs to be directed toward providing necessary housing, travel assistance, visa support and local orientation for both in-coming and out-going faculty and staff participants in such exchanges. Broader connection should be made community groups interested in international exchange including the Bellingham Sister Cities Association and Rotary among others.

IV. THE STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE

A. Introduction: Study Abroad as an Integral Part of An International Strategy

The American Council on Education defines internationalization as, “the process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research, and service functions of the university.”7 Affirming the importance of this process, the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges regards internationalization as, “the critical means whereby the quality of our academic learning, discovery, and engagement can be enhanced, broadened, and enlivened.”8

Meeting this definition requires facing challenges in globalizing our curriculum and providing worthwhile study abroad opportunities as well as reassessing the existing culture of the institution. Faculty, administrators and staff alike must share in this international vision for Western in order to prepare students who will be able to make significant personal, social, economic and community contributions to an increasingly globally interdependent world.

While we strive to provide an intellectually and culturally diverse environment that enhances individual growth and development, Western’s campus community alone cannot supply all of the implied dimensions of an international education for all of its students. Therefore, we should provide a focused combination of direct exchange, consortia, affiliate and faculty-led intensive programs in a broad variety of countries and cultures in collaboration with partners abroad. The selected study-abroad programs should provide our students with those communicative and cognitive competencies that are necessary for them to thrive in a global economy, let alone allowing for personal growth, development and maturity. In order to accomplish these goals, the selected programs must engage students with the people and culture of the countries they visit.

The challenge is not simply to increase the number of students studying abroad. After all, it is quite possible to be abroad with little or no contact with the local population. If most of the experience takes place in a classroom without local participation, the international intention will, for all intent, have been negated. Thus, we should encourage a greater emphasis on programs with wider community and cultural contact, or, in the case of faculty-led, project-based learning, activity in the community. This approach may reduce the number of potential student experiences abroad because of the challenge of managing this level of program, and because some students may prefer not to challenge this degree of immersion in another culture. But the payoff from this emphasis for Western’s community,
and for the experiences that these students bring back to the community, will be significantly greater.

In addition to the selection of appropriate study-abroad experiences for students, gaining credit for their study-abroad courses and for completed projects remains a primary concern for students who consider studying abroad. Rather than setting up paper roadblocks we should welcome them back into the community by recognizing the place of departmental elective credits for projects and courses completed abroad. When Western’s culture recognizes this need, our student population will see even more reasons to expand their international horizons.

Not only should study abroad programs provide students with a solid grounding of international cultures, it should concurrently expand and strengthen offerings across the curriculum. Integrating study-abroad experience into the wider international strategy for Western is one component of that expansion. Before students depart, we will need to expand offerings with an international theme and provide cultural orientations for each destination country. On their return, we will have to make better use of the knowledge that students bring back to the campus. The discussion below highlights each of these topics in more detail, providing specific recommendations for each.

B. Western’s Outgoing Student Study-Abroad Programs

Western currently offers a variety of study abroad options: WWU Faculty-led Programs take students either for classroom study or for a project-oriented activity abroad. Direct Exchanges allow students to study at partner universities. (Please refer to Appendix C). These first two types are lower cost due to the WWU tuition base. Contracted Programs, on the other hand, are one-way programs by academic bodies or organizations specializing in study programs. These programs have much more guidance, student support and a higher cost.

In the academic years spanning 2006-2009, nine faculty-led programs resulted in 104 students studying in at least 10 different countries, where they focused on specific life and curricular issues. These programs stand out for their uniqueness, but cannot meet the expanding needs of Western students. Western’s nine sponsored programs, particularly NCSA and KCP International, maintained fairly high enrollments in mostly European and Asian countries. One of these programs, LEXIA, is accrediting all of its world programs through Western via a mechanism that was apparently generated in International Programs and Exchanges over ten years ago. Some of Western’s ten affiliate programs, especially CEA, API and GST, were also well-enrolled, although once again these enrollments appear to have been for the most part in traditional destinations. Many of these sponsored and affiliate programs, while active, include the same groups of diverse destinations, so that they appear to be competing for students. The dozens of co-sponsored university and institute programs, like the direct/reciprocal exchanges, were underrepresented. Half of those programs had no student participation in the past three years; most had no more than one enrollee. ISEP exchanges were particularly notable because only their French universities and their English-speaking universities in the Netherlands and New Zealand had any significant enrollment. A smattering of German, Spanish, and Eastern European countries
(already available through more traditional programs) did attract at least one student during 
this period.

Recent studies show that while the traditional program of classroom study with other 
foreign students is still the norm, many more students are self-selecting experiences in which 
they actively engage another culture on a thematic or problem-solving level, even if the 
extperience is shorter in length than more traditional programs. Students are also selecting to 
study abroad at different times in their academic career, sometimes preferring two shorter 
experiences than the traditional semester abroad, according to a May 2009 IIE report entitled 
“Expanding Study-Abroad Capacity at U.S. Colleges and 
Universities.” To meet these changing needs, direct exchanges, intensive language 
programs, faculty-led thematic programs, and traditional contract programs should all be 
available in countries that are popular destinations. Too many of any one kind of program – 
especially of the traditional semester-abroad at a university in an international student 
population – are not as conducive to an academically-enriched experience since the students’ 
interaction with the culture is passive. Thus, we believe that a focused combination of 
options in a large variety of cultures will better serve Western’s future needs. It may be 
necessary to reduce the number of programs with contract operators in order to reduce 
commitment to one type of program versus others. In addition, specialized study programs 
that may attract more diverse groups of students across more than one discipline could 
broaden the reach of the study-abroad experience across Western’s campus and draw more 
diverse students into the larger population. Federally-funded scholarships like the Gilman 
should be actively promoted as a means to achieving that end. Faculty members, as one of 
the most important resources for promoting study abroad, and their departments, where 
credits for these experiences are granted, should be involved in selecting and evaluating those 
programs in which their students might participate. To effectively evaluate current and 
potential study-abroad offerings, a set of criteria defining each type of program should be 
constituted.

**Recommendation 1: Evaluate the Mix Current Study Abroad Options for Their Relevancy 
to Western’s Curricular Mission and Its Programmatic Needs.**

**C. Transferring Credit from Study Abroad**

Students considering study abroad are understandably concerned with the prospect of 
transferring credit from abroad. They also want to show potential employers via their 
transcript not only *that* they have studied abroad, but *what* they studied abroad. Without a 
clear process and without clear recognition for their efforts, students will hesitate to 
undertake study-abroad opportunities. A study by the International Education Forum lists 
cconcerns over credit as being one of the key barriers to increasing the number of students 
studying abroad.

An appropriate model for solving this challenge is already in place. A survey by the 
White Paper Committee of west-coast public universities shows a consistent pattern of 
policies that make the transfer of credit more predictable for students and faculty alike. The 
model starts by giving the student a placeholder¹ study abroad course (’337 Study Abroad:
Generic’) when the student registers in an international university that has an approved program. This keeps the student continuously registered and eligible for financial aid. Western adopted this initial step some time ago, but it has not taken the next steps toward implementation of the model. In other West Coast public institutions, the student who returns from a study-abroad experience presents documentation of successful completion of the courses to the Study Abroad Office, which routes them to individual departments for approval. Letter grades are often required for department credit. The student can receive credit in two ways. If there is a course at Western that matches the course taken abroad, on-campus credit for a perfect match course is given. Often, however, given the very nature of international experience, there is no Western course that matches the international content. If no match is available, departments are asked to make a judgment that the course represents sophomore / junior / or senior level work in the functional area of the student. If confirmed as such, the ‘337 Study Abroad: Generic’ credit is changed to ‘337 Study Abroad: Department’. The department retains the final judgment on transfer credit in every system.

California, Oregon and Washington universities all use some variation of this process. In Washington, Western is the only public university that does not provide this ‘337 Study Abroad: Department’ course to enable students to easily earn home department credit for their study-abroad course work. California, with its system-wide set of partner exchange programs, only gives automatic credit for these exchange programs with partner schools. Oregon schools transfer credit for all approved programs, including the specific grades as well. The transcript makes explicit that the courses were taken abroad by labeling the term of foreign study and then listing the courses that transfer into the Oregon university. (Please refer to Appendix D). This makes clear that the course work was not taken at the home university, while giving legitimacy to the courses taken abroad.

When other Washington universities moved to establish this system, Western chose to implement only the Generic Study Abroad placeholder as ‘International Studies 205/305/405.’ It has been general policy at Western that only courses that are taken on campus (or on study tours led by Western faculty) can appear on a student’s transcript. Nevertheless, there are currently, two ‘337 Study Abroad: Department’ courses in Western’s catalog (Management 337 and Economics 337). These courses have greatly simplified both advising and credit transfer. The current system, which leads to a lack of transparency and increased administrative complexity, needs to be reviewed if we are to move forward in internationalizing the campus.

If a system consistent with all the other West Coast public universities were to be adopted, there would be additional benefits as well. Students could clearly and objectively show potential employers the nature of their study-abroad experience. Transcripts would provide all users a clear picture of the educational experience of the student. Second, the ‘337 Study Abroad: Department’ classes, when they are established in the catalog, send a clear message to outside constituencies that Western is committed to integrating study abroad to the educational experience. Families shopping for a school with an international commitment will immediately see that each department recognizes the value of study abroad. Employers who are considering our students for employment can see that our programs recognize the value of international experience in each of our departments.

It should be noted that this revised credit-recognition system would also make life easier for both pre-trip advising and post-trip processing of credit transfer. If a ‘direct match’ must be found and evaluated for a course, this can be quite time-consuming for faculty and
international programs’ staff. That time can be better used for the basic advising of students pre-departure, and for the debriefing and sharing of experiences on return to campus.

Finally, many of our outstanding students are transfer students. If study abroad is not recognized on the transcript as Western credit, they can often fail the minimum credit requirement to receive graduation honors.

**Recommendation 2: Make Credit Transfer More Transparent Within Each Academic Department. Each Department Should Develop a Study Abroad Course (337) to Encourage Student Participation and Facilitate International Study Abroad Options.**

### D. Faculty-Led Programs

Western’s faculty-led study abroad courses have expanded significantly in recent years in number, in geographic scope, and in disciplinary breadth. Faculty-led course destinations recently offered or soon to be offered through International Programs & Exchanges (IPE) and Extended Education and Summer Programs (EESP) include South Africa, Ghana, the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Mexico, and India, as well as more traditional destinations in Western Europe such as Italy, Greece, and Switzerland. (Please refer to Appendix E). Course themes range from language study, cultural studies, history, and sociology, to development studies, international business, environmental studies, and field biology. The goals of this section are to identify: 1) how WWU faculty can be better supported to create more study abroad courses, and 2) how faculty commitments to existing study abroad courses can be made more sustainable over the long term.

Faculty-led study abroad programs offer unique advantages for internationalizing the curriculum. Faculty-led courses are appealing to Western students because: 1) they are offered by professors with whom students are already familiar or can get to know face-to-face at orientation sessions; 2) they do not involve any potential hurdles in having credits transferred or being recognized by the university; and 3) they are part of the academic infrastructure with which students are already familiar and comfortable. Faculty who already possess significant familiarity and previous experience in a foreign country are in a position to design experiential, heavily field-based courses that complement more traditional classroom-based international study tours. Faculty-led study-abroad courses may be most useful for students who have not traveled abroad before or are otherwise reticent about studying abroad, and for whom the familiar confines of a Western-listed course are a significant encouragement for taking that step to go abroad. Students who would be unlikely to proactively identify and apply to independent study-abroad programs (which represent the vast majority of opportunities for students) will be especially likely to benefit from faculty-led study abroad programs.

At the same time, faculty-led programs are not substitutes for study-abroad opportunities that offer students a more complete immersion experience, such as enrolling in an overseas university where instruction is not in English, or conducting independent self-designed research and study internationally (e.g. Fairhaven College’s Adventure Learning Grant). On most faculty-led courses the students interact with other Western students during much of their learning, as opposed to being truly immersed in another culture or society. Faculty-led
courses also typically involve classroom discussion and analytical investigation predominantly in English, which may limit the extent to which participants gain foreign-language proficiency. Finally, the length of time that students spend abroad on a faculty-led course tends to be relatively brief (typically 7 weeks or less), compared with programs where students are enrolled for a full quarter or more of study abroad at a foreign academic institution. For the above reasons, faculty-led courses abroad are best viewed as complementing rather than substituting for other international study options for students.

**Recommendation 3:** WWU Should Offer a Diverse Range of Affordable Study Abroad Options Including Faculty-Led, Independent Study and Direct Exchange Options.

**E. Providing Assistance for Study-Abroad Development**

The growing diversity of faculty-led study abroad courses Western reflects an intense level of international interest among faculty, as well as a desire to meet student interest in study abroad and international or global education. The expansion of faculty-led programs is all the more impressive given that designing, organizing, and teaching study abroad courses places heavy demands on the time and energies of participating faculty. (See Appendix B for a complete list of these duties.) This explain why some Western faculty may be reluctant to develop study-abroad opportunities in their area of expertise, or may decline to maintain existing study-abroad offerings even after investing significant time and energy in initiating and running it a program for one or more years.

Experiences at other universities suggest it may be possible to shift primary responsibility for some of the faculty pre-departure administrative responsibilities to IPE and EESP, such as arranging airfare, visas, and travel health insurance coverage. This would be expected to involve an increase in these programs’ staffing requirements. Greater opportunities to secure release time for course planning and implementation would also help faculty initiate and sustain study-abroad programs. Current funding opportunities like the International Programs Seed Grants are important for helping faculty explore initial ideas and logistics for study abroad courses, but they alone are not enough to support the full level of faculty investment that is necessary to develop and sustain most study-abroad programs.

Other options for encouraging faculty to develop international courses might involve raising the profile of study-abroad courses (and the availability of seed grants for developing them) at new faculty orientation, having faculty already involved in study abroad host information sessions and workshops for other interested faculty, increasing the internet resources available for assisting faculty in creating international courses, and dialoguing with the Faculty Senate on study-abroad initiatives and opportunities. All of these are secondary, however, to having adequate funding and/or release time available for study-abroad course development, and to having strong, effective administrative support to assist faculty with course logistics and implementation. With these two factors in place, faculty will likely continue to pursue international interests and an increased portfolio of study-abroad courses at Western is the expected result.

Additional pressure occurs when faculty devoting time to teaching abroad constrain an academic department or program’s options for meeting existing responsibilities for on-campus course offerings, student advising, staffing academic committees, and other
administrative roles that faculty play. Some programs with particularly high faculty interest and involvement in study abroad courses are already wrestling with these challenges. Limitations placed by the current fiscal environment for Western and other Washington state public universities are likely to exacerbate the challenges of meeting existing on-campus academic responsibilities while simultaneously expanding study abroad course offerings. (Please refer to Appendix F).

**Recommendation 4: Reduce the Organizational and Administrative Workload Involved for Faculty Involved in Setting up and Implementing Study Abroad Courses and Provide Appropriate Support and Assistance in IPE and EESP.**

**F. Management of the Office of International Programs and Exchanges**

The Office of International Programs and Exchanges has been historically under-funded as a result of its self-sustaining status. It finds itself in an especially untenable position at this time because the office has been given a variety of additional roles – student and faculty-related—over the past decade. The reception area is not easily visible when students and faculty enter College Hall. Nor has the Office done much in the way of promotional outreach to the rest of the campus. In addition, the Office’s website is underpowered and not as useful as it could be. Finally, there has been little time for the Office to consider its overall goals and objectives. No global review of the Office’s mission, processes and responsibilities has taken place for a considerable period. An internal review of the Office’s operations with an eye to assisting it to operate more effectively is required. Appropriate levels of staffing, space and funding need to be provided in order to enable the IPE Office to function efficiently.

**Recommendation 5: Undertake An Internal Review of the Office of International Programs and Exchanges and Adjust Funding and Staff Support Where Needed.**

**V. FACULTY TEACHING AND RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES ABROAD**

The topic of internationalization has too often been conceived as an activity that is limited to student exchange. Instead, a key goal in planning the university’s international outreach should be to advance teaching, research and service opportunities for its faculty as well. According to an IIE report entitled “Expanding Study-Abroad Capacity at US Colleges and Universities” (May 2009), student interest in studying abroad is most often driven by faculty who have international collaborations of various kinds. (p. 17) In the 21st century it is clear that teaching, research and service stand to benefit in multiple ways from academic connections forged across national and international borders by university faculty members and their departments.

There is currently no systematic method on campus for tracking the extent that faculty collaborate, research, teach or serve internationally. An informal survey by Research and Sponsored Programs identified only nine Western faculty who currently have externally or internally-funded projects with international connections. Five of these projects (Don
Alper, CCAS, Border Policy; Doug Clark, Geology; Wayne Landis, Environmental Toxicology) involve collaborations with Canadian agencies or institutes. NSF-funded research by individual faculty members is also taking place in the Siberian Arctic (Andy Bunn, Environmental Sciences) and in Ghana (Seth Feinberg, Sociology). Another faculty member (Judy Pine, Anthropology) is working with minority languages in Tibet and China. Service learning projects are on-going in Kenya as well.

International Programs and Exchanges identified the following incoming Fulbright exchanges since 2003: (1) four foreign-language teaching assistants from Mongolia and from Russian were sponsored by Modern and Classical Languages; and (2) two visiting students/scholars from Albania and Indonesia were sponsored by Psychology. According to Professor Shaw Gynan, Western’s Fulbright representative, Western has sent twenty faculty members abroad as Fulbright scholars since 1998, but there have been no such awards in the past two years.

In addition, an average of seven or eight faculty members per year have had teaching assignments abroad since 2000, either in faculty-led programs or in visiting-faculty positions through consortia (NCSA, IVS) or study-abroad arrangements with programs like Lexia. The trend has been increasingly in favor of faculty-led programs in recent years: nine such programs have been implemented since 2006, enrolling from 3 to 27 students in “Art/Art history in Japan,” a “Tuscan Summer in Sienna,” and a “Semester in India,” among other topics. In the past decade, faculty members from all of Western’s academic colleges, with the exception of CST, have taught in international settings. CHSS, Huxley, and CFPA were most often represented during that period, but faculty from Fairhaven, WCE, and TOESL also participated in teaching abroad. Finally, some Western faculty do have service commitments to international organizations (government agencies, NGOs or public entities). For example, Brad Smith (Huxley) serves on the Steering Committee of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, based in Geneva, Switzerland.

A clearing house of these and other faculty collaborations in teaching, research and service experiences would benefit the larger university community by allowing faculty and students with similar interests internationally to get to know each other and to collaborate on campus to larger audiences. This is necessary in order to be able to identify effectively and efficiently those individuals who might be relevant to the development of new or on-going international opportunities.

**Recommendation 1: Establish and Maintain a Database on Western Faculty Involved in International Collaboration.**

Changing the campus culture with regard to the value placed on faculty involvement in international teaching, research and service requires developing a program of incentives that reward and foster faculty who demonstrate success in the pursuit of international interests. Rewards for these kinds of successes should be reflected in the directives the university issues with regard to hiring new faculty and promoting those already on campus.

First, it cannot be emphasized enough that any future vision of faculty development must be kept in mind during searches to fill new or vacated faculty positions. The ability of an applicant to demonstrate the potential to engage in cross-disciplinary teamwork on campus as well as with universities and scholars abroad must be accorded priority in the
hiring process. Even a more general directive to hire faculty who can contribute to the internationalization of the campus would constitute a big step forward in laying the groundwork for more faculty involvement in teaching, research, and service with an international component.

Next, promotions and leave awards for Western faculty could be weighted in favor of those that demonstrate substantive accomplishments in cross-border cooperation. Options might include: (1) reserving one or more professional leave slots annually for outstanding international projects; (2) guaranteeing travel monies for professional leave projects which are awarded through normal channels but which will benefit Western’s international focus; (3) reserving one of more summer research grants for those projects with promising international dimensions; (4) weighing international collaborations more heavily in tenure and promotion cases; or (5) providing more support for outgoing Fulbright awardees in the form of continuing retirement contributions and on-going health benefits. The same IIE report that was cited above confirms that sabbatical and tenure/promotion policies that “favor the international engagement of faculty members” an important force for internationalizing the campus culture.11

**Recommendation 2: Change the Campus Culture by Rewarding and Promoting Outstanding Faculty who Maintain Successful International Collaborations of Various Kinds.**

Another path toward fostering international links requires placing more emphasis on the value of teamwork by providing incentives for faculty who work well with other faculty and staff on campus. Western must find ways to encourage partnerships across functional borders at Western, first and foremost, before seeking to strengthen ties to universities abroad, since such ties, by definition, require a broad vase of mutual support across different programs existing here. In so doing, we will emphasize cross-disciplinary efforts which are at the heart of a liberal arts education.

Ideally, a team or group of collaborating professors on campus would seek a partner group abroad. Fostering this kind of teamwork approach to research projects, for example, would be a way in which Western could distinguish itself among other American universities. To that end, funding must be provided, or generated, to allow both faculty and staff to visit their respective partners at our partner institutions in other countries, and vice versa. Course releases are another way in which Western could support faculty who are in the process of creating international partnerships. Priority should also be given to sponsoring conferences that might serve as a catalyst for developing international relationships or for supporting those that already exist. Venues should be created to bring international researchers to our campus. The lead set by such programs as Canadian-American Studies, for example, could be used to broaden associations.

**Recommendation 3: Strengthen Research and Pedagogical Ties across Western’s Campus. Based on Such Cross-Disciplinary Approaches on Campus, Develop Ties with International Organizations, Institutions and Individuals.**
Exploring the possibilities of reciprocal faculty exchange should also be undertaken as a means to bring international scholars to campus for longer than a brief visit, for Western faculty to work in another setting, and for potential partnerships to be developed. One hindrance for international faculty who might be interested in spending a quarter or academic year at Western is the lack of faculty housing. Providing and maintaining a small residence for visiting faculty near or on campus would alleviate this problem. In addition, Western needs a more coordinated approach for responding to requests from international scholars and speakers to visit campus. A set of criteria detailing, for instance, how a scholar or speaker might make multiple connections on campus, such as the approach currently in place in the College of Business and Economics and for Japan Week, should be generalized and coordinated across campus.

**Recommendation 4: Recruit and Support Visiting Faculty from Abroad Enabling Them to Participate in the Teaching, Research and Service Missions of the University.**

The Office of International Programs and Exchanges has facilitated a number of faculty-led programs since 2006. However, there are two types of such programs currently being supported: (1) experiential programs, which are essentially direct exchanges, and which engage students in community-based or research-focused projects within the culture being visited, and (2) course-based programs in which students earn Western credit while studying in an international setting where they have limited engagement with the culture being visited. These two types have different support needs and different outcomes. The first type is following recent trends in the service-learning types of experiences that students are favoring more and more; the second type is essentially a short-term traditional study-abroad program which students can undertake during the academic year through existing contracts with consortia. Experiential programs that integrate learning with practice should be well-focused and well-integrated into a Western program of study; course-based summer programs should demonstrate their uniqueness to other international opportunities that are already in place at Western.

Faculty who do create innovative, interdisciplinary or experiential international programs for Western students need administrative support that streamlines and coordinates the approval process, partnership agreements, recruitment, evaluation, and budgeting while evaluating the programs’ relevancy and quality. These programs require considerable effort on the part of the professor, who must act as promoter, recruiter, planner, guide, teacher, accountant and advisor even before leaving Western’s campus. According to two recent faculty program leaders, IPE was very helpful in setting up their programs, serving as a base for advertising, recruitment, and budgeting. This kind of service, with qualified staff who can work closely with faculty implementers, should be continued. In addition, IPE needs to follow-up on these programs to determine how individual programs have fared and how they might be improved in the future and to improve its own support of these efforts.

**Recommendation 5: Provide an On-Going Opportunity for the Faculty to Participate and Assist in the Planning, Implementation, and Promotion of Faculty-Led Study-Abroad Programs and Collaborative International Curriculum Efforts.**
VI. INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SUPPORT, ADMISSIONS AND RECRUITMENT

A. Introduction

International students in the United States make significant contributions to campus learning, community diversity and the economy. Regardless of their home countries, they bring with them rich experiences and unique cross-cultural perspectives that help to internationalize the campus and give the campus community first-hand opportunities to learn about the world. At Western, however, international students comprised less than 2% of the student population as of Fall 2009.

B. Categories and Characteristics of International Students at Western

1. Undergraduate and Graduate Degree-Seeking Students

For Fall 2009, 124 undergraduate and 12 international graduate students were enrolled for a total of 136 students representing 33 countries. The top five countries of origin were Japan, South Korea, Canada, Taiwan and China. The top five fields of study were Business Administration and Management, Biology, Communication Sciences & Disorders, Art, Psychology, and Communication. The degree-seeking students have been formally admitted through Undergraduate or Graduate Admissions to Western and thus are eligible to earn a Western degree. Fewer than 5 new freshman, 30 new transfers and 10 new graduate students begin each year. (Please refer to Appendix G). All newly-admitted international students must provide documentation of one year of complete financial support prior to admission.

International students pay regular tuition, are not eligible for need-based financial aid but are eligible for merit and MAP (Multicultural Achievement Program) scholarships and have all other rights and privileges of a Western student (housing, course registration, computer labs, etc.). Visa documents, immigration advising and information, new student orientation and international student activities/programming efforts are provided through the Office of International Programs and Exchanges.

2. Undergraduate and Graduate Exchange Students (non-matriculated students who take academic courses but are not degree-seeking)

For fall 2009, there were 36 non-matriculating exchange students, approximately 23% of the total international student population at Western. These students study at Western for one quarter to an academic year in duration through direct exchange programs and the International Student Exchange Program (ISEP). (Please refer to Appendix H). Exchange students are selected by their host institutions and/or from ISEP based on Western’s international student admissions criteria, academic performance and reference letters. International Programs and Exchanges receives copies of their applications (which include transcripts and reference letters) then forward that information to the Office of Admissions. Students are assigned a student number and are eligible to receive the same services as other students because their tuition and fees are paid by a WWU outgoing exchange student. Exchange students are provided the same services through IPE as other international
students. Housing is provided on campus because it is required by the exchange agreements. Exchange students are not eligible to earn a degree from Western and are not admitted to an academic major. So although they are generally equivalent to junior status or higher while at Western, course access can be problematic as it requires permission from academic departments and/or instructors.

C. Special Programs for Non-matriculated Students

There are several special programs for non-matriculated international students that include Intensive English Program (IEP), Asia University America Program (AUAP), Korea University Program, and Extended Education & Summer Programs (EESP) summer programs. These students receive a W# and have use of campus facilities; however, in most cases they do not take Western courses and have limited integration into the university community. Primary services such as recruitment, admissions, advising, orientation and instruction are provided by the specific program. Tuition is also determined by the specific program.

1. IEP is an academic English language program that prepares students for academic study and provides a bridge to entering a degree program for those students who may not initially meet the English language proficiency requirements at Western. IEP manages the conditional admission process for freshman and transfer students from U.S. and foreign institutions and also offers an Academic English Program (AEP). After successfully completing Academic English, students may begin to take credit-bearing university classes while continuing to enroll in part-time IEP classes. Once students are able to satisfy Western’s English language requirements they will be granted full admission as a degree-seeking student at Western. On-campus housing for IEP students is provided on a space available basis. IEP enrolls more than 200 students each year in its program.

2. The AUAP represents a 22-year collaborative effort dedicated to broadening the international perspectives, knowledge and skills of undergraduate students both at Asia University and at Western. This English language and culture program hosts about 110 students per year. On-campus housing is provided through the Western/Asia University agreement.

3. The Korea University Program is a relatively new program that is similar to AUAP in that Korean students seek to improve their English language skills and learn more about American culture. About 60 students participate in KUP instructional programs each year.

4. Extended Education & Summer Programs (EESP) hosts a variety of youth groups for short term English language and culture programs. These include Korean middle school and Spanish high school students. They live on campus, have Western student counselors, and activities are determined by EESP staff and the coordinating organization.
**Recommendation 1:** Establish an Internal Working Group that Examines and Assesses the International Student Experience at WWU and Develops a Strategic Vision and Plan for Recruitment, Admissions and Support of International Students that is Part of the Core Mission of the University.

Western is fortunate to have an incredibly talented and committed group of student affairs professionals and other administrators, faculty, staff and students who are eager to help the university expand access to, opportunities for, and support of international students. Currently at Western the scope of program support and services for international students is broad but there is no articulated infrastructure or philosophy/common understanding of international students, both matriculated and non-matriculated. Those that work in the various international student programs or collaborate with those programs have the knowledge and experience for working with international students, however there is still insufficient knowledge and experience on the part of the campus community. Communication among stakeholders about international students groups and needs, or how to deliver services to these students is insufficient and needs improvement.

In order to understand what student support services are currently being provided to international students, it is important to conduct an internal student service audit of objectives, practices and resources for each program while identifying cross-over, duplication of services, differences of philosophy, etc. as well as assessing effectiveness. There are several model institutions and best practices that could be appropriate for Western to investigate further. NAFSA: Association of International Educators has published a list of principles to guide the provision of services for international students to colleges and universities throughout the US. The CAS (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education) standards set benchmarks for international student services by outlining essential student learning and development outcomes.

International Programs and Exchanges has incorporated these principles set forth by NAFSA: Association of International Educators into its mission statement. Western is an institutional member of NAFSA and several international programs’ staff are actively involved in NAFSA, attend conferences to keep updated in the field, and use these principles as guidelines for providing services to international students.

In Spring 2009 a survey and research project of matriculated international students at Western conducted by Student Affairs Administration graduate student Fred Polinder found that a high percentage of matriculated international students at Western are fairly satisfied with access and quality of services, feel supported by faculty, staff and other students, and have successfully established friendships with other students. However, the findings also revealed that some students have experienced challenges related to finances, academic difficulty and engagement with the Western and Bellingham communities. So, although Western has done well to support current international students with the limited resources available, there is always room for improvement. His research findings suggest the follow recommendations:

- more admissions-based scholarships to mitigate the cost of tuition and fees;
- making further efforts in the recruitment of matriculated international students, continuing to offer and promote the Conditional Admission and Academic English option for new students;
- implementing and expanding on social programs that connect international students to domestic students and the Bellingham community;
- expanding on the newly created student-run International Buddy Program;
- assessing all programming efforts based on learning outcomes;
- providing more community leadership and service projects for international students;
- and enhancing collaboration across campus between Student Affairs and international programs.

**Recommendation 2: Develop an International Student Recruitment Task Force to Improve Outreach Efforts Overall, While Strengthening Cross-Campus Communication and Collaboration and Enhancing Western Publications and Web Presence.**

It is difficult to have one conversation about recruitment and “admission” of international students, as the categories and characteristics of students are so broad. With the understanding that special programs for non-matriculated students have a unique set of recruitment and admission goals and challenges, the focus of this paper is on student services in general but only the recruitment and admission of matriculated undergraduate and graduate students. However, as we look to the future, we need to identify ways we can leverage recruitment efforts for one program or in a given country, in order to maximize potential for growth in other programs as well. It is important to note that the university has no target for international student enrollment other than an unfunded desire to increase non-resident enrollment from 7% to 9%, and most of the related activity has been with out-of-state students rather than international students.

The university should strategically work with others on campus to convey Western’s story to prospective international students. This would include a marketing plan to enhance publications, web presence, video exposure and international alumni connections. Collaborative outreach efforts/strategies could be developed between graduate and undergraduate admissions. Also, strategic ways to build on current faculty areas of expertise and connections in other countries could be developed that have potential for long term sustainability and are in line with Western’s growth plans/priorities.

Western receives fewer than 75 international student applications annually for Graduate School. The Graduate School growth plan is currently in limbo, but there is some interest in building international enrollment if resources become available. There is a lack of any centralized recruitment program for domestic or international students to the Graduate School. In regards to international graduate students, increased focus on graduate education at Western will depend on this institutional visioning process.

**Recommendation 3: Increase the Number of International Transfer Students by Finalizing “Guaranteed Admission” Agreements for International Transfers from Selected Washington State Community Colleges.**
Undergraduate admissions receive less than a total of 100 applications annually from new freshman and transfer students. Compared with over 1,500 freshman applications alone to the University of Washington-Seattle for fall 2009, over 90% of applications are from students already attending schools in the United States.

Active recruitment is limited to Washington community college transfer students through selected college fairs. Admissions are currently developing targeted outreach plans for feeder community colleges with greatest potential to provide transfers to Western: Whatcom, Shoreline, Green River, Bellevue, Edmonds, Skagit and Everett community colleges. Western can also strengthen community college connections through several statewide organizations like Association of Washington International Affairs (AWISA), of which Western is a member, and Study Washington, a collaborative group of public and private two and four-year colleges and universities.

A current pilot program for international transfer students is the Global Ambassador program. This program provides a $2,000 academic scholarship for 2009-10, academic enrichment offerings through the Center for International Studies (CIS) and a guaranteed offer of housing and an on-campus job if they meet the deadlines. Western offers guaranteed admission to Whatcom Community College students with a 3.0 cumulative GPA and a direct transfer agreement (DTA) associate degree. Concerns about this arrangement are that Western does not offer a guarantee for admission to Washington residents and while admission to Western may be guaranteed, admission to the major is not. Programs like this should be expanded in order to further attract international students who transfer to Western from state community colleges.

*Recommendation 4: Identify New Funding Streams and/or Reallocate the Use of Current Resources to Accommodate the Expansion of International Student Recruitment Efforts and Needed Student Support Services.*

Both international programs and Student Affairs must be actively engaged in planning for and expansion of the international student body at Western. A synergistic vision and structure must be created for admitting and supporting international students on campus. We need to reassess institutional practices/philosophy which has assigned primary responsibility for the orientation and well being of international students to the Office of International Programs and Exchanges in general, or to the specific program, rather than a more integrated approach.

Currently, there is no funding for international student recruitment and limited funding for scholarships and international student services. We must focus on how we can identify untapped resources as well as how we can reallocate resources to support a common vision about international education on campus. There is the realization that resources will always be limited, so we need to have one foot on the ground as we plan for the future. It will be important to identify strategic opportunities for partnerships, on- and off-campus, that will maximize effectiveness while efficiently stretching resources. If necessary, new staff and resources must be added to meet the needs of an increase in the number of international students at Western.
Recommendation 5: Implement and Expand Programs That Connect International Students to Western and the Bellingham Communities and Provide Opportunities for Them to Participate in Community Leadership and Service Activities.

Western must continue to implement new programming and expand existing programming that assists international students with adjusting to life at Western while providing them avenues for engagement with the Western and Bellingham communities. For example, the recently developed International Buddy Program is a student-run program designed to help new international students transition smoothly to Western's campus and Bellingham with current Western students acting as peer resources for international students and providing opportunities for all students to interact and make global friendships, and learn new cultures and traditions. This is coordinated and implemented by students with assistance from the Office of International Programs and Exchanges. The program currently focuses on incoming exchange students but could be expanded to include matriculated international students such as new freshmen.

Western should provide opportunities for international students to participate in community leadership and service activities. Although many international students already initiate and participate in leadership and service activities on their own, further encouragement could be made in this regard. For example, through the Office of International Programs & Exchanges, recipients of the International Student Scholarship are required to develop and carry out individual community service projects as part of their scholarship award. This requirement encourages recipients to share about their culture with the community, to collaborate with different individuals, groups and organizations, and to challenge themselves to develop their own leadership skills. Similar opportunities for students could be encouraged through on and off-campus offerings such as AS Clubs and Student Activities, WWU Leadership Advantage, Compass 2 Campus, student employment and internships, Whatcom Volunteer Center, and local elementary and secondary schools.

VII. INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SUPPORT FOR WESTERN’S INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES

Organizational support for internationalization is a key element of success. Its structure must facilitate coherence, coordination and communication among the curriculum, students, study abroad, faculty development and campus life. Sufficient resources and personnel are essential to accomplish this. As noted above, one of the reasons for the failure of Western to move forward on its agenda for internationalization in the 1990s was the lack of sustained internal resources and staffing to support its undertakings. If we are to move forward now we must not only talk the talk but also walk the walk. While the present level of funding for the current initiatives of the various international units on campus appears adequate, it is not stable funding. Pieced together from fees, administrative overhead, as well as some state and grant funds, it would behoove the Administration of Western to strive to produce a stable and predictable level of internal funding for international education as the program cultivates its roots.
Recommendation 1:  Create a stable and predictable level of internal funding for international education at Western over the next five years.

As a firmer foundation for internationalization begins to take root, and a strategic plan is developed to guide the future of its activity, external funding will become essential. Multiple avenues exist for securing external funding, whether it through scholarships, fellowships, or grants. Most federal agencies have international line items in their budgets. Many private foundations have opened their wallets to internationalization of the curriculum and projects abroad.

Recommendation 2:  Working in collaboration with one another, the Center for International Studies and the several colleges on campus should over the next five years submit grant applications to government and foundation funders for support of the further development of international education on campus.

International alumni have not yet been tapped to help support Western – whether through scholarships or simply helping support students when they come to their countries. Private donors have not been approached to donate specifically to international endeavors. In order to tap into these resources, stakeholders’ points of view will have to be identified in order to engage them and tap into their interests. To help with this endeavor, it is suggested that a development officer/grant writer be hired. As this position is not seen as full time, it could either be contracted out or shared with other units in Academic Affairs that are in need of the same type of skills.

Recommendation 3:  The Western Foundation Office should work with the Center for International Studies to identify potential community and corporate donors interested in supporting international education at Western. Specific appeals in support of study abroad programming and international students should be undertaken.

VIII. A PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTING THESE PROPOSALS

Having reviewed the variety of initiatives deemed worthy of pursuing in the area of international education at Western, it becomes essential that we consider the means for achieving these objectives. We must have an agreed-upon plan that directs our efforts forward. This plan will endeavor to place the individual recommendations outlined in this White Paper within a framework that will set priorities, timelines for action, and specifically identifies those whose time, knowledge, insights and resources will be required to achieve the results that we seek. (See Appendix I).

The outlines for such a plan are set forth below. They are constructed around organizing principles of engagement, development, assessment and promotion that appear as recurring ideas throughout the various sections of the present report. In each instance, the specific action items are set forth with a priority ranking (immediate, high, continuing); a notation of the various campus participants that need to be involved (e.g. Colleges, Provost, Center for
International Studies) and an indication of the amount of resources that are required to effect the desired result (significant, some, limited). Given that we operating in a lean budgetary environment, the plan seeks to identify important steps that can be undertaken with relatively small price tags. However, it needs to be underscored that a significant enhancement of the international educational profile of Western will not come without any additional financial resources. A prudent and broad investment in international education at this time seems essential if we are to meet the important needs of students, faculty and staff in this area.

A. Engagement

1. **Support Efforts Within Colleges and Departments to Develop Curriculum with International and Global Perspectives.**
   - (Curriculum R #2)
   - Continuing
   - Provost, Deans, CIS
   - Some Resources Required

2. **Provide Opportunities for Faculty Involvement in Planning and Development of International Programs.**
   - (Faculty Teaching and Research R #5)
   - High
   - Senate, ACC, Provost, Deans, CIS
   - Limited Resources Required

3. **Strengthen Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration on Campus and with the International Community.**
   - (Faculty Teaching and Research R #3)
   - Continuing
   - Provost, Deans, CIS
   - Some Resources Required

4. **Reward and Promote Outstanding Examples of International Collaboration in Teaching and Research.**
   - Faculty Teaching and Research R #2)
   - Continuing
   - Provost, Deans, CIS
   - Some Resources Required

5. **Implement and Expand Programs That Connect International Students to Western and the Bellingham Communities and Provide Opportunities for Them to Participate in Community Leadership and Service Activities.**
   - International Students R #6)
   - Continuing
   - Student Services, Colleges, CIS
   - Some Resources Required
6. **Partner with the Community in Providing International Education Opportunities.**
   - (Curriculum R #3)
   - Continuing
   - Colleges, CIS, Communities
   - Some Resources Required

7. **Collaborate in Submitting Grant Proposals in Support of International Education on Campus.**
   - (External Support R #2)
   - High
   - CIS, Colleges, Office of Grants and Sponsored Research
   - Some Resources Required

8. **Establish an International Initiative Council.**
   - (Overarching R #1)
   - Immediate
   - Colleges, Registrar, CIS, Associated Students
   - Limited Resources Required

9. **Engage in Mutual Consultation in International Program Development.**
   - (Overarching R #2)
   - Immediate
   - All campus units, CIS
   - Limited Resources Required

**B. Development**

1. **Create a Campus Plan to Focus and Coordinate Western’s International Curriculum.**
   - (Curriculum R #1)
   - High
   - Provost, Deans, CIS
   - Significant Resources Required

2. **Grow the International Studies Minor and Provide Additional Advising and Course Support.**
   - (Curriculum R #4)
   - High
   - Deans, CIS, Department Heads
   - Some Resources Required

3. **Make Study Abroad Credit Transfer More Transparent.**
   - (Study Abroad R #2)
   - High
4. **Reduce the Administrative Workload of Faculty Involved in Study Abroad.**  
- (Study Abroad R #4)  
- High  
- Deans, Department Heads, CIS, IPE  
Some Resources Required

5. **Offer a Diverse Range of Affordable Study-Abroad Options.**  
- (Study Abroad R #3)  
- Continuing  
- Faculty, Deans, IPE, CIS, EESP  
- Some Resources Required

6. **Increase the Number and Diversity of Direct Exchange Opportunities in Study Abroad.**  
- (International Partnerships and Linkages R #3)  
- Continuing  
- CIS, IPE, Deans, Department Heads Faculty  
- Some Resources Required

7. **Increase the Number of Faculty and Staff Exchanges with International Partners and Provide Necessary Support Services.**  
- (International Partners and Linkages R #4)  
- High  
- CIS, IPE, Deans, Department Heads, Faculty  
- Some Resources Required

8. **Recruit and Support Visiting Faculty from Abroad.**  
- (Faculty Teaching and Research R #4)  
- Provost, Deans, Department Heads, CIS  
- Some Resources Required

9. **Establish and Maintain a Database on Faculty Involved in International Collaboration.**  
- (Faculty Teaching and Research R #1)  
- Immediate  
- Deans, CIS, RSP, Faculty  
- Some Resources Required

10. **Develop Principles and Guidelines Governing International Partnerships.**  
- (International Partners and Linkages R #1)  
- Immediate  
- CIS, Faculty  
- Limited Resources Required
11. **Provide Additional International Student Recruitment and Support Services.**
   - (International Students R #4)
   - High
   - Student Services, CIS
   - Some Resources Required

12. **Create a Stable Level of Internal Funding for International Education at Western.**
   - (External Support R #1)
   - Immediate
   - Provost, CIS
   - Some Resources Required

C. **Assessment**

1. **Evaluate Current Mix of Study Abroad Options.**
   - (Study Abroad R #1)
   - High
   - Faculty, CIS, IPE
   - Limited Resources Required

2. **Undertake an Internal Review of IPE and Its Needs.**
   - (Study Abroad R #5)
   - Immediate
   - Provost, CIS, IPE, Faculty
   - Some Resources Required

3. **Assess Current International Partnerships and Linkages.**
   - (International Partnerships R #2)
   - High
   - Faculty, CIS, IPE
   - Limited Resources Required

4. **Assess the International Student Experience at Western.**
   - (International Students R #1)
   - High
   - Faculty, Student Services, Admissions, CIS
   - Limited Resources Required

D. **Promotion**

1. **Increase the Number of International Transfer Students by Establishing “Guaranteed Admission” Agreements with Selected Washington State
Community Colleges.
- (International Students R #3)
- High
- Admissions, CIS, Office of Communications
- Some Resources Required

2. Establish an International Student Recruitment Taskforce and Improve International Outreach Efforts and Web Presence.
- (International Students R #2)
- High
- Admissions, CIS, Deans
- Limited Resources Required

3. Identify Potential Community and Corporate Supporters Interested in Funding Study Abroad Programs and International Students.
- (External Support R #3)
- High
- University Foundation, CIS, Community
- Some Resources Required

IX. FINAL COMMENTS

As a Committee we have devoted some time to assessing the present needs of the campus regarding international education. We have provided our best thoughts regarding what we see as the steps that need to be taken now and in the near future. We hope that this document will be of assistance in guiding our campus efforts to establish a greater global perspective and profile. We welcome you comments and observations as well as suggestions for additional initiatives and sources of support.

Sincerely,

Doug Nord (Chair)        Center for International Studies
Brian Burton             College of Business and Economics
Hui-Ling Chan            Residence Life
Karen Copetas            Office of Admissions
Barbara Fasser           Office of Academic Resources
Vicki Hamlin             Modern and Classical Languages
Liz Partolan-Fray        International Programs and Exchanges
Tom Roehl                International Business Program
Brad Smith               Huxley College of the Environment
John Tuxill              Fairhaven College
Ed Vajda                 East Asian Studies
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