

I am pleased to announce the formation of an International Leadership Team with the goal of developing a strategic plan for comprehensive internationalization.

Because of our Catholic and Augustinian heritage, our many fine international programs and our long experience with sending students abroad, Villanova already has a deep and rich history of international involvement. However, as recently as a decade ago, very few institutions had “articulated internationalization as a priority or engaged in institution-wide conversations about their vision, goals or approach to internationalization.” Only recently have universities “inventoried their own international activities, analyzed how these activities might build upon and connect with one another more effectively to enhance international learning or developed an internationalization plan” (cite).

To assist in this effort, we have joined with the [American Council of Education](#) (ACE) as a member of their 2012 [Internationalization Laboratory](#) learning community. ACE works with participating institutions to audit and assess existing international initiatives, to develop a strategy for comprehensive internationalization aligned with mission, to develop specific goals, and to assess progress towards these goals with a particular focus on developing student-learning outcomes. The International Leadership Team, chaired by Dr. Susan Mackey-Kallis, a recent ACE Fellow, will collaborate with ACE and six other institutions---Becker College (MA), Grand Valley State University (MI), Indiana University, Purdue University Indianapolis, Merrimack College (MA), University of Mississippi, and Virginia Commonwealth University---over the

course of the next year and a half to two years to develop a plan for comprehensive internationalization.

Although there are a number of reasons why such an initiative is important, let me share a few of the most significant.

First, we know that our students are travelling and engaging in learning and service opportunities abroad at the same time that increasing numbers of our students may come from other countries or from traditionally underrepresented ethnic or language groups. In this globally interconnected world, our graduates are also increasingly working for international companies, living abroad, and working on international teams that speak multiple languages. Thus, adequately resourcing study abroad to insure international opportunities exist for all of our students, while also developing and assessing global competencies---both in general education and in specific disciplines---will be key to our graduates' career success and impact.

Secondly, although offering all of our students abroad immersion experiences for educational study, research, co-curricular service, and internships is the ideal, there are many opportunities to build or enhance internationalization in our curriculum, to use existing communication technology for virtual international teaching and research partnerships, to increase the percentage of our students enrolling directly from secondary schools outside of the United States, and to draw on the experiences and expertise of our international students, faculty, and local ethnic communities, multinational corporations, and NGOs.

Thirdly, our faculty are increasingly collaborating with partners abroad in teaching, research, service, and program

development. Despite this we have yet to fully achieve meaningful long-term strategic partnerships with foreign institutions that are critical to comprehensive internationalization. With the emergence of global systems of higher education, institutions that are deliberative about developing international research, teaching and service initiatives and institutional partnerships abroad will enjoy the collaborative advantages and capacity building that these strategic partnerships bring.

Finally, internationalization invites working across disciplines, colleges and institutions in ways that often require financial expenditures and personnel commitments that strain institutional capacity. Although Villanova has successfully worked in this fashion on a number of international initiatives, particularly in programs focused in developing countries, the work of the International Leadership Team will help us better articulate, assess, benchmark and potentially secure funding for existing and future collaborations.

Accordingly, although other areas of focus may emerge from the work of the International Leadership Team, the following will receive particular attention: international research/grant development; teaching and learning (including international curriculum, area studies programs, and learning outcomes development); education technology and internationalization; education abroad; faculty development; international scholars and students development; campus and community culture (including the intersections among multiculturalism, internationalization and our local communities); relationship building with local multinational corporations, governmental and non-governmental organizations and international professional organizations.

I invite you to indicate your interest, possible relevant experience/background, or any questions you may have regarding this internationalization initiative to Susan.Mackey-Kallis@Villanova.edu. I also ask for your help if you are called upon this year to fill out a survey, to share your opinions in a focused conversation, or to provide information to the steering committee about your work on specific initiatives with internationalization.

Because I believe that systemic attention, sustained leadership and broad engagement will be key to our success with advancing comprehensive internationalization at Villanova, I thank you in advance for your support of this important initiative and I look forward to providing you updates on the work of the International Leadership Team over the course of the coming year.