How is WWU going to play in a future where leading universities, of necessity, are globally-engaged universities?

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

• Global engagement or internationalization refers to institutional efforts to integrate an international, global, and/or intercultural dimension into teaching, research, or service functions. While some institutions define their global engagement in terms of only one or two of the following efforts, the national trend is toward an integrated or comprehensive approach that impacts the campus culture more broadly.

• A mission statement and/or strategic plan defines and directs an institution’s global engagement. 51% of universities in the U.S. include internationalization in their mission plan; 35% of master’s granting universities have a strategic plan for internationalization.

• International partnerships with like institutions in other parts of the world form the basis for networking globally through student mobility, faculty exchanges, joint research projects and joint degrees. ACE reports that: “the higher education enterprise itself has become more globalized, and U.S. institutions are increasingly pursuing opportunities to expand their global reach and engage with institutions and students in other countries.” 58% of master’s granting universities report increased activity in this area. The student exchange component of traditional partnership agreements is now being supplemented with other goals, such as developing faculty’s international skills, curriculum building, and working collaboratively to solve global issues.

• Student mobility provides a choice of education abroad experiences (study abroad, faculty-led international program, international service-learning or internship). Nationally between 3-4% of students participate in an education-abroad experience. About 44% of study-abroad experiences nationally occur via faculty-led programs.

• A curricular model integrates global skills, knowledge and attitudes into general education and/or degree programs. 55% of U.S. institutions report that they have plans underway to internationalize the curriculum. These plans include the creation of interdisciplinary majors in Global Studies, general education requirements in global citizenship, foreign-language or study abroad requirements, and/or the integration of global competencies into all major programs.

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4 “Mapping Internationalization,” p. 20.
5 “Mapping Internationalization,” p. 20.
7 International Programs and Exchanges, WWU, fall 2013.
8 “Mapping Internationalization,” p. 11.
• International students, faculty and scholars constitute a prevalent means for bridging cultures and bringing new perspectives to U.S. classrooms. ACE reports increased activity at all levels in international student recruitment, support, and funding.  

• Co-curricular opportunities on campuses increase the likelihood that domestic students will encounter perspectives, life experiences, and values other than their own.

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT AT WESTERN

• Western is currently participating in the American Council on Education’s Internationalization Laboratory to create strategic plan for internationalization.

• Western currently has 30 international partnerships, most of which allow for student mobility between institutions. According to recent research, this particular model is outdated because the student exchange component of traditional partnership agreements is now being supplemented with other goals, such as developing faculty’s international skills, curriculum building, and working collaboratively to solve global issues. Only 3 of WWU’s current international partnerships involve faculty teaching or joint research. WWU has no joint degree programs with an international partner. However, 76% of WWU faculty who responded to a recent survey stated that their research has an international component.

• At least 500 (3%) of Western’s students participate in an education abroad experience on an annual basis. WWU faculty teach in 20 faculty-led programs in 14 countries. These programs enroll 40% of students who complete an education-abroad program through WWU.

• The One World Curricular team will propose curricular model(s) for WWU in spring 2014, based in part on the fact that 61% of WWU faculty surveyed report that they teach international content in at least one of their courses and that the GUR program at WWU also includes multicultural content in its ACGM and BCGM categories.

• Currently, 156 international students are enrolled at WWU. This is the lowest such statistic among all institutions of higher education in Washington state. Recent efforts at WWU have increased outreach to international students at regional community colleges and at WWU’s international partners in order to improve this aspect of Western’s engagement with the world.

• At WWU, the World Issues Forum, student clubs and International Education Week are among co-curricular opportunities for students, faculty, and staff.

9 “Mapping Internationalization,” p. 18.
11 CIS, WWU, fall 2013.
12 One World faculty survey, WWU, fall 2013.
13 One World survey of WWU faculty, fall 2013.
14 International Student and Scholar Services, WWU, fall 2013.
15 Open Doors 2012 (http://www.nafsa.org).
Additional questions to consider in response to this question

1. To what extent should Western’s internationalization plan be integrated into departmental, programmatic, and college-level plans?
2. How should Western position itself with regard to international partnerships?
3. Should Western provide more support for student scholarships, faculty development, and curricular integration related to the education abroad experience?
4. Should Western’s internationally-focused course offerings be coordinated more broadly across disciplines or within programs?
5. How important is it to Western’s mission that international students and scholars bring their skills and perspectives to Western?
6. How can we encourage faculty, students and staff to participate in meaningful, inter-cultural experiences outside of the classroom?