

Western Kentucky University
Steering Committee on Internationalization
Fall 2009

The Western Kentucky University Steering Committee on Internationalization was established as an initial step in the process of developing comprehensive internationalization throughout the institution as WKU develops into “a leading American university with international reach.” Comprehensive internationalization is a highly visible strategic approach that seeks to integrate international, global and intercultural dimensions into all aspects of an institution. It is an effort to forge an internationalized campus culture and identity, as opposed to a simple aggregation of discrete international activities, which will prepare students for success in a global society. This report outlines recommendations designed to provide the administration with a program of action to build upon previous internationalization efforts and transform WKU into a dynamic, leading example of a global and multicultural campus serving the needs of its campus, community and beyond.

What Is Internationalization?

Internationalization in higher education has been defined as “the process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research, and service functions of the institution.” (Knight, 1994) It involves several areas of integrated activities such as study abroad, exchange programs, outreach, international student recruitment, research and curricula development. To be successful, internationalization activities should be widely distributed across schools, divisions, departments and disciplines and, crucially there must be evidence of genuine administrative support. The process of internationalization must, at its core, have demonstrable results for students. The emphasis must be on the quality of the activity, as opposed to the quantity, and rigorous efforts to assess the impact of these activities, in terms of the knowledge, skills and attitudes, upon students must be established and maintained.

Why Is Internationalization Important?

Although the supporters of internationalization see its benefits as self-evident there are others who need to be convinced as to the value of emphasizing such activities. A campus-wide conversation is necessary to discuss the merits of internationalization and to publicize its various facets (too often, it is assumed that internationalization refers solely to study abroad and exchange programs). It is important to recognize that internationalization can be interpreted differently by individuals, departments and colleges, leading to different areas of emphasis and attention within the overall process. What is vital is that the underlying benefits of this process are widely acknowledged and supported. The American Council on Education (ACE) identifies different goals that can be achieved through a process of internationalization:

- Student goals – internationalization provides new ideas, knowledge and experiences. It provides the opportunity for students to utilize diverse perspectives, engage in critical thinking and develop the intercultural sensitivity to be successful in a global marketplace and interdependent world.
- Academic goals – internationalization enriches teaching, research and scholarship.

- Institutional goals – internationalization improves the visibility and prestige of the institution.
- Community goals – internationalization not only provides competitive and successful graduates but also enriches the community by providing networks, activities and opportunities that would otherwise be unavailable.
- National goals – internationalization promotes multicultural understanding and contributes to the soft power of the USA.

The Steering Committee

The Provost created the Steering Committee for Internationalization when WKU became part of the 2007-8 cohort of the American Council on Education’s Internationalization Laboratory. The laboratory consists of a small cluster of institutions that work closely with ACE to share knowledge and experiences as they review (or develop) their internationalization goals and strategies. The Steering Committee was established to provide overall leadership and consisted of four faculty members, Dr. Roger Murphy (Political Science), Dr. Dan Myers (Economics), Dr. David Coffey (Agriculture) and Dr. Carol Wilkerson (Modern Languages). Dr. Wilkerson has since left the university and her position was taken by Dr. Laura McGee, also from Modern Languages.

The Committee was charged with four main tasks:

- To work with faculty and staff to develop learning objectives and measurable outcomes to assess internationalization at WKU.
- To conduct a review and report on the current state of internationalization at WKU;
- To develop a campus-wide conversation on internationalization
- To develop a strategic plan for internationalization of WKU;

Task 1: To develop meaningful and measurable internationalization learning outcomes.

The Steering Committee was guided by the strong support for internationalization the university’s vision to be a leading American University with International Reach and in its mission statement where “Western Kentucky University prepares students to be productive, engaged, and socially-responsible citizen-leaders of a global society.” Convinced that the central purpose of internationalization must show demonstrable benefits for students, the Steering Committee has articulated the following learning outcomes for adoption by the university.

Outcome 1: Graduating students will appreciate and demonstrate their knowledge of the global diversity of peoples, ideas, theories, cultures and values and incorporate this knowledge into their academic, social and personal life.

Outcome 2: Graduating students will utilize global perspectives to think critically, solve problems and cope in unfamiliar situations.

Outcome 3: Graduating students will demonstrate their ability to negotiate meaning, communicate and interact with people of different nationalities and cultures.

Outcome 4: Graduating students will demonstrate respect for global diversity and our common natural and physical environment.

Outcome 5: Graduating students will develop the capacity to be engaged as citizen leaders in global issues, at the local, national or international level, acting as agents of change within campus and beyond.

The Steering Committee recognizes that comprehensive internationalization is a process that can only be continued with the support of faculty and staff. The learning outcomes are broad enough to allow each department/unit within the university to identify the particular skills, knowledge and attitudes that are relevant within their discipline. The Steering Committee recognizes existing reporting requirements and has developed learning outcomes that are linked to the established goals of WKU's Quality Enhancement Plan. It is important to remember that not all outcomes will need to be addressed by each department/unit. The learning outcomes for our students are achieved by participating in a well-integrated combination of activities throughout their academic experience. International activities are not ends in of themselves but a means to meet these academic goals.

- **Recommendation 1-1:** A committee on assessment should be established to assist departments in the development of assessment measures for the internationalization outcomes. Dr. Tony Paquin has expressed an interest in chairing such a committee.

Current Practices:

- Digital Measures will allow faculty, students and staff to capture their involvement in international activities and create portfolios. This will provide a valuable source of information for the university to assess the value of its international activities.
- The Office of Internationalization and the International Education Council have developed guidelines for the preparation for, and development of Study Abroad Programs.
- Potter College of Arts and Letters has adopted guidelines for the approval and assessment of Study Abroad Courses.
- **Recommendation 1-2:** The Office of Internationalization and the International Education Council should develop standardized guidelines for the development of Exchange Programs between WKU and international institutions.

Task 2: To conduct a review on the extent of internationalization at WKU.

One of the major challenges facing the Steering Committee was to gather information about the scope and scale of international activities at the university. Although some data, such as the number of study abroad programs and the number of international students at the university, is readily available, one of the problems of an institution this size is to identify and share information on the activities of faculty, staff and students.

The Steering Committee initiated the following activities:

- A Faculty/Staff survey. This survey was completed by 438 faculty and staff members of the university (including the branch campuses). Questions were asked about involvement in study abroad, international research, international travel, interaction with international offices on campus, internationalization of the curriculum and foreign language skills. A second set of questions were given to department heads to compare their knowledge of internationalization within their departments to their faculty's activities.
- An international student survey. This survey was completed by 80 international students. Questions were asked about why they chose to attend WKU and their satisfaction with the services provided on campus. The Office of Internationalization has initiated a regular program of surveys to monitor progress, identify areas for improvement and identify trends.

Recommendation 2.1: The Steering Committee recommends the continued use of surveys to gather information from international students

- A student survey. The Steering Committee met with the Student Government Association to develop a survey that would go out to all students on campus. This survey sought to capture information on study abroad and interaction between domestic and international students. Unfortunately, personnel changes within the SGA prevented the creation of the survey.

Recommendation 2.2: The Steering Committee recommends general student surveys to gather data in order to promote study abroad and interaction between domestic and international students.

- Internationalization data. The Steering Committee met with staff from various offices across campus to collect data on internationalization. The Study Abroad Office provided information on the university's exchange programs and on the numbers of students studying abroad (including information on where, for how long and in what type of program). The Office of International Student and Scholar Services provided information on the numbers of international students at WKU (and information on their majors and countries of origin). The ESLI program provided information on their levels of enrollment that allowed the committee to identify the numbers of students entering WKU through this program as opposed to direct admissions. The Office of Enrollment Management provided information on recruitment and admissions and the Office of Institutional Research provided information on retention and graduation levels.
- Comparative data. The Steering Committee gathered information from benchmark institutions and leaders in the area of internationalization and posted it on its black board site. This information covered all aspects of internationalization to allow for comparison and identify best practices.
- Department liaisons. Each department on campus chose an international liaison to have access to the black board site and post information on their unit's international activities. These liaisons also had the opportunity to comment on all the data and make recommendations. It was the goal of the Steering Committee to cast a broad a net as possible to gather information and have a large number of stake-holders in the process.

Task 3: To develop a campus-wide conversation on internationalization.

The Steering Committee was charged with the task of developing a campus-wide conversation on internationalization for three very important reasons. Firstly, for any institution of the size of Western Kentucky University, many existing innovative and exciting ideas and activities were not known outside of particular colleges and departments, reducing the opportunity for collaboration and learning. The sharing of ideas and activities will deepen internationalization across campus as faculty and staff can follow by example, be inspired to develop their own initiatives and provide opportunities for mentoring. This publicity will also assist faculty and staff in gaining recognition for their efforts. Secondly, the attention and focus provided by a campus-wide conversation will assist in the on-going process to identify the benefits of internationalization to those individuals on campus who are suspicious of its merits, its rewards or its importance to the administration. In order to promote comprehensive internationalization activities must be integrated across campus rather than restricted to a number of highly active, but isolated internationalized units. Finally, a campus-wide conversation serves the vital goal of synthesizing and coordinating internationalization activities so that they support the learning objectives and vision of the university. The opportunity to share ideas and cooperate across departments creates a learning environment where activities reinforce one another and provide our graduates with the skills, knowledge and attitudes to be successful in a global environment.

The Steering Committee initiated the following activities:

- An Executive Committee to comment on the internationalization report. As the Steering Committee is comprised of four faculty members, it was clear that the knowledge and concerns of the administration and staff must also be taken into consideration. An Executive Committee was created representing Enrollment Management, Housing and Residence Life, Extended Campus, the Office of Diversity Programs, Research and Economic Development, the Student Government Association and the University Faculty Senate. The CIO is also a member of this committee.

Recommendation 3.1: For the university to meet its internationalization goals and become a leading American university with international reach it is important that units across campus meet regularly to coordinate activities, discuss issues and plan for growth. The Steering Committee recommends that the Executive Committee (with a future name to be determined) should function in the future as an advisory body for the CIO. The CIO should be able to determine the composition of this committee and its responsibilities.

- Meetings. The Steering Committee met with all College Deans and Department Heads to discuss WKU's participation in the ACE Internationalization Laboratory. It also met with the Staff Council, the International Education Council and the Student Government Association. The International Education Council, representing the different colleges across campus, served as the 'faculty

- review' for the internationalization strategic plan (as a parallel to the Executive Committee).
- As noted earlier, departmental liaisons were created to provide information about international activities and to have the opportunity to comment on the work posted on black board by the Steering Committee.
 - **Recommendation 3.2:** It is recommended that departmental liaisons for internationalization become permanent positions to act as conduits of information between their departments and the IEC and Office of Internationalization. These 'champions' of internationalization will help publicize activities, policies and opportunities and serve as a vital link as internationalization deepens across campus.
 - **Recommendation 3.3:** In order to publicize activities, policies and opportunities regarding internationalization there must be an up to date web page where faculty can post and obtain information. The Steering Committee recommends the hiring of a programmer and web designer for the Office of Internationalization. This will not only help centralization information regarding policies but all serve as a useful data collection point for internationalization. With some form of staff committee advising the CIO and faculty liaisons serving the IEC there is an opportunity to gather data, coordinate and engage the campus in such a way that internationalization becomes a central component of the culture of the institution.

Task 4: To Develop a Strategic Plan for Internationalization

In addition to the activities already noted in this document to gather information and develop a campus-wide conversation, the Steering Committee created a series of subcommittees to investigate various aspects of internationalization. These committees were focused on the areas of Study Abroad, Exchange Programs, Outreach, International Student Recruitment and International Student Retention. The findings and recommendations of these committees have been incorporated into the following strategic plan.

Strategic Plan for Internationalization: Summary of Goals and Strategies

Goal 1: To demonstrate and maintain clear institutional support for internationalization.
1. Publicize the institutional commitment to internationalization.
2. To provide adequate financial resources for internationalization.
3. To reward and value internationalization.
4. To develop a clear and comprehensive organizational framework for internationalization.
5. To effectively coordinate and synthesize internationalization across campus.
Goal 2: To facilitate internationalization of the curriculum.
6. To increase curricula offerings with an international subject or to prepare students for defined international professions.
7. To incorporate internationalized elements into existing course offerings.
8. To strengthen the international component of General Education.
9. To utilize international experiences of faculty, students and staff across campus in the curriculum.
10. To develop and support interdisciplinary programs at WKU.
11. To encourage and expand the study of foreign languages at WKU as an integral part of internationalization efforts.
Goal 3: To attract greater numbers of high quality international undergraduate and graduate students.
12. To increase international student recruitment.
13. To increase the diversity of WKU's international student population.
Goal 4: To increase the retention rates of international students at WKU.
14. To provide international students with the necessary academic preparation for success at WKU.
15. To provide the highest quality services through the Office of ISSS.
16. To improve retention by strengthening services offered across campus.
Goal 5: To increase the number of students, faculty, and staff participating in exchange programs.
17. To determine the optimal balance of exchange programs.
18. Reduce the cost of participating in exchange programs. Increased faculty led and consortium opportunities (at a greatly reduced price) for WKU students have decreased the attractiveness of exchange programs.
19. Review the geographic mix of exchange programs.
20. Increase the attractiveness of exchange programs.
21. Increase curricular enhancements available through exchange programs.
Goal 6: To increase the number of students, faculty and staff participating in study abroad programs.
22. Improve the attractiveness of being a study abroad faculty leader.
23. Provide marketing support for faculty led study abroad and consortium programs.
24. Determine what interests students have in study abroad, consortium, and exchange programs.
Goal 7: To create an extensive network of relationships across the community.
25. To develop and strengthen relationships with the community and support local initiatives.
26. To utilize specific WKU resources for targeted outreach activities.

Goal 1: To demonstrate and maintain clear institutional support for internationalization.

The process of internationalization requires identifying and addressing institutional barriers to faculty and staff engagement. Without sufficient support even the most committed individuals to internationalization may conclude that their time and energy should be directed to other activities. Institutional support will not only facilitate activities it will also help to overcome individual resistance to internationalization by demonstrating its value and rewarding its champions.

Strategy 1: Publicize the institutional commitment to internationalization.

- University's Vision Statement. The public commitment of senior leadership to internationalization is demonstrated in the vision statement that identifies WKU as "a leading American university with international reach." WKU's goal of preparing students for success in a global society as its Quality Enhancement Program for student learning also demonstrates this support.
- The University has also hired a Chief Internationalization Officer to serve as a champion and coordinator for international activities. The CIO will play a vital role in the establishment of clear policies and guidelines with regard to study abroad and exchange programs.
- **Recommendation 4.1.1:** The international activities of faculty, staff and students should be acknowledged and publicized across campus (in the form of an e-bulletin or other publication).
- **Recommendation 4.1.2:** The President and Provost should visit new or current partner institutions occasionally to demonstrate the value of these linkages to WKU and should invite and host their counterparts from current or prospective partners.
- **Recommendation 4.1.3:** A link to partner institutions should be clearly visible on WKU's home web page and across campus (flags, mile-posts, posters etc).
- **Recommendation 4.1.4:** Partner institutions should be recognized across campus (for example, using milepost signs, pennants, unveiling corridors named after partner institutions. These corridors would be in buildings with a strong connection to the partner institution and have posters and photographs of that institution and country).

Strategy 2: To provide adequate financial resources for internationalization.

In order to meet internationalization objectives, whether they are to increase the number of students studying abroad, increase the number of international students on campus etc, financial resources must be made available. The administration has made significant progress in this area as evidenced by the following activities.

- World Topper Scholarships are available for students interested in studying abroad.
- The Honors College provides financial assistance for study abroad.
- The university has hired a Director for the Office of Scholar Development to mentor, advise and assist students as they apply for prestigious domestic and international scholarships.

- The Office of Internationalization and departments will each provide up to \$1000 for faculty development of study abroad programs.
- **Recommendation 4.2.1:** Faculty teaching study abroad programs should receive the same stipend as faculty teaching on campus during Summer or Winter term sessions.
- **Recommendation 4.2.2:** The University should investigate best practices over the issue liability on study abroad programs as faculty are unconvinced about the sufficiency of ‘sovereign immunity’ for university sponsored programs.
- **Recommendation 4.2.3:** As both the numbers of international students on campus and students studying abroad increase a clear organizational growth chart for staffing levels in both the ISSS and Office of Study Abroad is required.
- **Recommendation 4.2.4:** Greater financial resources are required to promote international research and conference participation. The Faculty/Staff survey indicated an impressive 637 instances of international creative activities, 503 instances of international conference participation and 520 instances of international professional development (out of a total of 4234 international experiences listed). These activities consisted of 15%, 12% and 12%, respectively, of the total international experiences listed in the survey (the other options were independent travel, study abroad teaching, study abroad participant, internship, military service and country of origin). However, only 38% of the creative activities, 40% of the conference participation and 40% of the professional development activities have occurred within the last five years.
- **Recommendation 4.2.5:** Establish scholarships for staff to participate in international conferences, workshops and study abroad programs. 50% of the staff members who responded to the internationalization survey reported that they did not possess a passport. In order to change the campus culture toward comprehensive internationalization it is important to provide opportunities for staff to participate in some form of overseas activity.

Strategy 3: To reward and value internationalization.

- **Recommendation 4.3.1:** International criteria must be added to considerations for new hires and for merit, promotion and tenure decisions. This is the only avenue to engage faculty to lead WKU towards comprehensive internationalization.
- **Recommendation 4.3.2:** The format for all departmental and faculty reports and digital measures should reflect productivity in international domains.
- **Recommendation 4.3.3:** Awards for internationalization should be established at the college and university level.

Strategy 4: To develop a clear and comprehensive organizational framework for internationalization.

- **Recommendation 4.4.1:** The International Education Council (IEC) was charged by the Provost to promote internationalization across campus. With the hiring of a Chief Internationalization Officer the relationship between the IEC and the CIO needs to be clarified.

Comprehensive internationalization will involve both the broadening and the deepening of international activities across campus.

- To bolster linkages between the IEC and departments across campus please refer to **recommendation 3.2** to utilize liaisons.
- To bolster linkages between the CIO and administrative units across campus please refer to **recommendation 3.1** for the creation of a staff advisory committee to assist the CIO.
- **Recommendation 4.4.2:** The Office of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) should offer a regular series of workshops to discuss internationalization, cross-cultural issues and represent the needs of the international population.
- **Recommendation 4.4.3:** College Deans should establish internationalization goals and objectives for the IEC College liaisons.

Strategy 5: To effectively coordinate and synthesize internationalization across campus.

An approach that focuses simply on numbers rather than on goals leads to an ad hoc and disconnected campus. Not only are opportunities for cooperation and information sharing lost but the integration of international activities into learning objectives is obscured.

- **Recommendation 4.5.1:** The five learning outcomes articulated earlier should be adopted by the university as soon as possible. Question 12 of the faculty/staff survey asked respondents to identify any international learning goals for their major/unit. Most faculty either articulated goals related to their specific courses but many could not identify any (and a large number chose not to answer the question at all). 31% of department heads identified internationalization goals, 31% referred to the QEP and 38% stated that their department did not have any.
- **Recommendation 4.5.2:** The Office of Internationalization should assume a leadership role in the planning and coordination of international programming. As noted earlier, a Programming Assistant/Web manager should be hired so as not to increase the burden on ISSS or Study Abroad staff who have their own areas of responsibility. International activities & events are announced throughout the semester, policies are revised and immigration laws change. It is vital to have an individual who can stay abreast of these changes, update the web-site and help plan future activities.
- **Recommendation 4.5.3:** Articulate a clear internationalization theme. The adoption of a university-wide theme has significant benefits. Faculty will be able to integrate internationalization activities into the curriculum and to integrate their research and study abroad projects. Programming and events arranged around a theme increase their value to students and can be more easily linked to learning outcomes. This type of synergy will allow WKU to be a leader in internationalization. It is recommended that a multi-year theme would be of the greatest benefit. A multi-year theme provides time for faculty, students and staff to identify areas of activity, develop curricula, engage in research and grant writing, utilize professional development etc. It could also be linked to a graduating class. This theme would be announced by the President (convocation) and then conclude with a campus wide conference that would involve presentations from faculty, students and staff and also draw in speakers and presenters from the community, country and beyond. WKU could then publish

- proceedings from the multi-year process. (Possible examples: citizenship, stewardship, democracy etc)
- **Recommendation 4.5.4:** Question 7 of the faculty/staff survey asked respondents to identify countries of particular interest to them. This information should be collected and utilized as a resource base to foster cooperation, provide mentoring opportunities and share experiences.
 - **Recommendation 4.5.5:** Question 5 of the faculty/staff survey asked respondents to identify international grants received and Question 6 asked about participation in international conferences. This information should be used as a resource to share information and experiences and promote further grant applications and conference presentations.

Goal 2: To facilitate internationalization of the curriculum.

The American Council on Education refers to the curriculum as ‘the heart of the matter’ amongst the elements of an internationalized institution. International learning can only occur through an internationalized curriculum because less than 10% of university students within the United States will participate in some form of foreign academic experience. The adoption of the international student learning outcomes will encourage all departments to incorporate international activities and perspectives in their majors and to provide the necessary breadth across campus so that international competencies are not isolated and limited to particular majors. These learning outcomes will also require faculty to continually assess the value of the international content of their courses. The implementation of other recommendations, such as providing financial support for faculty travel, including international activities in tenure and promotion considerations and adopting a university-wide internationalization theme will also give faculty the necessary resources and incentive to reform the curriculum.

Strategy 6: To increase curricula offerings with an international subject or to prepare students for defined international professions.

- Respondents to the faculty/staff survey identified an impressive 178 courses/sections taught at WKU that have an entire international orientation. 66% of these courses were housed in the Potter College of Arts and Letters but other departments across campus, notably Geography & Geology, Biology, Economics and Management also offered at least six international courses.
- The university has approved two new majors – International Affairs and International Business.
- **Recommendation 4.6.1:** To explore additional curriculum changes that would prepare students for defined international professions (such as internationalized minors, area studies, possible majors – such as international development).
- **Recommendation 4.6.2:** To explore curricula reform that would lead to internationally recognized professional qualifications.

Strategy 7: To incorporate internationalized elements into existing course offerings.

- The faculty/staff survey identified 376 courses/sections taught at WKU which contain an international element. However, it was also reported that in 47% of

these courses the international content was less than 25% of the course material. The survey also reported that 95% of these courses included comparative international material and 86% contained discrete international modules. These figures are encouraging as internationalization is integrative, requiring cultural context, rather than additive. It does not involve simply including a few international readings or exercises into an existing course. However, of the 173 courses/sections that were identified by department heads as utilizing comparative elements and 167 with international modules, they reported that in only 25% and 27% of courses/sections that the international elements made up less than 25% of the course material. This is in sharp contrast to the information reported by their faculty that suggests that the depth of internationalization within courses is not as deep as department heads believe it is.

- **Recommendation 4.7.1:** The university should initiate a series of workshops to provide information on how to internationalize the curriculum. This should include segments on best practices such as how to avoid ‘2 minute experts’ and stereotyping, how to examine knowledge construction across culture etc.
- **Recommendation 4.7.2:** The university should earmark professional development funds for faculty to attend conferences on internationalizing their discipline.

Strategy 8: To strengthen the international component of General Education.

- A recent study by ACE found that only two in five institutions require undergraduates to take courses focusing on issues, events or perspectives outside the United States. Of those, 60% require students to take only one course. Under our current general education system, WKU falls into this category, requiring students to take one course in Category E. This category consists of both world cultures and American cultural diversity. The Steering Committee believes that one course is insufficient to meet our learning objectives and QEP goals. **Recommendation 4.8.1:** The international component of General Education should be expanded.
- **Recommendation 4.8.2:** There should be a clear link between the internationalization learning outcomes and the competencies addressed in general education.

Strategy 9: To utilize international experiences of faculty, students and staff across campus in the curriculum.

- WKU attracts faculty, students and staff from around the globe. This pool of international experiences and knowledge can be used to enrich the classroom experience. However, it must be remembered that international students are not simply a resource to provide global awareness for domestic students. International students should also have the opportunity to learn about American culture and society. Interactive academic opportunities provide the most effective means to develop international and multicultural competencies.
- **Recommendation 4.9.1:** The Bridging the Gap-University Experience course, which provides an interactive learning environment for incoming international and domestic students should be mandatory for international undergraduate students. This course provides international students with an opportunity to learn

about American culture, society and academic and will ease the transition to WKU. It could also become a unique selling point to attract international students to the WKU ‘family.’ This course also provides freshmen domestic students with an early opportunity to develop cross-cultural learning and begin their academic career with an international perspective.

- **Recommendation 4.9.2:** The living-learning community for domestic and international students should be supported and continued.
- **Recommendation 4.9.3:** Faculty should seek out willing domestic and international students to share their experiences and perspectives in the classroom.

Strategy 10: To develop and support interdisciplinary programs at WKU.

- WKU has introduced three new interdisciplinary majors that will promote internationalization of the curriculum. These majors are International Affairs, International Business and Popular Culture. See *recommendation 4.6.1*.

Strategy 11: To encourage and expand the study of foreign languages at WKU as an integral part of internationalization efforts.

- **Recommendation 4.11.1:** Maintain or increase the university-wide language requirement so that all WKU graduates enter the work force with at least a basic proficiency in a foreign language and with a better appreciation of cultural diversity. The current language requirement of completion of the second semester course (for a total of 6 credit hours of college language study) places WKU in the middle of its benchmarks (among schools like Florida Atlantic, Eastern Michigan, and the University of Central Missouri). Lowering the requirement would drop WKU to the bottom of its benchmarks. If WKU aspires to be compared to benchmarks in a higher league, the requirement should be increased.
- **Recommendation 4.11.2:** Align the foreign language curriculum with national standards and use proficiency-based assessments. Measure outcomes not merely by courses completed, but by the proficiency level attained. This communicates to employers what graduates can do and is of greater satisfaction to students themselves. Express the general education requirement in these terms also.
- **Recommendation 4.11.3:** Insure adequate staffing for foreign language courses and coordinate advising across campus so that students build on the pre-college curriculum by continuing their language study as soon as they arrive at WKU. Foreign language skills that go unused fade quickly, making it harder for students to complete even the most basic general education language requirement if they wait until they are juniors or seniors. Starting WKU students on their language studies earlier will mean the pool of students who acquire greater skills grows, and the willingness to study abroad for an entire semester later on also increases. This may help address the grave imbalance in our direct exchanges with partner institutions abroad (see Strategy 17 below).
- **Recommendation 4.11.4:** Increase the student motivation to study abroad by offering more of the general education language courses and profession-related language courses in a study abroad context. This may help increase the number of WKU students taking part in study abroad programs, which is still very far below the quoted national average of 10%.

- **Recommendation 4.11.5:** Integrate language learning meaningfully into the academic requirements (or at least the electives) in disciplines for which it is especially relevant, such as agriculture, business, criminology, education, health services, journalism, etc. Develop profession-related intermediate language courses and steer students into them early in their academic careers so they have an opportunity to reach a higher level of proficiency by the time they graduate.
- **Recommendation 4.11.6:** Expand the diversity of languages offered at WKU so that more regions of the world are represented. Studies show that employers want a diversity of languages represented in their work force, not just Spanish.
- **Recommendation 4.11.7:** Devote more resources to the offering of languages of critical (strategic) national interest. The Chinese Flagship Program is an excellent start in this direction, and is a prestigious award for WKU. The Flagship Program is designed to bring a small number of highly talented WKU students to the “superior” level of proficiency. But WKU should not stop with the Chinese Flagship Program. It should do much more to claim federal funds to offer language study to all WKU students. For a university the size and national stature this one aspires to, the volume and diversity of language programming must grow.
- **Recommendation 4.11.8:** Through its expanded language programming, WKU should become a noticeable resource to the region and the state. Offer more language camps for high school students, more summer enrichment in languages for the gifted, more professional development and continuing education for foreign language teachers. Draw on federal grant resources to initiate this and coordinate with admissions so that the enhanced programming raises the profile of the institution in the eyes of prospective students and draws notice generally to WKU’s international character.
- **Recommendation 4.11.9:** Change the campus culture of attitudes to foreign languages by involving faculty in more visits to direct exchange partners abroad and by inviting faculty from our foreign partners for short-term guest professorships so they can interact directly with students.

Goal 3: To attract greater numbers of high quality international undergraduate and graduate students.

An international student recruitment subcommittee was formed and chaired by Lisa Murrell. Members of the subcommittee included Scott Gordon, Crissy Priddy, Derick Strode and LaBrisha Williams. The committee noted the growing role of agents in international recruitment as a significant development in WKU policy. The subcommittee examined recommendations in three areas. The first dealt with staffing issues, the second with education and the third with administrative concerns.

Strategy 12: To increase international student recruitment.

The number of international students at WKU has been rising steadily in recent years and there are now nearly 700 students enrolled. However, over 50% of these students are graduate students and more attention needs to be paid to undergraduate enrollment (only 207 students according to the Open Doors report for Fall 2008). Furthermore, the

percentage of students attending WKU from the ESLI program has increased from 34% in Spring 2005 to 45% in Fall 2008. ESLI conducts its own recruitment (in collaboration with WKU) and more attention must be focused upon attracting students directly into WKU degree programs.

- **Recommendation 4.12.1:** WKU should hire more international student recruiters and devote more resources to international travel for the purposes of recruitment.
- **Recommendation 4.12.2:** WKU should devote more resources for recruitment materials. For example, the admissions web-site should include sections in various languages, brochures must be culturally sensitive for particular regions. A frequently updated web-site for prospective students (and their parents) about the WKU experience using video footage of current international (and domestic) students, faculty and staff would also be a valuable promotional tool.
- **Recommendation 4.12.3:** More intentional efforts to recruit international students who are already in Kentucky (for example, at high schools). Campus days could be offered for international exchange students in the Commonwealth and our catchment area.
- **Recommendation 4.12.5:** WKU should utilize international alumni as recruiters and work closely with the Alumni Office to develop a network. Successful international alumni recruiters could be formally recognized with an honorary title.
- **Recommendation 4.12.6:** WKU faculty and staff travelling abroad should travel with WKU promotional materials to aid in recruitment.
- **Recommendation 4.12.7:** Support staff, such as a full-time international transcript & credential evaluator would speed up the recruitment process. To attract students from Europe, efforts should be made to link WKU course offerings within the European-wide Bologna Process.
- **Recommendation 4.12.8:** To increase the number of undergraduate international students at WKU a proposal to provide tuition incentives similar to those offered to international graduate students should be considered.
- **Recommendation 4.12.9:** Changes in the campus environment (such as an 'international café' and television subscriptions for popular international sports such as soccer, cricket and rugby) should be considered. These changes would not only attract international students but also provide further opportunities for international and domestic students to interact with one another.
- **Recommendation 4.12.10:** WKU should investigate a partnership with Disney to utilize the new J-student intern visa category to bring international students to campus.
- The international student surveys conducted by ISSS revealed that the most effective method of recruitment is via word of mouth. A separate subcommittee on retention was established to make recommendations in this crucial area as the experiences of our current international students will affect future recruitment.

Strategy 13: To increase the diversity of WKU's international student population.

The Open Doors report submitted by WKU to the Institute of International Education for Fall 2008 shows that most international students at WKU are from a small number of countries. Of the 690 students at WKU, 223 come from India, 96 from China (PRC), 53

from Taiwan, 50 from South Korea, 47 from Saudi Arabia and 43 from Vietnam. These six countries account for 76% of the international students at WKU. Although an impressive 61 different countries are represented at WKU, there are only 30 from Central and South America, 28 from Sub-Saharan Africa, 28 from Europe and 15 from the Middle East (excluding Saudi Arabia). Many of these students are at WKU as exchange students or on athletic scholarships.

- **Recommendation 4.13.1:** WKU should develop a strategic recruitment plan to target areas of the world that are under-represented on campus.

The Open Doors report also demonstrated the concentration of international students at WKU into a small number of majors. 138 were classified in the Computer/Information Sciences and Support Services, 126 in Business, Management, Marketing and Related Support Services and 94 in the Health Professions and Related Clinical Services. These three areas account for nearly 52% of all students at WKU (60% if the 88 students enrolled in ESLI are not counted). Only four other areas of study have over 20 international students.

- **Recommendation 4.13.2:** WKU should develop strategic plans to attract students to other majors on campus. Recruitment and promotional materials should emphasize WKU's fields of excellence, new and internationally focused majors, minors and certificates. WKU should also develop semester, winter and summer institutes to attract exchange students to campus (for example, in journalism and broadcasting, in American Studies etc).

Goal 4: To increase the retention rates of international students at WKU.

An international students retention and programming subcommittee was formed and chaired by Jean Nehm. Members of this subcommittee included Andrea Ford, Beth Murphy, Bethany Ore, Alex Poole and Elizabeth Winkler. This committee conducted a trial survey of international students and obtained a large amount of data from Institutional Research. This subcommittee focused on three main areas. The first dealt with academic issues, the second with the services provided by ISSS and the third with campus-wide issues.

Strategy 14: To provide international students with the necessary academic preparation for success at WKU.

- International students at WKU arrive on campus from different pathways. Some are direct admissions into the university while others are study abroad or exchange students planning only a short stay. Others transfer from ESLI while others may be local immigrants or refugees. WKU must be sensitive to the different needs of each community to ensure their success.
- **Recommendation 4.14.1:** All ESLI graduates should enroll in English as a Second Language (ENG-051/DENG-051C) to ease their transition from English learners to English learners in an academic environment.
- **Recommendation 4.14.2:** All graduate students entering from WKU from the ESLI program should enroll in UCC-200C to prepare them for academic life at WKU.

- All undergraduate international students at WKU should enroll in the Bridging the Gap-University Experience course to prepare them for academic life at WKU. See *recommendation 4.9.1*
- **Recommendation 4.14.3:** Explore the possibility of offering a section of English 100 to local high school graduates who are immigrants or refugees.
- **Recommendation 4.14.4:** Study alternatives to the Michigan Test to determine the English proficiency of local community international students who want to pursue high education. The Michigan Test is a placement test rather than a proficiency test.
- **Recommendation 4.14.5:** WKU should examine its relationship with ESLI and determine whether additional targeted WKU-ESL programs for specific purposes (e.g. business) would serve the need of our international students.

Strategy 15: To provide the highest quality services through the Office of ISSS.

- The ISSS developed a ten-question survey that was administered to international students to identify levels of satisfaction with ISSS functions and students' overall experiences at WKU. The survey was administered in November 2008 and again in May 2009. **Recommendation 4.15.1:** ISSS administer a student satisfaction survey on a regular basis to help maintain high quality services.
- Eighty students responded to the first survey and 57 to the second. A high level of satisfaction with ISSS was reported with particular attention paid to the friendly environment, timeliness of response and individual attention offered. 83.3% of respondents were very pleased with the information ISSS provided prior to arrival at WKU in the November survey. This figure went up to 86% in the May survey. 80% responded that ISSS was responsive in meeting their needs in the November survey and this figure went up to 82% in the May survey. The number of students who responded that they never use the services of ISSS also dropped from 7% to 3% during the same period. The Steering Committee is impressed by these figures and the dedicated staff at ISSS and expects such high levels of satisfaction to continue. Of course, as the number of international students at WKU grows, the size of ISSS must be reviewed so that it can continue to function at a high level. See *recommendation 4.2.3*.
- **Recommendation 4.15.2:** Add SKYPE to computers in the ISSS office to allow international students to talk to their friends and family.
- **Recommendation 4.15.3:** International students currently must provide a Social Security card and SSN in order to be hired as a student worker. However, it takes our students at the minimum 2 weeks to obtain the SSN as their information must be verified in the SAVE system, a data base that interfaces with DHS, DoS, SEVIS, and many other federal agencies. Our students risk losing their job offers because on campus employers do not want to or cannot wait this long for our international students to start working. The Social Security Act states that not having the SSN does not preclude the student from being hired or to start working as long as the SSN is available for tax reporting. Student Financial Aid instituted the policy of requiring

international students to provide a SSN before working for 2 reasons: 1) It required a large effort to track down international students to obtain the SSN 2) Initially in 2004 when the new Social Security Act went into effect, the international students (erroneously thinking they had to have the SSN to lease an apartment, use as a deposit for a cell phone, etc.) started a job just to obtain the SSN and after receiving it, promptly quit their jobs. Since 2004, ISSS has put forth a lot of effort into educating our students prior to arrival and throughout the year about work etiquette and dispelling the myth that the SSN is needed for deposits and cell phones. Thus, we recommend that the international students do not have to provide the SSN before being hired and put on payroll. The office or department that hires the international student should take the responsibility to ensure that the SSN is collected for each student it supervises, be it domestic or international. Of course, ISSS is happy to assist in this effort. Employment Opportunities and Options are a number one concern for international students. Federal laws severely restrict the ability to work; hence the demand for our students to seek out on-campus employment which is allowed for our students incident to their status. Instituting additional obstacles in the form of WKU policies only decreases their satisfaction with WKU. Eliminating obstacles to employment will increase retention.

- **Recommendation 4.15.4:** Providing Curricular Practical Training (CPT) Workshops and collaborating with Career Services to advertise existing work internships to our international students. CPT is off-campus work permission that is authorized by the DSOs at ISSS.
- **Recommendation 4.15.5:** Providing Optional Practical Training (OPT) workshops for students. OPT is one year of work permission at any company directly related to a student's field of study after the student graduates. Several regulations surfaced in April 2008 expanding OPT options for our students and also increasing the students we advise to not only our prospective students, current students, but now students who have graduated up to 29 months after they graduate. Our students have provided informal feedback that the information is outstandingly presented, but also that other students from other universities are accessing our web site for the most current information. Further plans include to incorporate our WKU immigration attorney, Brent Brennenstuhul to present at our workshops regarding H1B and Pathways to Permanent Residency, Career Services to present on Interviewing and Resume skills, and the Alumni Office to talk about the exciting advantages of being an International Alumnus. However, ISSS recognizes that the best retention practices reside with personal, one-on-one service. We have many students as far away as California, New Jersey, and Washington and we spend many hours on the phone or with detailed emails explaining to a alumnus or a current student how to apply for work permission.
- **Recommendation 4.15.6:** Include presentations on academic expectations, etiquette and plagiarism during orientation. These have been included for Fall 2009.

- **Recommendation 4.15.7:** Re-entry workshops for our students and families who return home and experience reverse culture shock.
- **Recommendation 4.15.8:** Working closely with Academic Advising and Retention Center and ATP to send them lists of all undergraduates who check in at ISSS so that the academic advisors can meet them at ISSS during Orientation week to take them to their College to advise them on their schedules. To continue to work closely with AARC when a student has been identified as at academic risk.

Strategy 16: To improve retention by strengthening services offered across campus.

- **Recommendation 4.16.1:** More staff for Conversational English at the Academic Advising and Retention Center.
- **Recommendation 4.16.2:** ISSS should develop a series of workshops dealing with the special needs of international students to help empower departments and offices across campus.
- **Recommendation 4.16.3:** Hiring an international student coordinator at AARC.
- **Recommendation 4.16.4:** Increase the number of Health Services forms translated for students (especially for Level I ESLI students and spouses/dependents of students with limited English language skills)
- **Recommendation 4.16.5:** Workshops for current students through Health Services and ISSS, such as parenting, immunization laws, car seat laws, and child care.
- **Recommendation 4.16.6:** Translate counseling brochures into multiple languages.
- **Recommendation 4.16.7:** Placing a counselor (perhaps a graduate student in psychology) at ISSS.
- **Recommendation 4.16.8:** International calling booths in various locations on campus.

Goal 5: To increase the number of students, faculty, and staff participating in exchange programs.

The committee on exchange programs was chaired by Dan Myers and the other members included Zubair Mohamed and Jerry Barnaby. Student and faculty exchange programs are an excellent vehicle to encourage international involvement. In addition to increasing the international mobility of our students, with exchange programs, WKU is able to establish long term relationship with strategic partners, leading to additional benefits including: joint academic research; curricular collaboration; the use of joint cases/projects in classes; recruitment of students to pursue advanced degrees at WKU; and development of double/dual degree programs. WKU currently has four active exchanges with Canadian schools; four active programs with schools in Mexico; two active

programs with schools in France and South Korea; and one with schools in Ecuador, Belgium, Germany, China, and Japan.

Strategy 17: To determine the optimal balance of exchange programs.

- **Recommendation 4.17.1:** There is significantly more demand for students from our partner schools to attend WKU than there is for WKU students to attend our partner schools. There are benefits to receiving students from our partner schools. These include: increased awareness of global perspectives for WKU students, increased interest in study abroad from WKU students, increased enrollments in graduate program from incoming exchange students coming to WKU, and any formula funding provided by the increased enrollment of incoming exchange students. Increased faculty led (at a greatly reduced price) and consortium opportunities for WKU students has decreased the attractiveness of exchange programs. It is recommended that WKU “balance” exchange programs at a rate other than one-for-one. It is recommended that the balance be 1 outgoing student per incoming student to 2 outgoing students for each 3 incoming students, with the deficit funding being absorbed by the general fund.

Strategy 18. Reduce the cost of participating in exchange programs. Increased faculty led and consortium opportunities (at a greatly reduced price) for WKU students have decreased the attractiveness of exchange programs.

- **Recommendation 4.18.1:** It is recommended that additional scholarship funds be made available to students participating in exchange programs, or the cost of exchange programs be underwritten so that the cost of participating in exchange programs be reduced.

Strategy 19. Review the geographic mix of exchange programs.

- **Recommendation 4.19.1:** Determine if there are areas of demand from WKU students that is unserved or underserved.

Strategy 20. Increase the attractiveness of exchange programs.

- **Recommendation 4.20.1:** Explore double/dual degree options. WKU currently has one double degree program in place, a program in International Business with St. Etienne School of Management in France. By tying long-term study abroad to degree programs would increase the attractiveness of such exchange programs.

Strategy 21. Increase curricular enhancements available through exchange programs.

- **Recommendation 4.21.1:** Encourage joint research/teaching with our exchange partners. This may be done by providing and supporting short-term exchange opportunities for WKU and partner faculty.
- **Recommendation 4.21.2:** Encourage joint classroom projects and case studies between WKU and partner school faculty.

Goal 6: To increase the number of students, faculty and staff participating in study abroad programs.

The committee on study abroad was chaired by Melissa Stewart and Ron Ramsing. WKU has seen a significant increase in the number of students participating in faculty led study abroad, exchange, and consortium programs.

Strategy 22: Improve the attractiveness of being a study abroad faculty leader.

- **Recommendation 4.22.1:** Increase compensation for faculty leading study abroad programs to equal that of teaching an on campus class.
- **Recommendation 4.22.2:** Provide a scholar program that allows faculty to apply for grants (matched by departments and colleges) to shadow a faculty led or consortium study abroad program.
- **Recommendation 4.22.3:** Provide additional training on planning and budgeting for faculty led and consortium study abroad programs.
- **Recommendation 4.22.4:** Streamline study abroad approval process, including budget worksheet.
- **Recommendation 4.22.5:** Increase the services offered by SAGL in support of faculty study abroad initiatives, including logistics assistance, marketing assistance, invoicing and receipt of funds. The Study Abroad Director's emphasis should be on grant and scholarship development.
- **Recommendation 4.22.6:** Provide funds for staff to participate in study abroad programs.
- **Recommendation 4.22.7:** The Study Abroad office should continue to work with DELO on the proposed SAGL study abroad preparation, orientation and assessment courses which aid faculty in the preparation of their courses and enrich the students' academic experience during the program.

Strategy 23. Provide marketing support for faculty led study abroad and consortium programs.

- **Recommendation 4.23.1:** Market all programs on the SAGL web site.
- **Recommendation 4.23.2:** Include study abroad as a central part of advising for all students, targeting freshmen in particular to make them aware of the opportunities and how they can include study abroad and exchange programs in their academic programs.

Strategy 24. Determine what interests students have in study abroad, consortium, and exchange programs.

- **Recommendation 4.24.1:** Survey students to determine: where they would like to study; what they understand about WKU study abroad opportunities; how they learned of these initiatives; hurdles to participating in programs; perceived benefits of participation, and perceptions of how study abroad will fit into their academic plans.

Goal 7: To create an extensive network of relationships across the community.

A subcommittee to examine outreach issues was chaired by David Coffey and included Beth Laves, Mona Menking, Elizabeth Romero, Laura Reike and Sharon Woodward. The subcommittee concluded that WKU has some well-defined efforts regarding outreach. However, they believe that even more can be achieved.

Strategy 25: To develop and strengthen relationships with the community and support local initiatives.

- **Recommendation 4.25.1:** WKU should continue to recognize all parts of the community including the non-documented and immigrant communities. Changing demographics in both the rural and urban communities should be treated as a laboratory where WKU can provide expertise to assist positive local, regional, state and national growth and celebrated through events such as recognition days, public awareness events, awards and appreciation banquets.
- **Recommendation 4.25.2:** Develop an annual event where regional international businesses are recognized and shown appreciation. WKU should broaden its involvement in local Chambers of Commerce.
- **Recommendation 4.25.3:** Support local international and community festivals and students as a starting point rather than as an ending for international outreach activities.
- **Recommendation 4.25.4:** Strengthen the relationship with the Bowling Green International Center, Housing Authority and other related agencies regarding internships, teaching strategies, service learning opportunities and entrepreneurial activities.

Strategy 26: To utilize specific WKU resources for targeted outreach activities.

- **Recommendation 4.26.1:** To publicize and promote awareness of the need for qualified ESL teachers in Kentucky and beyond and of the steps involved in obtaining an ESL endorsement.
- **Recommendation 4.26.2:** The Office of Diversity Programs currently offers programs of special interest including their series on Latin American and Human Rights. Minority services have primarily been provided for African Americans and the expansion of services for other minorities is applauded. Greater emphasis should be placed upon study abroad opportunities for all minority groups (and international students at WKU) and in-country alternatives to study abroad (to promote diversity awareness) should be promoted. There should also be greater efforts to promoting art across campus as a tool to celebrate diversity.
- **Recommendation 4.26.3:** The recently granted FIPSE award to work with local immigrant entrepreneurs should have a positive impact for student and faculty outreach. Undergraduate and graduate students should be involved in the successful implementation of the grant.
- **Recommendation 4.26.4:** Greater efforts should be made to make regional campuses aware of lectures and other events on the main campus and video conferencing should be provided for these events.

- **Recommendation 4.26.5:** Examine possible curriculum changes to mirror changing demographics and the needs of the community. For example, does Agriculture have a course on Migrant Workers? Does Sociology have a course on Latinos Immigration? Does CFS have a course on Food and Culture?
- **Recommendation 4.26.6:** Department must work with international and/or multi-lingual local businesses, governmental and social agencies to develop meaningful internships.
- **Recommendation 4.26.7:** Globalization and cultural competency should be incorporated into the beginning freshmen week of MASTER plan by working with local schools and community organizations for students to volunteer half a day of service.
- **Recommendation 4.26.8:** Nursing, public health and dental hygiene students could utilize local churches and stores in the Hispanic community to learn more about health related and communication issues. The Rural Mobile Health Unit could expand its program not only to serve Glasgow but smaller communities as well as Bowling Green.
- **Recommendation 4.26.9:** Greater efforts should be made across campus to cooperate with the ALIVE center.
- **Recommendation 4.26.10:** Departments should rethink the concept of extra credit and instead consider making major multi-cultural and international events as part of the curriculum.
- **Recommendation 4.26.11:** While the Department of Curriculum and Instruction provides embedded competencies in two required courses for certification, some efforts should be given to allow predominately rural students to better comprehend their changing community. Cultural and language awareness activities related to working at Community Education and the Housing Authority in Bowling Green or their own communities would be advantageous.