



*Leadership and Advocacy*

**Report on Western Washington University  
Participation in the ACE Internationalization Laboratory  
By the American Council on Education Peer Review Visit Team  
April 29-May 1, 2015**

**I. Introduction**

This report is based on a visit to Western Washington University (WESTERN) by an American Council on Education (ACE) peer review team on April 29-May 1, 2015. This report also draws upon several documents, which the university provided to the peer review team: Kay Findings Report on Internationalization at Western Washington University (December 2014), An Action Plan for Global Engagement at Western (March 2015), Center for Global Engagement Organizational Structure, and general information about WESTERN.

The visit included meetings with Bruce Shepard, President; Brent Carbajal, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs; Brian Burton, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs; Samit Bordoloi, Assistant Professor, Human Services; Jeanne Armstrong, Professor, Western Libraries; Dean Hagin, Associate Director, Language and Culture Programs, Extended Education; Tim Costello, Director, Center for Service Learning; and Karen Dade, Associate Dean, Woodring College of Education.

The visit is part of the ACE Internationalization Laboratory (Lab), a project that builds upon the learning from several earlier ACE multi-campus initiatives, including Promising Practices in International Education, Global Learning for All, and the previous nine cohorts of the Lab itself. In addition to WESTERN, other institutions participating in the 2013–2015 Laboratory are California State University Dominguez Hills; Clemson University (SC); Emerson College (MA); Hawai'i, Leeward, and Windward Community Colleges (HI); Lewis University (IL); Orange Coast College (CA); Sacred Heart University (CT); The State University of New York College at Geneseo; University of Alabama at Birmingham; and the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

This confidential report to WESTERN is designed to assist the institution with its comprehensive internationalization efforts. In spite of the ample reading material provided to the peer review team, we want to emphasize that this report can only be a snapshot of the university, not a full portrait, because the peer review lasted only 24 hours over 2 days and WESTERN is an intrinsically complex institution. Nonetheless, we encourage wide internal distribution of the

report so that it can assist the university community in the tasks of comprehensive internationalization. The contents will not be published or made public unless the institution chooses to do so or gives ACE permission to do so.

## **II. Peer Review Team**

Dr. Barbara Hill, Senior Associate for Internationalization and Director of the Internationalization Laboratory, Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement, American Council on Education, Washington, DC (team leader).

Dr. Penelope J. Pynes, Associate Provost for International Programs, International Programs Center, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

## **III. Overall Strengths and Assets**

### **Senior Leadership**

The President and the Provost both enthusiastically endorsed joining the Internationalization Lab, and were uniformly serious, open, and upbeat, considering comprehensive internationalization to be achievable. The deans were also on board with the initiative.

### **Mission Statement**

WESTERN is fortunate to have a mission statement that emphasizes the development of “active learning, critical thinking, and societal problem solving” that responds to an “ever-changing world” by “[b]ringing the world to Washington and Washington to the world.” The key findings document shows how much WESTERN has accomplished, but also how much work is yet to be done. The Action Plan provides clear guidance on how to get this done in a timely fashion.

### **Lab Process, Team, and Report**

Clearly the Lab process was well designed to produce such data-rich reports and recommendations. The team was well-balanced, the work divided up, the analysis appropriate, and the surveys encouraged a climate of listening. Those who worked on the initiative have a sense of accomplishment, as well they should.

### **Lab Leadership**

The process was ably led by Vicki Hamblin, who created a good sense of organization and provided milestones (which contributed to the sense of accomplishment). The presentations of “How International is Western?” were an excellent and clever way to get the material to the faculty to generate conversations. They can also be used to benchmark global engagement moving forward. Both the milestones and the presentations were effective models, one of process and one of presentation—both worth emulating in the future.

## **History of Student Mobility**

The data on study abroad suggests a participation rate that parallels the national average of 3-4 %. Given that so many students at WESTERN are on financial aid, the rate of participation may not change much, though the faculty members are correct in seeing short-term programs as a potential growth area. Care must be given to how the costs of these programs are set, so that they are accessible to students who may be financially disadvantaged.

## **Exchanges**

Many of the international partnerships that WESTERN has focus solely on student exchanges. Very few agreements focus on faculty exchange, research, or artistic activity. Given that the faculty members who will be responsible for a globally engaged curriculum do not have ample opportunities to be globally engaged themselves, this is a potential growth area for WESTERN.

## **Centers**

WESTERN has a number of internationally focused Centers, primarily on the Pacific Rim, and analysis of how they can better contribute to global engagement for students should be explored.

## **Peace Corps**

WESTERN ranks 1<sup>st</sup> in the nation among medium-sized universities sending graduates to the Peace Corps, a notable accomplishment. This implies that students at WESTERN can be even more globally engaged in the classroom.

## **International Partnerships**

We were impressed with the array of templates for international partnerships that are provided by CIS. Covering the categories of good will, exchange, advancement and strategic partnerships, they automatically divide the agreements into an appropriate typology of partnerships. They provide a good base for moving forward, though to have maximum impact, WESTERN should focus its resources on the ones considered strategic. While the partnerships are listed on the WESTERN website, it is not clear if all of them are active. If a review has not been done recently, we recommend that one be done.

## **Sister Cities**

WESTERN has seven sister cities around the world in Korea, Russia, Australia, Chile, Japan, Mongolia, and Finland. This offers an excellent opportunity to engage the local community in the outreach necessary to greater global engagement. We encourage the senior leadership to explore opportunities here.

## **One World Curriculum Team**

This committee did excellent work about setting the stage for internationalizing the curriculum and is ready to continue to implementation. Their process of deliberation and then campus forums seems to have been successful, and it provides a model of how to continue the work.

## **Moving Ahead**

WESTERN now has an Action Plan for Global Engagement, which follows ACE's model of comprehensive internationalization, so all the pieces are poised to launch WESTERN to the next level of internationalization.

## **IV. Observations and Recommendations**

### **Messaging**

The President and Provost seem willing to give consistent and frequent prominence to the importance of comprehensive internationalization in their public and internal communication to continue the momentum engendered by the Lab participation. We strongly endorse this, as it will help keep the campus focused as the action plan is implemented.

### **Accountability**

The senior leadership needs to make sure that this all-University initiative filters down through all levels of those reporting to them and to hold everyone accountable. This may require some adjustments to the system of annual reports. To make the whole plan work requires the work of the whole institution.

### **Support for Centralized Coordinating Office**

We were pleased to know that the campus does realize that a centralized office is a good idea. We recommend that it should be led by a full-time senior-level position, with sufficient administrative support, space, and budget to do the work required. This will require restructuring. The suggested office structure chart seems a step in the right direction. In addition, we have concerns that the office not be expected to be self-supporting, as we see that the office would have a key role in the central academic purposes of the institution. In addition, we think some clarification is in order to specify how the office would have a role in the development and implementation of policies and practices related to the broad array of international activities.

### **Name Change**

To clearly signify to the campus that internationalization is on a different level at WESTERN, we strongly endorse that the Center for International Studies be changed to the Center for Global Engagement. This change is a better fit for the Global Action Plan.

## **Need for Global Engagement Council**

Most Lab institutions find it a good idea to establish an internal standing committee to provide oversight of the action plan and advising the senior international officer about policies and practices. Such a group should be small, strategic thinking, and poised for action. Such a group must also suit the governance structure of the university.

Some institutions also like to have an external advisory board comprised of local corporations, foundations, and heritage groups to give support for the international programs, but this should not be attempted until there is some success with the action plan.

## **Global Learning**

The analysis of the curriculum in the Key Findings Report is on target, and the goals of the action plan provide guidance without prescription. WESTERN was fortunate to have an effective One World Committee to articulate the need both for a university-wide global learning outcome and for recognizing and incentivizing international content in the General University Requirements. We agree that WESTERN should explore the idea of a Global Scholar Certificate, International Proficiency Points (similar to the Writing Proficiency), and an International Studies Major.

Because not all students are able to study abroad, WESTERN is wisely considering ways to internationalize at home by internationalizing the curriculum. This is not just a responsibility of the languages and cultures departments; a global dimension should be infused in all courses, general education requirements, and majors and minors, and this work has already begun well. Many resources are available to assist the faculty to do this. We suggest that WESTERN explore the ACE/CIGE website for *Internationalization in Action*, which has posted a four-part series on internationalizing the curriculum at the course, program, degree, and discipline levels and has posted the first of three installments on internationalizing the co-curriculum. In addition, other curricular resources are available at [www.campusinternationalization.org](http://www.campusinternationalization.org), which is a collaboration of 12 higher education associations dealing with internationalization. There are quite a few postings on the curriculum and co-curriculum.

## **The Use of Technology**

Another technique to boost faculty involvement in international education efforts is to put technology to greater use. At a much lower cost than faculty travel, technology offers faculty and their students the opportunity to engage with colleagues overseas. Co-teaching courses with faculty from abroad using video/Internet technology, for example, can help fill gaps in international expertise at an institution and enhance the internationalization of the curriculum. This will require having technical capacities in areas of the campus that are convenient for faculty and students. It will also require that there is support for developing the relationships that can lead to such cooperation, and WESTERN will need to recognize that this will require face-to-face contact for cooperating faculty (and possibly administrators) at some points. Yet, to be successful, technology must serve specific objectives of the international education. Technology,

at its best, needs to be used to integrate classroom and educational experience across the disciplines. Technology can prove to be very costly, and if it is not designed to clearly support the international program, the University may find that these scarce funds have not been most effectively utilized. Some resources about the use of technology to bring the world to the classroom are on the ACE/CIGE website.

### **Building a Globally Engaged Faculty**

The chief resource needed to accomplish the internationalization of the curriculum is the faculty, both those currently at the institution and those who will be hired in the future. They need to be incentivized to do this work. Internationalization cannot be accidental—it must be intentional. Advertisements of new positions can emphasize that international experience or background is preferred so that the institution can augment its human capital for comprehensive internationalization. Professional development at various levels will be necessary to help faculty members, department chairs, and deans identify international and/or intercultural learning outcomes, enhance the international/intercultural content of current programs and perhaps create study abroad opportunities that will incorporate global perspectives to the majors. This may involve grants and stipends, workshops, released time, administrative support, perhaps even modification of tenure and promotion guidelines or an award system. Internationalization is not additional work, but a means to give the faculty new ways to think about their current teaching and research in a more nuanced way.

### **Role of Student Organizations**

As WESTERN moves forward with comprehensive internationalization, the campus should consider how to further involve student organizations, especially those with an ethnic focus.

### **International Student Recruitment Management Plan**

We recommend that WESTERN develop a plan, as it is clear that the institution could benefit from a more intentional approach to recruitment. We think that such a plan must address a number of key issues. We noticed that WESTERN is proud of its domestic students, but without a plan that integrates degree-seeking international students and a pedagogy that treats them as assets in the classroom and residence halls, WESTERN risks the perception that international students are recruited simply as a source for cash tuition. We also recommend that WESTERN consider which disciplines would be especially attractive to international students, working to ensure a balance in their distribution throughout the entire university, without placing a disproportionate burden on one or two departments' resources. We also recommend that the plan be developed so that it does not rely too heavily on international students from only a few countries, as has been the case in some institutions that have relied heavily on agents in China. Since no U.S. institution of higher education can influence or control the politics of other countries, such a reliance on a few home countries is unhealthy given the volatility of international relations. Because of these factors, we think that a robust enrollment management plan should have the following features. First, it needs to focus on both undergraduate and

graduate enrollments, including transfer students, and to coordinate them. Second, it needs to set intentional numerical goals for both domestic and international students at both levels. Third, it needs to address issues of the quality of entering students, ensuring that there is equal attention to this issue for both domestic and international students. Fourth, it needs to address the diversity of both domestic and international students and to be intentional about ensuring that diversity. Fifth, and equally important, steps must be taken to ensure a wide diversity of majors.

Other elements need to be considered for an international student enrollment management plan: use of scholarships, the role of 2+2 degree programs, requisite staff support, and the level of TOEFL scores. We suggest that the institution give careful consideration to the TOEFL score required of international students, so that you are competitive with your benchmarking institutions. It may be advisable to benchmark with peer or aspiration institutions that have a relatively similar mix of international undergraduate students. We strongly recommend that WESTERN consider employing an outside consultant to assist with the development of an international student enrollment management plan.

Several infrastructure features are necessary to succeed with such a plan. The institution should develop a “one-stop-shop” for international applications. It must develop the habit of issuing I-20s quickly, review deadlines and requirements, especially grade requirements, to make the university competitive. Finally, as the international student numbers grow, the additional tuition revenue, at least in part, needs to be directed to the building of support structures and services for these students. This should be decided on in advance to additional recruitment efforts in the form of an internal memorandum of understanding. We recommend that WESTERN look outside the state of Washington for other good practices.

Finally, we recommend that WESTERN emphasize the positive aspects of its reputation. The university is affordable and relatively safe. It is in a stunningly beautiful location. It provides some high-quality housing, some of which should be available for international students. WESTERN has a reputation of being student-centered. All these features need to become part of the way that members of the WESTERN community think about and talk about their institution.

### **Study Abroad**

While WESTERN has an array of opportunities for students to study abroad, we were not sure if they were a function of institutional history or whether they were evaluated to see if they are serving the needs of current students. We recommend that a review take place.

### **Grant Writing**

Because comprehensive internationalization has costs associated with it, we encourage WESTERN to urge the development office to explore potential funding sources, and to assist in grant proposal writing. If there is an impending capital campaign, that offers another possibility for additional resources.

## **Celebrate**

Many institutions have good stories to tell about their international activities, but few have a way of integrating these into the fabric of the campus. We encourage WESTERN to celebrate them, to bring attention to them, in order to encourage more global engagement.

## **Lab 2.0**

The Lab is a significant investment for institutions, both in terms of time and resources, including the human ones. To make sure that institutions receive good value and sustained impact for comprehensive internationalization, ACE has inaugurated a formal re-visit structure, Lab 2.0. We recommend such a visit three to five years after the formal end of the Lab engagement. The structure of Lab 2.0 would include an ACE staff member plus one or two other peer reviewers, perhaps members of the original peer review team, if they are available. The visit would take two days. The visitors would need to have access to the final peer review report and a short self-study of what the institution has accomplished since the final report. There would be a fee for such a visit, plus travel costs for the team. The value of such a service would be to assess progress toward the institutional goals, to make appropriate adjustments in those goals, and to rekindle the excitement and momentum of the Lab process.

## **V. Conclusion**

WESTERN is clearly fortunate to have support for internationalization from many in the faculty and administration. But the conversations about comprehensive internationalization need to continue to widen the base of support so that the university can effectively deliver what its global vision and action plan imply about internationalization. Student success is the goal, and to succeed in our globalized world will require continuing the important work you have begun.

WESTERN is well positioned to continue developing its work in comprehensive internationalization because it has all the key ingredients: leadership, dedication, energy, and emerging structures to support this work. The Lab team has demonstrated that it can engage faculty members and influence faculty processes, and the university should continue this important work. Internationalization is a long-term project, requiring regular processes for checking progress. By developing and continuing an intentional process, WESTERN will make its balanced internationalization goals part of its everyday operations, continuing to reinforce its reputation as a distinctive institution.

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