

# Internationalization and Global Learning

*A Joint Project by the American Council on Education and the  
National Survey of Student Engagement*

To address the needs of a rapidly globalizing world, colleges and universities are increasingly embracing internationalization as an institutional priority. The American Council on Education's (ACE) 2011 *Mapping Internationalization on U.S. Campuses* survey revealed that international education or some aspect of internationalization was among the top five priorities in approximately one in two institutions' (52 percent) strategic plans. Internationalization may include efforts to increase student mobility (both inbound and outbound), bring a global dimension to the curriculum and co-curriculum, implement policies and programs to encourage faculty global engagement, and develop partnerships and collaborations with institutions abroad, among other activities.

In terms of the goals for institutional internationalization, student learning is front and center. Among respondents to the 2011 *Mapping* survey, 75 percent chose "to improve student preparedness for a global era" as one of the top three most compelling reasons for internationalization. Along similar lines, among those institutions that reported a recent accelerated focus on internationalization, 70 percent indicated that the "institution's emphasis on a more globally oriented curriculum and pedagogy" was one of the top three motivations for this acceleration.

To achieve these goals, some institutions have implemented globally focused student learning outcomes

designed to specify the international and intercultural knowledge and skills that students are expected to acquire through their educational program; this was the case at 55 percent of the institutions that responded to the 2011 *Mapping* survey. Assessment of student global learning is often undertaken within individual courses, and in some cases at the institutional level, using various rubrics and measurement tools.

To date, however, little comparable, cross-institution information has been available about students' perceptions of internationalization and global learning, the extent to which students experience institutional internationalization efforts, and the activities associated with global learning gains. In the current project, ACE and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) are endeavoring to fill this void.

Using data from the 2016 iteration of the *Mapping* survey and NSSE's newly developed Global Learning Module (which will also be administered in 2016), ACE and NSSE will conduct a joint analysis of administrator and student responses to study the relationship between the internationalization initiatives and activities undertaken by the institution, and students' experiences of these activities and the global learning that results. Colleges and universities that participate in NSSE 2016, elect the Global Learning Module, and also participate in the *Mapping* survey can explore institution-specific results.

## About the Surveys

**ACE's Mapping Internationalization on U.S. Campuses** survey assesses the current state of internationalization at American higher education institutions, analyzes progress and trends over time, and identifies future priorities. Survey data from U.S. institutions were collected in 2001, 2006, and 2011, and will be collected again in 2016. The survey is the only comprehensive source of data on internationalization in U.S. higher education institutions from all sectors, and includes two-year, four-year, public, and private degree-granting institutions.

**NSSE's Global Learning Module** assesses student experiences and coursework that emphasize global affairs, world cultures, nationalities, religions, and other international topics. The module is appended to and complements items on the core NSSE questionnaire about student experiences with people from different backgrounds, course emphasis on integrative and reflective learning, and participation in study abroad.