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Executive Summary

This publication is a practical guide for higher education administrators and faculty engaged in internationalizing their institution. Drawing upon existing literature, as well as ACE’s experience in working with diverse institutions around the country, it outlines a process for clarifying goals, conducting an internationalization review, and crafting a strategic internationalization action plan. Every chapter includes practical campus illustrations, resources, and discussion questions.

Part One, “Framing Internationalization,” provides campus leaders with an overview of the terminology and rationales in the field. Familiarity with these debates can assist leaders in identifying stakeholders’ points of view and enable them to create a vision appropriate for their campus and community. Making the case for internationalization is an ongoing process that requires leaders to engage stakeholders and tap into their interests and expertise. Comprehensive internationalization—our shorthand for the broad, deep, and integrative practice that enables campuses to become fully internationalized—requires leadership, strategy, and sustained effort.

Part Two, “The Journey,” offers campus teams charged with internationalization a road map for addressing the process (the “how”) and the content (the “what”) of internationalization. Internationalization requires strong champions. A carefully composed team, with broad representation from the faculty and administration, is critical for conducting a productive review of current international programs and policies and crafting an action plan. An effective plan should build upon a clear understanding of what is in place and the institution’s strengths and weaknesses. Chapter 5 outlines a framework and a process for undertaking an internationalization review—an undertaking that can be more or less elaborate, depending on the size and decentralization of the institution. Chapter 6 distinguishes between institutional and student learning goals, challenges readers to formulate measurable goals, and underscores the principles of integration and cross-campus collaboration when developing an internationalization action plan.

Of all the elements of an internationalized campus, the curriculum stands out as key to ensuring that all students experience international learning. Internationalizing the curriculum is not simply an adjustment of the curriculum, but rather a transformation. Chapter 7 poses questions about what constitutes an internationalized curriculum and offers strategies for developing more coherence. If the curriculum is the centerpiece of internationalization, faculty engagement is its cornerstone. Chapter 8 focuses on widening the circle of faculty participation in internationalization. Identifying institutional

and individual barriers is a critical early step when developing a well-crafted faculty development plan that is sufficiently attentive to principles of faculty ownership, choice, and support. Four key elements of a successful institutional strategy—leadership, resources, organizational structures, and partnerships—are discussed in Chapter 9.

The appendices include ACE’s guidelines for carrying out an internationalization review, survey instruments created by practitioners, a summary of the literature on international and intercultural competencies, and a list of funding sources.

Introduction

Most higher education leaders agree that an undergraduate education should prepare students to live and work in a world in which national borders are highly permeable, information travels rapidly, and communities and workplaces are increasingly multicultural and diverse. Far less clarity exists, however, on precisely what that preparation should entail in terms of curriculum content or on the learning outcomes that such “globally prepared graduates” should achieve. The result is a gap between lofty aspirations and clear educational objectives. A similar gap lies between the value of internationalization asserted in many institutional mission statements and the reality of actual institutional practices and priorities as revealed by strategic plans, policies, and resource allocations.

Closing these gaps is not a trivial task, nor does it involve simply adding a few internationally focused programs or strengthening those existing ones. Although many institutions offer a diverse mix of international learning opportunities, few do so with much intentionality. The result becomes a hodgepodge of programs and activities that are not sufficiently integrated to create maximum institutional impact or to advance learning. Without a clear set of goals and a strategy to connect the disparate activities and create synergy among them, internationalization will likely be confined to a marginal set of activities affecting a self-selected group of students and faculty. Internationalizing an institution requires widely understood goals and objectives, an assessment of existing efforts and capacity, recognition of the leverage points for creating change on campus, plans for measuring progress, and the capacity to make continuous adjustments along the way.

Origins of the User’s Guide

This publication aims to help campus leaders address these gaps. It draws on literature in the fields of organizational change and international education and is informed by our experience working with institutions on a number of ACE projects, most notably the Carnegie Corporation–funded initiative, “Promising Practices: Spotlighting Excellence in Comprehensive Internationalization” (<http://www.acenet.edu/programs/international>) and two Kellogg Foundation initiatives that examined campus change (<http://www.acenet.edu/programs/change>). Another project that has informed this publication has been our work with the ACE Internationalization Collaborative, a group of 45 institutions engaged in serious efforts to advance internationalization on their campuses (<http://www.acenet.edu/programs/international>).

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These projects demonstrated the significant challenges of internationalization. We have learned that because each institution has different starting points, objectives, and campus cultures, there is no one best way to internationalize an institution. Nor is there a final point at which an institution can declare itself fully internationalized. We also have learned that although every institution's journey is unique, there are many commonalities and rich opportunities that allow institutions—even markedly different ones—to learn from one another.

A Framework for Internationalization: Who, What, Why, and How

This familiar framework provides a helpful shorthand to organize institutional thinking and strategy. It also helped us organize this guidebook, framing the central questions we address:

- *Why internationalize?* This question provides a point of departure. Why is it important? Is it necessary? Will it really improve this campus, and if so, how? What do we hope to accomplish through internationalization?
- *Who should be involved?* Internationalization, similar to other important campus changes, cannot be decreed or accomplished by a few individuals. Internationalization leaders should carefully consider whom to involve, how, and at what point in the process. These questions are crucial toward ensuring that various stakeholders own the international agenda and have a say in its development and implementation.
- *How shall we proceed?* Change is often thwarted by insufficient attention to process, rather than by a lack of good ideas. Although campus discussion focuses, rightfully, on the substance of internationalization (the “what”), such discussion must be accompanied by a thoughtful process that addresses individual and institutional barriers and is compatible with the campus culture. A consultation plan and communications strategy are two important—albeit troublesome—elements of the process. Crafting an inclusive, intentional process can serve as a decisive factor in successful internationalization.
- *What do we need to do?* At the heart of the matter is the substance of internationalization: the curriculum, campus life, and opportunities for students and faculty to engage in learning. Different stakeholders will express different interests, and internationalization requires making choices, resolving conflicts about values and priorities, and fitting the pieces together into a coherent whole.

Organization of the Guide

Although many users will not read this handbook in its entirety or the chapters sequentially, each chapter does build on earlier ones. We have divided the guide into two parts. Part One, “Framing Internationalization,” highlights underlying questions and debates and discusses the context and rationale for internationalization (the “why”). It also introduces the concept of comprehensive internationalization—our shorthand for the broad, deep, and integrative international practices that enable campuses to become fully internationalized. We have crafted Part One so that it reaches as broad a spectrum of readers as possible, including those individuals currently charged with the direct oversight and advancement of internationalization (faculty, staff, international education professionals, and others) and persons with authority over the levers of institutional policy and change (senior administrators and governing board members).

Part Two, “The Journey,” addresses the content (the “what”) and the process (the “how”) of internationalization, introducing its major elements and framing questions that guide faculty and administrators to think about the curriculum, the co-curriculum, and programmatic elements of internationalization. In focusing on the internationalization process, we highlight strategies to achieve comprehensive internationalization, including taking stock of existing international practice (an “internationalization review”), developing goals and strategies for integrating international learning into essential institutional functions, and measuring progress. Our focus on process also includes consideration of how to continually widen the circle of involvement (the “who”). This section targets campus teams charged with internationalization.

Several of the most important lessons that we present spring from key assumptions about the nature of comprehensive institutional change and our observations of institutions working to integrate international learning into the fabric of the educational experience. First is the simple but compelling truth that all institutions are different; each has its own history, culture, structure, and practices. Although this guidebook presents general principles and frameworks, readers will necessarily interpret these principles according to their institution’s distinctive nature. The second lesson is that internationalization, similar to other major changes, is not a linear process. Successes are accompanied by setbacks, interruptions, and distractions. The work is difficult, exasperating, and frustrating, and at the same time exciting, exhilarating, and energizing. It takes a long time and requires patience and stamina. Wrong turns are opportunities for learning and readjustment, rather than signs of failure.

The third lesson involves the importance of coherence. Even the smallest campuses suffer from inadequate communication and fragmentation among related efforts. An internationalized campus is more than a set of disconnected programs; it is characterized by a sense of shared purpose and the cross-fertilization of different elements such as education abroad, language teaching, international students and scholars, service learning, the curriculum, campus life, and community involvement. Coherence does not mean centralized control or uniformity. Complex institutions, and especially research universities, are highly decentralized; their schools and colleges cherish autonomy. But adhering to a broad set of goals, and pointing all the boats in the fleet in the same direction, as one administrator at a research university put it, can promote synergy and connections that are helpful to all.

And finally, the fourth lesson is that internationalization is a shared responsibility across campus. Even the most visionary president and the most energetic, creative chief international officer cannot make internationalization happen without the participation—indeed, the enthusiasm—of faculty, staff, and students. Internationalizing the campus is a leadership challenge: to identify other leaders and champions, to generate widespread enthusiasm, and to harness it.

We offer this volume as a resource for campus leaders to deepen their understanding of internationalization and help them address the challenges associated with its advancement.